



## 1 Peter 3:15

***“In your hearts revere 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.”***

A friend of mine had a beautiful front yard. In it were several fruit trees down along the road and a small flower garden up by the house. One summer a doe and her speckled fawn begin to frequent his little mini-orchard and sometime mid-June he got it stuck in his head that he wanted to feed her out of his hand.

He began turning his yard, his movements, his speech, even his thoughts into what could only be described as seeker-sensitive. It worked. She eventually stopped running away when he walked out his front door. In time, she even tolerated him watching her for a while. But, every time he tried to take a step toward her, she would take a step away. As hard as he tried, he couldn't make any ground. Meanwhile, his flower garden was looking more than a bit neglected.

One day he gave up. He decided he was done with her and abandoned his crusade to feed her by hand. In fact, he vowed never again to even give her a glance.

As he tells it, about three days after he began to ignore her and to devote all his efforts once again toward a beautiful flower garden, something quite miraculous happened. As he was bent over pulling weeds, all the hair on the back of his neck stood up and he cautiously looked down to see that silly deer poke her head between his right arm and his ribs. It would seem, that her curiosity got the better of her and she just had to find out what all the fuss was about over all those flowers.

I wonder if there isn't a lesson in that little front yard scene for all of us struggling evangelists. I wonder if sometimes our frustration with sharing the good news comes from setting our focus on something less than what was originally intended. Maybe our family and neighbors, coworkers and friends, resist our efforts to give them the bread of life because they feel more like prey as they sense the intent with which we pursue them.

Peter wrote that we should first set our focus on revering Christ as Lord and then be ready to answer the questions that arise from that focus. I am increasingly aware that much of my evangelistic efforts have been facing the lost, and then with a tilt of the head over my shoulder, inviting them to trust in God. Peter seems to paint a picture of facing God and looking back over our shoulder to invite others to focus on God with us.

We've started to try this as a church. We now do service projects in our communities with only one focus: to see God glorified through our efforts and in our community. Many times we try to do them without anyone else finding out that we are the ones getting them done. We don't use them to invite people to our gatherings or even to share the gospel with them. In practice, we've just kind of decided to ignore them all together.

It's absolutely crazy to watch what is beginning to take place. Individuals who formerly made no uncertainty about their disdain for churches being a part of community activities, are now inviting us in and trusting us to lead. Outspoken, self-proclaimed atheists and agnostics are starting up conversations to try to figure out our motivations. We've made friends with people who are categorically opposed to Christians. And slowly but certainly, we are getting more and more opportunities to give a reason for the hope that is in us.



To continue the conversation, email  
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