



NCFI Caring Across Regions with Encouraging Scripture

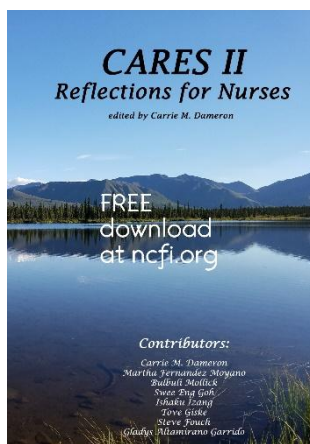
The Face of Kindness By Carrie Dameron

“And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another. For this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit.” 2 Corinthians 3:18, ESV

As a nursing professor who teaches gerontology care of older adults, I am always intrigued by articles that support caring for patients with dementia. These vulnerable adults can be caught up in their own world filled with fear and paranoia, especially when they are surrounded by people they don't know. This can be very troublesome for caregivers or nurses who are trying to provide for their basic needs like nutrition and hygiene. A few years back I found a study about how the simple act of a kind facial expression can alleviate fear and calm someone with dementia. The person sees a calm expression and bright smile and their fear is changed to trust and calmness. The same can be said for contrast. When the caregivers are rushed or frustrated, the person with dementia sees their face and feels threatened and fearful.

I think the same can be said of anyone. Our facial expressions speak loudly to others without us moving our lips. A big smile says joy and love. A hopeful expression communicates trust and security. A simple nod shows respect and honor to others. The greatest thing about our facial expressions is that there is no need for a language interpreter, it is universal.

Take some time and reflect on your facial expressions. Does your face communicate the love and joy you have in Christ? Are your calmness and joy spilling over into your smile? Does your expression change when you work with patients, colleagues, or even family members? Keep in mind no one can illuminate joy all the time. Yet, we can become more aware of whether our expressions are congruent with our heart and spirit.



p.s. You can find more information on communicating with people with dementia on Alzheimer's websites around the world.

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