

News Story Summary

For the last decade, the National Football League enforced strict rules that governed what players were allowed to do when celebrating in the end zone following a touchdown. End zone celebrations were considered unsportsmanlike conduct and earned the offending player's team a 15-yard penalty. Many sportswriters and some fans viewed the celebration rules as a simple demonstration of authority and legislated behavior. But the League relaxed the celebration rules going into the current season. Things that had previously been against the rules (examples: using the football as a prop, celebrating on the ground, and group celebrations involving other team members) are now allowed under the new rules. Some of the celebration rules remain: a player can't pretend to use a weapon of any kind, taunting the other team is a no-no, and a player can dance but provocative dancing is not allowed.

(For more on this story, search the Internet using the term "NFL celebration rules".)

Focus Attention

To supplement the Focus Attention idea, begin by sharing the news story summary. Then call attention to the "Do's" and "Don'ts" headings displayed on the wall. Point out that some people outside the church might think that Christians are made to follow endless lists of rules simply as a demonstration of authority. Then continue with the step as described in the Focus Attention idea by inviting volunteers to name some do's and don'ts.

Challenge

To supplement Summarize and Challenge, remind the group that some viewed the former celebration rules as a demonstration of authority. Explain that some might view any rule as a demonstration of authority and legislated behavior. Emphasize that God does not call us to follow a code of do's and don'ts, but rather He calls us to live as holy people. Then lead the group to discuss ways of holding each other accountable for being a holy people, as described in Report under the Summarize and Challenge idea.