

DRAGON TALES

The Freshness We Need

Do you want to know what makes me angry?

Let me give one trivial thing and one major thing (that have implications for everyone one of us, so, please listen!).

First, the trivial thing...

I love Funyuns, (yes, the delicious, ring-shaped, onion-flavored corn snack brought to us from the wonderful world of Frito-Lay.) They taste amazing and, honestly, if they contained vegetables and fruit then that's probably all I would eat! But what I hate about Funyuns, or any big bag of chips for that matter, is the ultra-anticlimactic moment where you open up the big delicious bag and what do you find? AIR! The bag is only approximately 1/3 of the way filled with Funyuns! You practically have to squint to see the Funyuns at the bottom of the bag! Come on!

OK, so on to something that actually matters. I get angry when I'm driving and people who *don't* know the way think they do and they give me directions. Because what happens is you end up getting even more lost than before! It's maddening! You're left thinking, "Man, I would have been far better off if I just guessed the way to Austin!"

The scary part though, friends, is that we can do this with our faith! We think that "this, that, or the other thing" is true Christianity and so that's the way that we live our lives and aid others in living theirs. Or, we believe that Jesus was all about "this, that, or the other thing" when He wasn't and so now there is more confusion about Jesus than truth. As a youth director, given the responsibility of sharing Jesus this scares me because I know I can create confusion or indoctrination rather than impart truth.

So, what's the solution?

Well, it was only the other day that I re-affirmed in my life what I can do (and maybe what we all can do) to keep ourselves moored to our Lord and His teaching.

The solution sprung from my conversation with one of my "All-Star" girl's small group leaders, Miki Krueger.

Miki, along with Larissa Burch, and Cindy Labhart, weekly facilitate our girl's "D-Group." The D Group (the D stands for Deeper) is for girls in our youth group that are committed to knowing and following Jesus more. While discussing the material, the girls became a tad flustered by what it was saying because it didn't seem to "fit" with what they already "knew." The girls later realized, however, that the teaching was correct it just *seemed* incorrect as it went against what

they thought before really looking at the Bible. Miki, then brilliantly used this as a teaching point that sometimes we need go back and *re-learn* what we think we've already known.

Miki then encouraged the girls to do FRESH reading of the Gospels. She said read them as if you know nothing about Jesus or the Bible. Read them like this is your first time! Read them as a blank slate, simply wanting to know and understand Jesus.

Thanks to Miki and the girls, a fire has now also been lit in me to really study Jesus. To look at Him in a fresh, objective way. Maybe some of you would like to join me in this study as well. Just take a chapter a day. It could be fun. We could do cool handshakes and that would be the sign that we are a part of this ultra-cool "reading movement." Ha-ha!

Anyway, I'm starting with Mark and, honestly, so far I am loving it. I mean it's as if I'm studying Jesus for the first time...again!

In closing, please don't think that I'm doing this reading so that "I can have a perfect understanding of our Faith." That will never happen. I'm simply doing it for my personal walk with God and that I would be able to more faithfully and accurately point students to Jesus. The real Jesus and *not* the Jesus that I've, perhaps, just made up.

Thanks for listening.

Youth Prayer Focus: Pray that students encounter who Jesus really is this summer. Pray that in my strengths and weaknesses I would be able to point students to Christ and His love. Pray that our Summer Retreat on July 23-25 is a BLAST and that students either take a first step in knowing God or a powerful *next* step in knowing and following Him more.