

YOUTH SUNDAY SCHOOL DEVOTION ~ MISTAKEN IDENTITY OR RACISM?

KEY VERSE:

“My friends, as believers in our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory, you must never treat people in different ways according to their outward appearance” (James 2:1)

ILLUSTRATION:

Alberto was a young Hispanic man who was spending the summer working as an intern at the city hall in Los Angeles. He was an honor student and an outstanding athlete as well as a leader in his school.

One day while Alberto was walking home from work, a police car sped up to him and the police jumped out and tackled him. The police read him his rights and then arrested him for robbing a nearby liquor store. It wasn't until Alberto was brought to the police station that he was able to prove he was not the person they were looking for.

When the white police officer realized that he had made a mistake, he just shrugged and said “ Oh well, most Chicanos find themselves in trouble with the law at some time in their life. I guess it just wasn't your turn this time.”

Alberto was furious.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. How would you feel if you had been Alberto? What would you have done if you were in his situation?
2. Were the police justified in their treatment of Alberto given the fact that he seemed to fit the description of the robber? Why or why not?
3. Have you, or someone you know, had a similar experience? What was your reaction? How did it make you feel about yourself?
4. Have you ever made a similar mistake about someone? Have you ever judged someone by their race, ethnic background, looks, economic status or other criteria, rather than as an individual? What were the results of your misjudgment?
5. What can be done to avoid such incidents, or are such misunderstandings inevitable? What can you personally do to try to avoid misunderstanding another person on the basis of external aspects, rather than as an individual?

ADDITIONAL SCRIPTURES:

Leviticus 19:1

1 Samuel 16:7

Esther 3:8-15

Romans 10:12

James 2:8-9