

New Man Story

Rick Horton — “I Want to Be Like Him”

Rick was a Major League Baseball pitcher for the St. Louis Cardinals and the LA Dodgers from 1984 to 1990. While with the Cardinals, he appeared in the 1985 and 1987 World Series and, also, won a World Series ring as a member of the 1988 championship Dodgers. He currently provides color commentary and play-by-play for Fox television broadcasts of the Cardinals. He has also served as the Greater St. Louis Fellowship of Christian Athletes Director since 1993.

Rick’s story of coming to faith is one of conviction influenced by the lives of fellow players early in his professional career. Several team members began attending the players Chapel services. While maintaining friendships with them, Rick resisted their faith and made it a point to make fun of and play practical jokes on them—such as putting beer cans and pornographic magazines in their lockers.

That all worked for a while, until a series of incidents got his attention. The first was one where he was making fun of one of those players (a pastor’s son) from the outfield: when the player turned and sprinted right at him from the infield. Rick braced for a fight when the player stopped in front of him and said: “I just want you to know that God loves you and so do I.”

About a year later, he was was “caught” in a dugout chapel service where he didn’t want to be and didn’t belong. The speaker asked if anyone knew the verse John 3:16. After some silence, the person standing next to him quoted it. That person was the team’s 12 year old bat boy. Rick was humbled by how much that boy knew of something he knew nothing about.

Another teammate gave him a Bible and asked him to read it. Upon reading it, the truth of scripture began to work on him. Finally, a Christian teammate’s demeanor—the way he treated the other players and his family—made such an impression on him, that he determined “I want to be like him”.

In all cases, Rick’s worldly arrogance and pride was knocked down and he was humbled to the point of seeing the difference in the lives of these Christians, wanted what they had, and surrendered his life to Christ. Thank God for their witness and patient love for Rick.

Discussion Questions

1. Do you have any fun, arrogant, proud and mocking friends like Rick (pre-Christ) in your life?
2. Have you written them off? Love and pray for them? Shared your faith with them?
3. How does God reach hard cases like Rick?
4. How can you tell when God is directing you to be His messenger to someone like that?
5. Can you give examples of who that might be now?

Click on the link below to watch Rick’s 7 minute video

<https://vimeo.com/506877318>