

Love Your Community!

It's amazing how often people believe that God is out to get them. They see him as an all powerful God who is eager to judge and condemn people. For those people, they should look at Matthew 23:37:

"O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you who kill the prophets and stone those sent to you, how often I have longed to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing."

Jesus looked over the city of Jerusalem and remembered the sins of the people. He could see all that they had done. Even though they had killed those whom God had sent, he had compassion on them and wanted to gather them together.

Was he filled with anger? Did he want to destroy the city? No! He was filled with compassion for the people there. Often in our village community, we hate 'sinners' - people who hold different beliefs or lifestyles to us. We judge them and don't associate with them. Sometimes, we drive them from our churches and our villages. This is not the attitude of Jesus.

He saw them as needing care just like baby chicks. Even before they hatch, chickens sit on the eggs and keep them warm. When the chicks are small they feed them and protect them under their wings. Jesus is like this with his people.

Even when we have sinned, God wants to know us and take care of us. A mighty follower of Jesus, Paul the Apostle, said this about God's love in Romans 5:8:

"But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: while we were still sinners, Christ died for us."

God did not wait for us to be good enough for him. He died for us even though we were still sinners. If Jesus himself did not cast us aside, then what right do we have to do this to anybody else? Jesus had compassion and that is what we must have to anyone and everyone around us. We need to love and be involved in our community, not set against it!

Put it into Action!

Make a list of everyone who you or community have disapproved of or shunned and pray for them.

Try and find ways to bless them - spend some time getting to know them. In this, you will find common ground and be able to grow in love and compassion for them.

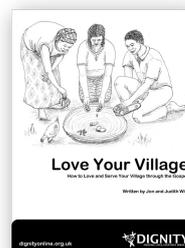
Pray that:

- 1) They will be able to see God's love shine through you.
- 2) You may be filled with compassion for them.



"Where we are living we were almost poor and we were not helping each other. God has helped us a lot as we are bringing a Dignity group into the village. It has even helped me lead my church better."

- Myombo, Lubwe, Zambia



This lesson is taken from "God is Love" a lesson found in Love Your Village.

Find out more at:

dignityonline.org.uk/publications