

**House Group Bible Study -
You are being watched!**

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Recently, I have been thinking more and more about evangelism and how our church is going to grow. I don't mean the **'guilty'** evangelism type whereby the devil makes you feel guilty because you didn't say anything about Jesus to the lady at the checkout or that man stood in the queue.

Nor about the **'self righteous'** type of evangelism whereby our pride takes over, and we try to stack up points, feeling we are doing more than others at church by constantly talking to most people we come across. This usually gets us a reputation to be 'avoided where possible'.

No the best type of evangelism is to allow people to **'see Jesus'** through us, in our lives; by our actions and example.

If our neighbours' see us behaving differently towards others and, **'choosing'** a different reaction to things, they are much more likely to be curious about why we are different, and maybe ask questions. We can explain we believe in Jesus and He is the one who governs our behaviour (if we let Him!)

On our estate there is a family who regularly come into conflict with their neighbours. The last incident, a few weeks ago resulted in them being sworn at, and abused in public, because they had painted their own fence, on their own land, purchased with their own money! The neighbours did not like the colour and were not consulted, so they decided that it was a good enough reason to try to bully them into changing the colour and concede to their will!

The dispute went on for a couple of days and was marked by threats, abuse and intimidation. **What would you do in this situation?**

- ◆ Get angry and shout back at them because clearly you are in the right and completely vindicated if you 'loose it' with them.
- ◆ Would you feel totally intimidated and want anything for a quiet life and give in to their unreasonable demands.
- ◆ Plana sneaky revenge in your heart (not that you would follow through with it) but it makes you feel better!



Jesus says to bless those that curse you! Love not only the people who love you, but also those who hate you, because this is the right thing to do! **We all know what to do, but doing it in real life is hard.** We must make a conscious choice to follow Jesus, but how? How do we resolve something like this? When our emotions get involved it makes us behave in certain ways.

And that is the key!

- ◆ First submit your feelings about a situation to God. Bring under control every thought that would exalt itself above the throne of God.
- ◆ Look who is controlling the situation – Satan! As soon as we realise what is happening spiritually, all the hatred and anger towards people disappears, and we can turn the situation around. We can forgive people without feeling hurt – it makes it easier to then love them (a little!)
- ◆ We can pray, and decide how to resolve the situation without feeling bad, without feeling we have ‘given in’. We can then feel compassion towards the ‘wrong doers’. They can’t help it – Satan has control of their lives and has them bound up in fear. It makes them want to control everything in their lives to help them feel safe, including wanting to control others, and stop them from doing things they can’t control (such as painting a fence in a colour they don’t like)

*Love your enemies
Bless those who curse you
Do good to those who hate you
And pray for those who
persecute you*

Matthew 6:44

1 Peter 3:15-16

"But in your hearts set apart Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect, ¹⁶keeping a clear conscience, so that those who speak maliciously against your good behavior in Christ may be ashamed of their slander."

When we **‘choose’** to follow Christ, it makes a huge difference in our lives, but also in the lives of those around us. We have the ability to evangelise by example, rather than by just speaking about the Lord. If people see us behaving differently in difficult situations, they are much more likely to ask the reason for the hope we have.

Can you think of a difficult situation you went through?

Are you feeling ‘peaceful’ about how it was resolved or is there still something which needs healing?