

# ***REFLECTIONS***

July 22, 2007

**An anxious heart weighs a man down,  
but a kind word cheers him up.**

*Proverbs 12:25*

## **Brief Encounters**

“What floor?” I asked as two middle-aged women stepped into the elevator. “Three,” one of them answered. So I pressed the button for the third floor then turned, smiled, extended an open hand and said, “That will be a quarter.” The women laughed then one of them said, “Today is my birthday so maybe I can ride for free.” As I wished her a happy birthday, the door opened to my floor and I stepped out of the elevator. The door was closing when I heard her say, “May your day be a blessed one.”

Only a day earlier I had another brief encounter. It was with an elderly couple that I shared time with while waiting for the doctor’s office to open. The woman was complaining that the doctor did not open his office earlier so she could end her fast and enjoy her first cup of coffee. Meanwhile her husband was good naturedly lamenting that he was too young to have failing eyesight. When I discovered that the man’s eyesight prevented him from driving, I jokingly suggested that he position himself in the back seat of the car next time. Then he could pretend that his wife was his private chauffeur. “He better not!” she quickly exclaimed, and we all laughed.

Now over the years I have had thousands of brief encounters like these two, but this time something caused me to wonder about them. I wonder if God had anything to do with them. I have come to believe that nothing happens by chance or without reason, so I believe in some small way these brief encounters were a part of God’s master plan. Likely my path will never cross with those people again and even if it did it is unlikely that I would recognize them. Yet those brief encounters did something to lift my spirits and just perhaps the spirits of the others were lifted too. I believe that was God’s plan.

And there is another thing that strikes me about brief encounters. Each encounter we have with people, however brief it may be, is an opportunity. Every time we meet someone, even if no words are spoken, we have an opportunity to reflect the Savior. Whether a friendly smile, an encouraging word, or a tender touch, we have the opportunity to allow the love of Jesus to shine through us.

I believe that is God’s plan, too.

*“You are the light of the world,”*

*Richard +*

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