

Bullying Stops with Me

Preview

No one thinks they're a bully, but what if ending bullying had nothing to do with everyone else and everything to do with me? How can I transform my life so that I become part of the solution instead of the problem?

Praise

We thank God because He died for everyone. He has shown us that everyone is worthy of love and grace. There isn't anyone so bad that Jesus doesn't love them. No one has gone so far that hope and salvation isn't available to them. What about you? God doesn't care how much money you have or the brand of clothes you wear. He doesn't care if you're getting all A's or struggling to get a C. You are loved and adored by God. When Jesus saw you at your worst, He still chose Calvary. You are valuable. You matter.

"But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us" (Romans 5:8, NKJV).

Parable

Have you ever seen someone who was bullied either in person or online? Have you been the victim of bullying? What was your response to that situation? What was the response of others?

Here's a harder question: Have you ever been a bully? Typically, we don't like to think of ourselves this way, and perhaps many of us would say that we've never done it. Yet if we think harder, we may be able to remember times that we laughed at the expense of someone else or excluded someone for no good reason. Have we remained silent even when we knew the right thing to do, thus enabling someone else to be bullied?

We all have the capacity to do what is right or what is wrong, and on the issue of bullying, we must make up our mind to let our voice be heard. "The only thing necessary for the triumph of evil is for good men to do nothing." We cannot afford to be silent. We must show the world the love of God!

Present

If we want to be like Jesus, we must stop following the crowd. The crowd very rarely understood what Jesus was doing. Jesus showed love unconditionally; He showed love when people didn't deserve it. You could always find Jesus befriending the people that society hated, mocked, and rejected. The crowd said to stone the woman who was caught in adultery, but Jesus saved her (John 8:7). The crowd mocked when Mary anointed Jesus with oil, but Jesus accepted her sacrifice (John 12:7-8). Never forget that it was the crowd that chose to release Barabbas, the murderer, and crucify Jesus. If you're truly walking with Jesus, you're rarely going to fit in with the crowd.

If we're to stop bullying and spread the love of Jesus to the world, we must lose the need to fit in. We must intentionally choose to live according to His call and not bow to peer pressure. When we stand up for those in need, the crowd will not accept us, but neither did they accept Jesus. When we befriend the friendless and love those who are "unlovable," the crowd will criticize and mock us, but we are not living for their approval. We are living for the approval of God! The responsibility is on us to go and love those in need of love. Jesus didn't make us ascend to Heaven to save ourselves; He came down to us. We must follow His example.

We also must lose any negative talk about other people. Under the name of "just playing around," many people have been bullied. If we're laughing at someone else's expense and pointing out negative things about them (publicly or privately) we need to stop (Proverbs 6:19). If that is what we are engaging in, we are part of the problem. Remember that God knows every negative thing about us but chooses to give us grace. If we're to be like Jesus, we must choose to act with grace, even when people don't deserve it. Let your speech be used to encourage others and build them up. The crowd often focuses on the negative, but the Christian seeks opportunities to uplift others.

Finally, we need to intentionally make new friends—genuinely befriend new people. Go out of your way to include others and invite them to join you. Get to know as many people as you can; make sure they know you're someone they can talk to, turn to, and count on. Extend the

love of God to everyone that you meet.

Practice

Make a list of people with whom you are connected (perhaps have a class together) but don't know very well. Pray over your list and ask God to guide and help you show His love to these people. Afterward, make intentional efforts to befriend them and get to know them.

Pray

Thank You for loving us unconditionally beyond all our faults and failures. We pray that You will help us to become more like You and to show love to everyone around us. We ask that You give us opportunities to stand up for those in need and the boldness to follow Your call instead of the crowd.

Plus

Are there any people who missed P7 today that are usually there? Is it their first time or are they getting disconnected? Reach out to them and be a true friend. Let them know that they are missed and valued!