

What Can God's Man Do About Bullying?

Imagine being 6-feet, 5-inches tall and weighing more than 300 pounds. You look like a human tractor capable of plowing holes up the middle for football running backs and protecting quarterbacks from agile defensive lineman.

Now imagine being educated at a place like Stanford University, making you a man with brains and brawn.

At a glance, a man of this stature could never become the target of harassment and bullied to the point of depression and resignation. Yet, Jonathan Martin, an NFL offensive lineman for the Miami Dolphins, recently walked out of the locker-room and perhaps his football career, because of the treatment that afflicted him at the hand of his fellow teammates. I'm glad he did and put bullying into the spotlight because bullying is not just for kids. It's costing people their lives.

After reading this brief blog, I hope you and other God's men will be able to identify bullying at home, school, and at work, and be able to apply some Godly muscle to all parties involved.

I read a recent article about several college-age women who were bullied to death, shamed into suicide after classmates posted illicit photos on social media sites while they were drunk, drugged or both. Young men, disconnected from empathy, abusing unsuspecting women and getting away with it, while the victims try to survive the torment from peers. It's sad, but after learning more about bullying, I believe it's more pervasive than these top news stories.

Bullying starts with gossip, "joking around," sarcastic comments that escalate into verbal and physical threats,

aggression and violent behaviors. Bullying is defined as a form of harassment, purposeful attempt to control another with physical or verbal abuse.

One report said bullying is the most common type of violence in contemporary society. Here are some startling statistics:

- 1 in 3 students, grades 6-10 are affected by bullying
- An estimated 160,000 children miss school every day due to fear of attack or intimidation
- 35 percent of kids have been threatened online
- 40 bullying boys had three or more arrests by 30 years old
- 75 percent of school shootings are linked to bullying
- 64 percent of children don't report it.

What can God's men do about bullying?

Expect it ... always. Regardless of age, we are all vulnerable to bullying tactics. Jesus told us in John 16:33 that "in this world, you will have trouble," so we need to expect it and not be ignorant about it.

Recognize it ... early. Don't condone bullying you see on TV, in a movie or in your life; instead point it out as a teaching example of what not to do. Here's an example:

The other day, while taking my daughter and friends home from school, I heard them chatting about other girls at school, not at all flattering. One of the friends stayed silent. Recognizing the gossiping poison, I had to say something, "I'll bet it's really hard being a girl at your school." The silent friend spoke up sheepishly, "Yes, it is."

Merely identifying this fact brought the conversations to a close.

Endure it ... wisely. Jesus tells us in Luke 6:27-28 "Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse

you, pray for those who mistreat you.” If you see or experience bullying behaviors, the loving thing to do is to pray for the bully, and share God’s love, and don’t repay the slanderous words with bombs of your own. Paul wrote in I Corinthians 4: 12-13 “When we are cursed, we bless; when we are persecuted, we endure it; when we are slandered, we answer kindly.”

And, if unkind words escalate into abusive behaviors that control you or someone else, the compassionate thing to do is report the bully to authorities.

Jesus showed us how to deal with a bully when he was harassed in the desert by Satan. He used scripture to defend himself. We need to know the word, and apply it to the circumstances.

Prevent it ... at home. God’s men must not participate in bullying behaviors at home to control your spouse and/or children. This includes gossiping about others, using sarcastic tones to drive home a point, and definitely using verbal or physical abuse to get your way. We also learn that bullies are born out of rejection, so spend time with your kids, talk with them and hold them with love.

Why would someone bully another? What are they thinking? Feeling?

I believe bullies aren’t thinking, and aren’t feeling at all. Their behaviors are results from a broken male culture and broken families that leave children with low self-esteem, self-hatred and jealous natures. Studies show bullies that are often abused as children experienced social rejection by their fathers.

If they only knew, we all have the most perfect, loving Father in heaven. I hope this message can break through the bullying barriers. But it requires a God’s man to show up in society.

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