

## **THE MAKING OF A TAILBACK**

What was it that dramatically changed a high-school football player's life? The late Dr. James W. Moore, senior pastor of St. Luke's United Methodist Church in Houston for 22 years, tells us the answer.

When Moore was in the 10<sup>th</sup> grade, there was a young man on his high-school football team named Larry Hardin. As a junior, Larry was a tailback, but rarely got to play. And even when he did, he didn't do much. His family moved away to another city, "and then the most amazing thing happened," Moore related.

The next year, Larry not only played football at his new high school, he led his team to the district championship, led the state in scoring and rushing, and made a number of high-school All-America teams.

At Christmas, Larry came back to his hometown to visit. "Larry, congratulations! I'm so proud of you," Moore told him. "But how in the world did you do it?"

Larry was quick to answer. "In the old school, the coach always criticized me harshly. He would say, 'Hardin, you are slow, stupid and scared. You'll never amount to anything.' He told me those things so much that I started believing them. But when I got to the new school, the new coach there believed in me, and he encouraged me."

Larry's new coach kept saying, "Larry, without question, you are the greatest football player I have ever coached."

And Larry added, "He told me that so much that I guess I started believing him!"

Moore's story about the transformation of Larry Hardin shows the power of encouragement.

Every leader should understand the miracle-working power of giving someone support, confidence and hope. As in the case with Larry, it goes a long way toward developing the potential that lies within.

*Therefore encourage one another and build one another up (1 Thessalonians 5:11 ESV).*

– Beecher Hunter

