

My Trip to the Principal's Office

It was my senior year in High School, and as was my custom, I had arrived early so as to mingle with my friends in the cafeteria before going to class. On this particular morning, my twin brother and I had gotten into a bit of a scuffle on our drive to school. We had a disagreement over who was going to buy gas on the commute home later that day (we shared a vehicle). Our disagreement continued and intensified as we assembled in the cafeteria with our peers. It wasn't long until our classmates were voicing their opinions on who should and shouldn't buy gas. With lines having been drawn, neither one of us were going to budge. We were both poised to win the argument, no matter the cost. My friends stood with me, while his friends stood with him. It wasn't long until a fight pursued. Punches were thrown (none of which landed) and words were said. As my brother and I wrestled to the floor amidst the divided mob, I remember a hand grabbing my back and catapulting my brother and I straight into the principal's office. It was Mr. Cook, our High School football coach. He wasn't what I'd call a physically fit man, but he was surprisingly strong. We were made to sit down with the coach standing directly behind us. We'd never seen the inside of the principal's office before. I was scared! Mr. McKinley (our principal) was known for his disciplinary actions; in particular, his application of the rod of knowledge to the seat of understanding. Sitting there awaiting the final verdict was the longest few moments of my life. Fortunately, because of our "unblemished record," he made us reconcile and promise that we'd both pay a little on gas. I look back on that incident now and think to myself, "Boy, how stupid to have allowed something so insignificant (a few dollars in gas) to come between us!"

Tragically, there will be many folks stand before God in Judgement and answer for the strife they allowed to come between they and a fellow human being. Strife that existed between husbands and wives, parents and children, neighbors, co-workers, and yes, even brethren, will undoubtedly be called into question on that day. Sobering thought, isn't it? That's why it's imperative that we reconcile any differences we might have with fellow human beings while we have opportunity. With eternity in view, we must ask ourselves, "Is the strife between us really worth losing our soul over?" May our attitude be as Abram's, who said to Lot, "Let there be no strife, I pray thee, between me and thee...for we be brethren" (**Gen. 13:8**). And if we find ourselves amidst some strife or disagreement, may we heed the words of Jesus: "...if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath aught against thee; Leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift" (**Mat. 5:23-24**).

Terry R. Townsend