

## **It Starts Early**

### **Ready:**

"Do not judge, and you will not be judged. Do not condemn, and you will not be condemned. Forgive, and you will be forgiven."

-Luke 6:37

### **Set**

I am back into coaching again. I'm coaching a finely tuned machine – amazing athletes with the ability to lose focus in three seconds or less. Yes, I'm coaching little league (9-10 year-olds). We have been practicing for several weeks, and it has already started. These little players are starting to say bad things to teammates, are picking on each other, and are hurting each others' feelings before the season even starts. Where does this all come from? Why does it start so early? I only had to look in the mirror for an answer.

As Jesus got His team of disciples together, He began teaching them many things. One of these things was how to treat others. He strongly encouraged them not to judge or criticize or it would come right back. The last part of this teaching was about forgiveness. A forgiving spirit showed that a person had received God's forgiveness. Jesus knew back then that these things would be hard for people to follow. Not much has changed, huh?

Why does it start so young with our children today? Where do they learn to have a critical spirit? Where do they learn to have a judgmental attitude? Where do they see an unforgiving heart? Probably in their own living rooms. I am guilty as charged. I have caught myself recently being critical of work, my wife, my church, etc. I have been reminded by God's grace that an unforgiving, critical, judgmental spirit is just flat wrong! I don't mean to do it, but it happens. I take my eyes off the cross for a moment and sin creeps slowly in. Why did Jesus tell His followers to follow His example? Because He did it right ALL the time. My job now as a father, husband, worker and coach, is to guard my heart, watch my tongue, deny myself and follow the cross of Christ. Only in Him and through Him can we succeed in life. My example needs to model His example in all I do. I hope my new little team can see the Jesus in me this summer, win or lose!

### **Go**

1. Do you struggle with any of these issues?
2. Do you have an unforgiving heart?
3. Today, how can you start to live a life modeled after Christ?

### **Workout**

Psalm 79:12  
Mark 4:24

### **Overtime**

"Lord, help me see people as You see them. May I hold my tongue before I speak, and may You grant me the grace to forgive as You have forgiven me. In the name of Jesus, I pray. Amen."

### **Bible Reference:**



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