



Teaching the Playbook

by
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The dictionary defines a sport as, “a physical activity that is governed by a set of rules or customs and often engaged in competitively.” Back in high school, this was my primary argument whenever the debate of whether or not cheerleaders should be considered student athletes came up. I used to get so frustrated with the people that couldn’t see how much hard work and dedication being a part of the cheerleading squad took. We practiced for three hours a day, cheered late night football games even when we had to be at competitions on the other side of town the following morning, not to mention we kept the local chiropractors in business with all of our injuries. What I fail to realize is that a majority of the people that disagree with me, are casually observing from the sideline and are probably never going to see things from my point of view. When they think of cheerleaders they probably just picture a bunch of overly enthusiastic girls with ponytails that are too tight. Unless they have grown up cheerleading like I have, their opinion is going to be based on what they see and what I tell them.

I’ve discovered that a very similar scenario holds true when it comes to my walk with Christ. In Matthew, Jesus commissions his to “go and make disciples of all nations.” As Christians, it can be hard to understand why when you share your faith with someone, they don’t immediately catch on. A lot of us have had the privilege of growing up in a Christian home, or have spent countless hours at Bible studies or youth group. We’ve been immersed in the Gospel for so long that it becomes a huge part of who we are. We often forget the fact that not everyone has had those opportunities, and we are really quick to isolate and pass judgment on those whose actions don’t line up with what we believe. But honestly, how can we expect people who are lost to act like they’ve been found? And how can we expect them to want to know Christ, when from where they stand Christianity looks like a bunch of rules that suck the fun out of everything? Non-believers aren’t ever going to see things from a Christian perspective until someone reaches out and teaches them how to experience Christ’s love for themselves.

I was joking with some of the girls at our Wednesday morning Bible study that, despite having cheered on the sidelines for basketball all through college, I know the rules but I really have no idea how to play. If I were to step out on the court two things would happen; I would be the laughing stock of the school and I would probably foul out within the first five minutes. It’s not enough for me to just see other people play basketball; I need to be coached and put in the hours at practice before I can be expected to be an asset to the team. After Jesus commissioned the disciples to spread his name to all nations, he instructed them to baptize them “in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded.” Simply telling someone about God may be the first step in getting them to understand the basics of Christianity, but until someone shows them the playbook, teaches them the defense, and sets an example, how can they be expected to play the game?