

For with You is the fountain of life; in Your light we see light.

Psalm 36:9

the LifeWord *—*

with Michael Green



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Dear Friend:

THE EYES HAVE IT!

Yogi Berra, one of our great American philosophers, delivered this enlightening truth, **“You can observe a lot just by watching”**. Truer words were never said.

On the job, in the classroom, on the bench at the mall and in most parts of our everyday life, the people watching part is just one of God’s free gifts and with movies running at ten bucks a pop followed by the twenty dollar popcorn and diet coke, along with concerts and sporting events running between \$50.00 and \$100.00, we are all looking for more free forms of entertainment.

Many an airport layover has been made a bit easier by watching the passing parade and you know us folk in New Orleans love parades.

For example, the drive on the Causeway is always a visual feast of the daring and ignorant and I’m not talking about those drinking morning coffee or cramming down an Egg McMuffin. The guys in Baton Rouge are haranguing to make laws about drivers on the phone and that is a problem but let’s talk about...reading legal briefs, kissin’ and a huggin’, reading the sports page folded into quarters, shaving, tying neckties, and putting on makeup...not just lipstick or powder but fake eyelashes!!, all while driving seventy mph on the longest bridge in the world. I think that’s why some of them arrive at work looking like “The Joker”.

Oh yeah, there is always something out there on the road of life to watch. Observing is fun and it can be vitally important to your survival.

I recently heard someone talking (I listen a lot, too) about one of their business procedures. They explained how they carefully observed the people they must deal with and how they treated other business acquaintances and co workers. The practice of simple observation, giving clues as to what was possibly ahead, seemed to be quite helpful.

If you watch a Ralph Kramden type (loud, verbose and always right) verbally brow beat the wife and kids in the cafeteria line, you can quickly surmise that this poor slug has some issues and isn’t going to be a barrel of laughs during the family vacation drive to Pigeon Forge.

But, hold on, the guys shouldn’t carry all the blame here.

I’ve also observed some on the other side who undermine and fully practice the “If Momma’s not happy...” philosophy in order to bring the family train to a standstill until they get what they want. Mix this in with a few purple haired, eye rolling kids, a network of gossipy friends and relatives, throw in a late Sears payment or two and you’ve got yourself a dysfunction disaster. Problem is, they are usually the last ones to connect the dots but others have “observed” the problem for years.

Real wisdom is being able to observe the walk of others and learn from the good and the bad. We’ve all had someone we looked up to, a coach or a teacher that put something positive in us and, even today, it brings a smile as we remember it and put it into practice. Unfortunately, we’ve also had the opposite experience and, even after 25 or 30 years, the memory is still bad and can still make our stomachs flip when we think about it.

Observing a gracious walk and the delivery of a kind word can go a long way and we should all make an effort to practice such. However, when you look at some and the way they respond to life’s stuff, the thought of pinching their heads off does come to mind and the impulse must be pushed back down under our baptism memory.

The other night, Linda and I were in our favorite TV watching spots. I was in full command and control of the remote (there are still a few things I can’t give up).

We stopped on one of those reality shows that seem to be on every night. The premise of the show was that some “B List” celebrities had been dropped off in a jungle and the pampered ones got a rude wake up call.

Although I might not be fully hip to some parts of the pop culture, I did somewhat recognize most of the people. The two noisiest ones of the gang were a silly, shrill couple that could have been great candidates to discover the benefits of Prozac. I had no clue as to who they were, apparently they were from some basic cable TV show but the way they strutted around you would have thought that there was an Oscar, Emmy and a Tony on their mantle.

I also figured out that they were married. Talking to Linda and the TV I said, "They deserve each other, there is a God".

The sniveling brats cried, screamed, complained and even made us miserable on our couch a few thousand miles away. I can't imagine what it was actually like being with these two unhinged juveniles. Don't they remember they are on national TV?

To make matters worse, midst the bleeps and tantrums, they would stop and pray. They professed to be born again Christians and in periodic, bipolar type, screeching halts in the action they would join their hands, lift their voices and pray in Jesus' Name. I'm thinking Jesus doesn't need these two to be the poster children for the Gospel unless they are the "before" examples. Some will observe this spectacle and think this is what Jesus does in a life. I finally calmed down by telling myself, "Jesus is fully capable of taking care of Himself".

The Apostle Paul reminded us that we are "Living Testaments, known and read by men". In other words, we are always being observed and judgments are being made. You never know who is watching.

I've heard horror stories of some people in ministry who walk around making ridiculous, inane demands like a Diva or Prince Charles because they are on television and are such a gift from God. Folks watch as waiters are castigated, store clerks, flight attendants and their own employees are spoken down to because they are famous and that is their God given right. Difficulty is a game and is celebrated. No, please no.

Back to Sir Laurence Olivier in the jungle, during one of his rants, the young man started blurting out that he was the most famous person out there and did not even deserve to be among these other fame imposters. "I am famous!" he yelled. Actually, most folks didn't even know who he was. This dimwit was a "legend in his own mind" and the childish tirade brought an old statement back to mind...**"There is a big difference between someone who is famous and someone who is great...Madonna is one, Mother Teresa is the other"**.

Somebody is always watching and, as it says in Proverbs, **"He's making a list and checking it twice"**.

Michael

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