

General Topics :: Facing a racial issue...

Facing a racial issue..., on: 2006/8/31 14:18

OK... this is not necessarily a theological issue. I just need to throw this out there, and see if folks can relate to this... and how others would handle it.

I really believed that God was telling me not to coach football this season, but to be satisfied to just sit and watch, and be His witness to the parents on the sidelines.

Well, sorta like Abraham, I believe God was testing me to see if I was willing to do this because sometimes I tend to make football an "idol". Apparently I passed the test because my sitting on the sidelines lasted 1 night. The board of our football organization came to me and begged me to be the defensive coordinator... and I prayed about it and felt that God was releasing me. I have to admit, I had surrendered to God so much in this that I was very reluctant to coach when they asked me. I'm usually all over it like a dog on roadkill.

Soooo... here I am coaching defense. We won our first game 12-8 this past weekend. Everything is going well for the most part. Usual complaints from parents, but nothing out of the ordinary.

Here is the problem. We're having a lot of disunity on the team. Mainly caused by our very talented running back, and our equally talented quarterback/runningback. They are insulting to the other players, say mean spirited things to the other players, the runningback is getting into the habit of slamming the ball on the ground if the play gets messed up as well as kicking whoever it is that has tackled him.

In school the attitudes continue. They pick on some of the other players and make fun of them, etc...

Now, normally I don't care who the player is, or how talented they are, I punish them. I'll even sacrifice a game and bench my best player if he has acted in this manner just to make my point. BUT... because I decided to not coach this year originally, someone else is the head coach... so it's not my call to make.

Our head coach is concerned about one thing... the two boys are black. And our collective experience with their parents has taught us that as soon as we begin to punish them, Mama throws down the "race card". "They're punishing my baby cuz he's black!"

No, lady... I'm punishing your baby cuz he's a jerk.

In talking with some other people about this, they suggested we talk to the parents first before we do anything. All the coaches, the parent(s), and have at least 2 board members present... one white and one black.... explain the situation to Mama, and explain before hand how we plan to punish the behavior if it doesn't stop. This way everyone understands.

Has anyone ever run across this type of racial junk? The kids are black, so everyone is too afraid to do anything about the behavior. Let it be a white kid tho, and we're expected to deal with it. I feel like equality goes both ways. If we'd punish a white kid we should punish a black kid. What difference does it make? Either we're equal, or we're not, but we can't have two kinds of standards.

Any suggestions, or experiences to share?

Krispy

Re: Facing a racial issue... - posted by roadsign (), on: 2006/8/31 23:13

Quote:

----- The kids are black, so everyone is too afraid to do anything about the behavior

I think this is a common problem these days -- not just related to skin color, and not just with children.

Krispy, it sounds like you have been given your calling. Since God is more interested in people than in football, he is likely using the game as a backdrop for his higher purposes.

Mamma likely will not wish to believe that this is not a racial issue, no matter how hard you try to reason with her. And if you assert yourself over the child, in her eyes it will just seem like another unfair power play by whites-- something all too true in her heritage. So, punishment may actually have a reverse effect.

Expelling the child will not help him, Mamma, or the team. And you sure don't help anyone by turning a blind eye and permitting this to go on. It harms everyone. You are in a hard place.

My husband, a high school teacher shared some similar episodes with me: one irate parent stormed into the principal's office after his darling angel was expelled for violating the dress code. The principal explained how the rules had been set by the students themselves and he was following protocol (and not picking on his daughter).

Your organization must establish clear rules and clear, reasonable consequences -- agreed by all. If you get coaches and parents together to establish guidelines make sure to include Momma or she will feel everyone is ganging up against her. Appeal to her for suggestions for the behavior code. Surely she'd like to see junior learn to behave well.

She has to see that you are not against her, but interested in her and her son. She has to know that you care. Really she has to forgive past sins committed against her race or she will stay in this rut and just pass it on to her offspring. Of course, she has to discover God's forgiveness and love.

Ask God for ways to express his character through you to her. Pray that God can use you to help her see that not all whites are going to use her and degrade her and her baby. She needs some adjustments to her thinking. And junior will just follow along. You may be more successful with surprises rather than predictable reactions. Bold love can be a powerful weapon -- because it stuns people in their tracks. They suddenly have nothing to get mad at - nothing to fuel their vengeance!

It sounds like the head coach needs praying too. He needs to see the kids as people -- not just as blacks. He needs to see people as more important than the game. Your good example may be the only way he'll see the value of this.

Well, take all that for what it's worth -- if anything. I'm sure you already have thought about these various points - and you know the situation better than I do.

Let us know how things work out -- and how God continues to guide you in your mission work.

Diane

Re: - posted by freedbyjc (), on: 2006/9/1 9:11

Awesome response, Diane!

Bold love is absolutely the answer. We took it to another level ...

Another point to make with mom is that if her angel pulls his 'throw down' stunt on the field he could be expelled from the game.

This is a rule that we adopted in our leagues and it caused some heartache to start but as long as rules were adopted and signed off by all of the players before the games started, everyone was notified. The umpires and the referees established that they would be strict in the enforcement of this at the coaches meeting and the coaches were instructed to ensure that they did not allow it in their practices... it would be easier to pull a player from a practice than a game.

If it happened on the field the player and the team were told that it was the actions of the player that caused the expulsion then the actions were usually not be repeated.

We had some discussions that this was punishing the whole team for the actions for one player but its a "team" sport and our job as coaches and referees was to teach sportsmanship and not winning.

This has since been adopted at the high school level. Any untoward displays receive swift consequences; even profanity will result in a penalty and repeated occurrences will cause a player to be removed from a game.

Re:, on: 2006/9/1 11:51

Great responses, guys...

We have a 20 page code of conduct for the **parents** to sign before the season even starts, and it covers both the player and the parent. But sometimes enforcing all the rules gets a little sticky.

Here's what we did last evening. We coaches met before practice, and I suggested before we do anything too drastic, let's huddle the team up and discuss teamwork and brotherhood... and without mentioning names let's talk about how they should be treating each other.

Praise God... at least for last night the kids were patting each other on the back... my son (middle/inside linebacker) tackled the snot out of one running back (the kid who likes to kick), and the running back got up and said "Great tackle!" Our QB was encouraging one of the kids who really hasn't developed into a good player yet... it was neat.

I prayed for about 45 minutes before practice that God would intervene so that there wouldn't be any need of confrontation!

When practice was over, we met again and were all pleased by the results of the huddle. However, I did suggest to our head coach that we reiterate this whole "team concept" at least once a week... cuz I know kids. By Tuesday, if we don't keep a tight reign on it, it will become a problem again.

Krispy

my dear brother, on: 2006/9/1 13:30

Stevie, (forgive me, when I feel affectionate towards someone I ALWAYS put an "ie" after their name)

team is team. First suggestion is to have the whole team watch a copy of "Glory Road", which is one of the finest sports films I ever done seen.

secondly, I play on a team, its not a sports team, but we are bonded as intense as any sports team, its mainly guys, and I'm the quarterback in essence and one time, we had a technical aspect fail, wasn't anybody's fault, it just made me FURIOUS, and I didn't scream, I just went out into the alley, picked up half a cinder block and hurled it to the ground, breaking it into pieces.

well, everyone saw this, and they know that I'm a born again Christian and they were flabbergasted, it was a terrible witness, and for one day my heart was hardened, I didn't care what anybody thought, coz I'm playing to win, I'm playing to be the best, and if you stand in the way of that, either your going to get run over or tossed.

Needless to say God the Holy Ghost dealt with me, and the next day I repented and apologized in front of the whole team, and pledged NEVER again to let my anger get the best of me. I must lead by example.

This QB should be told that he is the team leader and on his shoulders is this burden, to lead by example, that by his example we live or we die AS A TEAM.

and if he doesn't seem amiable to correction, if he doesn't display the necessary humility to lead by sacrifice, then he must

st go.

REFUSE to even address the race issue in these meetings, its about team, its about being ONE, united in a common goal, we live or we die TOGETHER as one. Don't let the coach take the bait, set a new paradigm.....UNITED WE STAND, as ONE...DIVIDED we fall

I love you bro,

In Christ, neil

xo

Re: Facing a racial issue... - posted by AshleyJnr, on: 2006/9/1 19:16

Quote:

-----Either we're equal, or we're not, but we cant have two kinds of standards.

This seems to pop up all the time - the coin has two sides. Kind of how some women's right's want absolute equality with men to the very needle point, yet when it comes to lifting a suitcase, should a man do it - I mean where's the equality in that????

Please don't misunderstand me I want chivelry!! (even though I don't know how to spell it)
I guess it's that I feel society's direction is slowly nudging it out.

eg My friend was holding open a door for this lady in a public place, and she lashed out at him saying "I don't need your help, I'll get my own door you so and so..")

You can understand his confusion.

I know it's a slightly different scenario to you football dilemma, but in some ways simialar.

Re: - posted by ginnyrose (), on: 2006/9/2 0:53

God Bless you, Krispy. I am surprised you actually accomplished something! Usually, it is not THAT simple!

ginnyrose

Re: my dear brother - posted by Spitfire, on: 2006/9/5 20:51

Quote:

-----This QB should be told that he is the team leader and on his shoulders is this burden, to lead by example, that by his example we live or we die AS A TEAM.

Sorry Charlie. I disagree with this comment. My son played football all the way through college and he led every team he was ever on and he was never the quarterback. I was going to suggest, Krispy, that you look for the one who is the team leader, meaning the one who cares for the team, as a whole. Begin to address the problem with him. If he is, indeed, the one who leads, then he will be able to turn this machine around.

My son played at Presbyterian College and there were always more whites than blacks there. Sometimes we heard the "race" card get played. But, there were a number of strong, young men on that team who loved God and you should have seen the way they led that team! It was awesome to watch! They might not have been the winningest team, but they were the most unified team, and they won many a game, not because of being the best talent, but by sheer heart and a unified vision. Your true leaders within the team itself are the ones with the real ability to change the ethos of this team. That's my 2 cents. Dian.

Re: - posted by letsgetbusy (), on: 2006/9/8 22:55

I have a few thoughts on the subject; racism, in general. I have been in the military for about 14 years, which, for anyone that doesn't know, is very racially diverse, and this is by purpose. A certain percentage of officers must be minority, and a certain amount female. I have also worked in an inner-city/suburban ministry for about 15 months. There are many times where I am the only white guy.

Observations: the longer I have been in the ministry, the less I even think about color. I used to think, when I started, 'I am the only white dude in the room. Is someone going to say something about me?' Now before anyone jumps to conclusions, I have had a college professor say to me as I entered class for the first time: "Now that Hal is here we have a SEC OND white student. (She actually turned out to be pretty cool)." I was beaten up or punched in the face by a young black guy on at least three different occasions. Nothing against anyone, I just think that Satan tries to use race to stir up hatred in us.

So most likely, the mom is fearful of white people because she is not around them much. I was fearful of black people, though I had worked with people of all backgrounds for years in the military, had multiple close, black friends, went to school as a kid that was about half white, half black, etc. It wasn't until I was immersed in a black community that the color factor seemed to just disappear.

My conclusion is that it is all spiritual. Satan is stirring up the issue to the point where people are ready to kill each other over nothing. And people are biting at his bait hook, line, and sinker. 'We are not ignorant of his devices.'

The guy I work under has worked in the inner-city community for much longer than me, and he was the only white kid growing up in an all-black community and church. He said that the reaction he saw to the court cases of late (Rodney King, OJ) were very obviously demonically motivated. I am not saying the decisions themselves were right or wrong, but the reactions and ripples that followed.

Like our sister said, the only person you can change is yourself, the rest is up to God. These situations make us get on our knees when we otherwise wouldn't. Again, as Ray Comfort says, it is all spiritual.

Re: Facing a racial issue... - posted by ccchhrrriiisss (), on: 2006/9/9 2:39

Hi Krispy...

I am experiencing a similar situation even as I write. I am now a post-grad student, and I also work full-time at my University. I live on campus in a 24/7 quiet dorm. Students pay quite a bit more to live in this particular dorm, and the rules are supposed to be enforced at all times.

I recently moved into a new room on a lower floor. My next door neighbor is African American and attends school on an athletic scholarship. He is very loud, and constantly plays very sexually explicit music all day long. To make matters worse, his bass speaker is also constantly "thumping" -- which serves to shake things in my room (even at night). His also loud friends come over to visit, and suddenly my room fills with cigarette smoke (which gives me a terrible headache). He never seems to leave for class, but in the few instances that he does, he leaves his music turned up at a high setting.

I have called him several times politely asking him if he could turn down his bass. He gets very upset and hangs up the phone. Sometimes, he even turns the music and bass volume up! Tonight, I called him and asked him to turn it down so that I could sleep. He then angrily asked me, "*Is this a RACE thing, white boy?!?*" He then asked me, "*Why do you hate my culture?*" I explained that this had nothing to do with race, and everything to do with noise. I explained that the dorm is supposed to be a 24/7 quiet hall, and that everyone seems to follow these rules. He laughed and said, "*I suppose that you stop at red lights and stop signs too?*" and promptly hung up on me.

I am concerned that this guy will try to insinuate that my requests are based upon some sort of racial or religious "profiling." I explained to the dorm official that I am concerned only with the noise and smoke -- not the type of music. The Head of Residence explained that the Resident Advisors are afraid of being labeled a "racist" for enforcing the rules on a certain group of minority students. Thus, these students often push the boundaries as far as they can.

Brother, your situation is in my prayers. I request that you keep this situation in your prayers as well.

:-)

Re: to Cris - posted by roadsign (), on: 2006/9/9 7:29

Let's get busy said:

Quote:

-----My conclusion is that it is all spiritual.

If the problem is a spiritual one, then obviously the solution has to be a spiritual one, doesn't it? And who better to offer spiritual remedies than God's own enlightened people! Here's your divine appointment, Chris, for sure!

No doubt, we've all learned (likely the hard way) that we can't soften a hardened heart by trying to be rational. The cement is set quite hard. The sun has gone down just too many times on these people while they were still angry. On top of that, Satan has his own grip on them -- having been given passage via bitterness. It is so sad to see our black fellow citizens assume, not only personal grudges, but grudges on behalf of their entire race -- even going back several generations. That's a LOT of anger! They don't see that they are really stabbing their own toes by holding grudges.

It is so tempting to get angry back at anyone who annoys us, but that would only add fuel to the fireball of rage. The grudge only intensifies with every attempt to fix it. In their minds, it "proves" their viewpoint.

Reading your post Chris's post made me cringe. I would hate to be in your shoes -- it would drive me absolutely crazy -- which is exactly what Mr. Rage wants, of course. Then he can think he has won.

So you don't in anyway want to give him the luxury of thinking he has control of you. No wonder Jesus said, "Turn the other cheek.." and "return good for evil", "Lay down your lives" etc. Doing such things is a spiritual weapon because it douses the fire of fury.

Chris, I wish I could offer a solution, but I can't. I am praying right now that God will ordain some specific opportunities for you to be as Christ to this man, and help break down the barriers. I think that's what he did for Krispy with that black football player. (I wonder how that's been going)

For now, I hope you have a good set of earplugs. You do need your sleep and your sanity. And please keep sharing about this. I will be praying for you and your neighbor.

Diane

Re: - posted by ccchhhrrriiss (), on: 2006/9/9 23:51

Hello...

Thanks for the prayers.

Today, I received a knock on my door. I opened the door to find a young African-American guy at my door. He gave me a big hug and said, "Hey Chris...I've been looking for your dorm room!" I introduced this young man and his family to the Lord several years ago, when he was only about 12 years old. He began attending Church faithfully for a couple of years before he and his family moved out of town. He was visiting some relatives, but he wanted to find me and let me know that he had graduated from high school, received a scholarship to attend UTPA (the University of Texas - Pan American) in the Rio Grande Valley. He also told me that he was now leading the youth group at his local Church.

This young man blessed me a lot. I have been feeling upset because of the situation next door, and this was just the "lifting of my countenance" that I needed. A couple of people in the hall opened their doors -- including the guy that lives next door (and plays the loud music). I'm glad that he opened the door, because I think that it also showed that my issues with his loud music had nothing to do with race at all. In fact, I noticed that he soon closed the door and turned down his music.

The Lord is faithful!

:-)