

Call Behind the Plate

During an afternoon baseball game when American League umpire Bill Guthrie was working behind the plate, the catcher for the visiting team repeatedly protested his calls.

According to a story that appeared in the *St. Louis Post Dispatch*, Guthrie endured this for three innings. But in the fourth inning, when the catcher started to complain, Guthrie stopped him.

“Son,” he said gently, “you’ve been a big help to me calling balls and strikes, and I appreciate it. But I think I’ve got the hang of it now. So I’m going to ask you to go the clubhouse and show them how to take a shower.”

Baseball players and fans will appreciate Guthrie’s tongue-in-cheek – but effective – approach to a chronic complainer.

Are there those in your midst who whine about calls they don’t think are fair? Most organizations have them, whether in a civic club, a school, a governmental agency, a church or a health care facility. Unfortunately, there are some people who spend most of their lives at the complaint counter.

The voicing of concerns with a right attitude, helpful suggestions and even constructive criticisms are appreciated. We grow and develop as a result.

Sometimes, however, those whose specialty seems to be nit-picking or fault finding should be “sent to the showers.”

In the Bible, Job also had been complaining about the calls he didn’t think were fair. In his case, the umpire was God. After listening to Job’s objections, the Lord finally spoke out of a violent storm. God was gentle with Job, but He was also firm and direct. God asked him the kind of questions that bring finite man back to his original size. The patriarch listened, gave up his complaining, and found peace in surrendering to God.

--Beecher Hunter