

PLAYING BY THE RULES

LESSON 138 → 1 Corinthians 10:23-24, 31-33; 1 Timothy 4:13-16;
2 Timothy 3:16-17; 4:1-5; 1 John 2:15-17

Doctrines and guidelines will help us reach Heaven!

WHACK! Diana hit the softball straight over second base. The ball bounced and rolled in the outfield as the team shouted, “Run, Diana! You can make it to third base! Run!” Diana sped away from home plate in the direction of first base. But halfway there she turned. Straight toward second base she charged. Her teammates gasped. What was Diana doing? Quickly she touched second base, sped on to third, then raced toward home plate. The other team shouted, “Throw the ball to first base.” As the first baseman caught the ball, the gym teacher yelled, “OUT!”

Diana's angry teammates gathered around her. “Why did you skip first base?” they demanded. Diana looked at them defesively. “I wanted to make a home run. I couldn't do it if I went all the way to first base, so I skipped it. I think that's a silly rule, anyway. I'm going to tell the gym teacher so.”

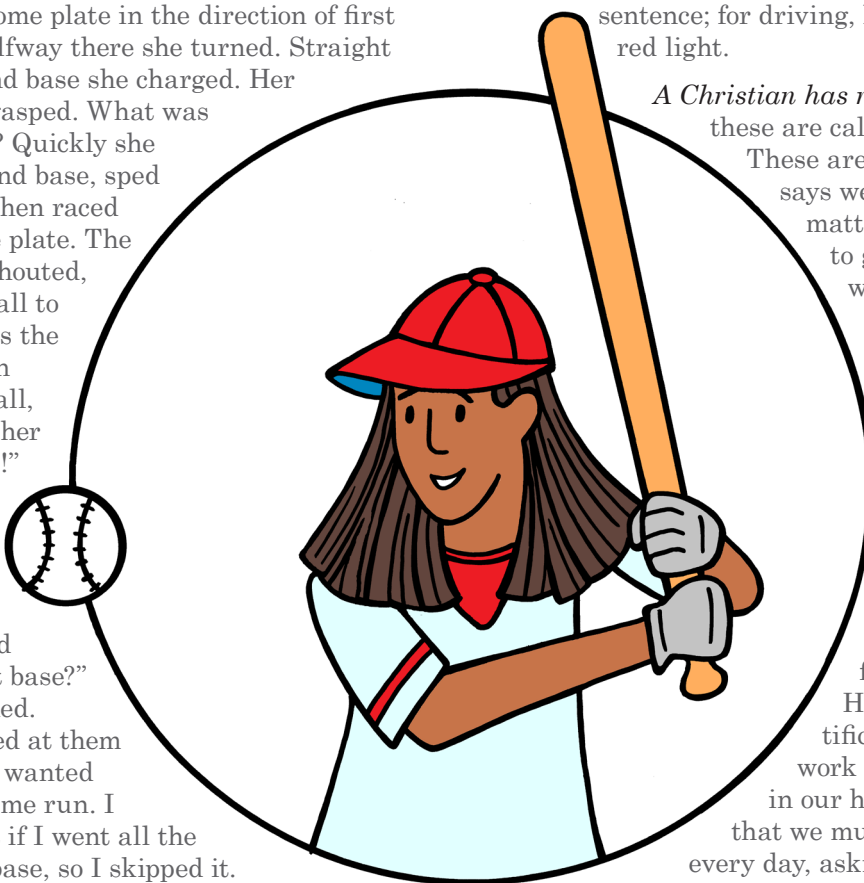
Should Diana's home run have counted even though she broke the rules? Of course not.

We learn rules in every part of our lives. There are rules for games, like touching first base in baseball; for crossing streets, like looking in both directions before you step off the curb; for writing, like putting a period at the end of a sentence; for driving, like stopping at a red light.

A Christian has rules too. Some of these are called doctrines.

These are the things God says we must do, no matter what. In order to go to Heaven, we must repent and believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. After we are saved we must continue to love and serve Him. He also tells us that there are more wonderful experiences for us to receive. Holiness, or sanctification, is a second work that God will do in our hearts. He says that we must follow Him every day, asking Him for help to grow spiritually. Jesus also told

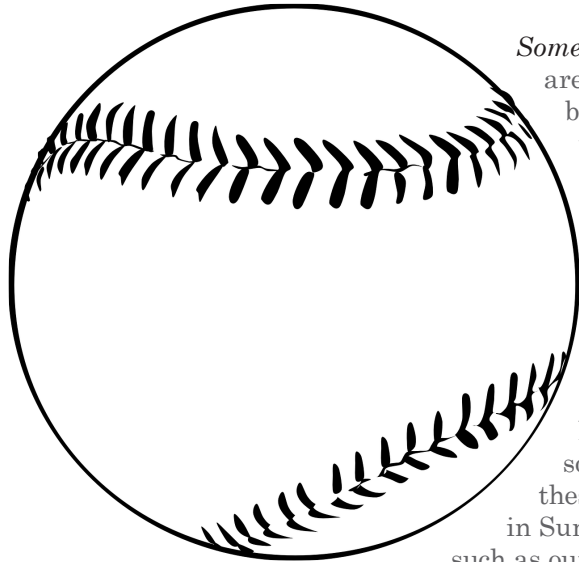
us in the Bible that He wants us to have the special gift of the Holy Spirit—that the Holy Spirit can fill our hearts and give us power to serve Him better.





DOCTRINES ARE THE TEACHINGS OF GOD'S WORD.

If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself. — John 7:17



there is a Heaven.

Some doctrines are not rules but, rather, tell us about God and about the things that the Bible says will happen in the future. We have learned some of these things in Sunday school, such as our belief that

Christians have other kinds of rules besides doctrines. These might be called guidelines. They are the policies that church leaders make to try to help Christians walk more closely to Jesus and be an example to others. Sometimes we forget that these rules are meant for our good. We may say, "Why do I have to do this? Where does it say I can't do that? I don't find any rules like that in the Bible."

The guidelines may not be spelled out word-for-word in the Bible, but they are based on Scripture. Our ministers are given the authority by God to make these rules.

For instance, the Bible says that a Christian should not only be careful of what he does to the inside of his body, but also of how he looks on the outside. We should look and act like a person who loves and serves God. We are told to dress modestly and act in a meek, well-behaved way. Men should have shorter hair and not try to look like women. Women should have longer hair and not try to look like men.

It is true that the Bible does not give a specific style of clothes or say how long is long (hair

length) or how short is short (dress length). In order to help people understand what the Bible says about these things, the leaders make rules so that everyone in the church will know what is expected of him. These rules are the guidelines of the church and are established so there will be unity among those who worship together.

Businesses have rules for their employees. The Army, Navy, and Marines have rules for those who are in their service. We, as Christians, have an even more important service to give. The Lord has said that as we serve Him we should obey or have respect for those who rule over us in the church. When God puts us into a certain church to worship, it is because He knows that church will help us to learn more about Him and teach us how to serve Him better. If we are going to be a part of that church, we need to obey the guidelines and not find fault with the leaders.

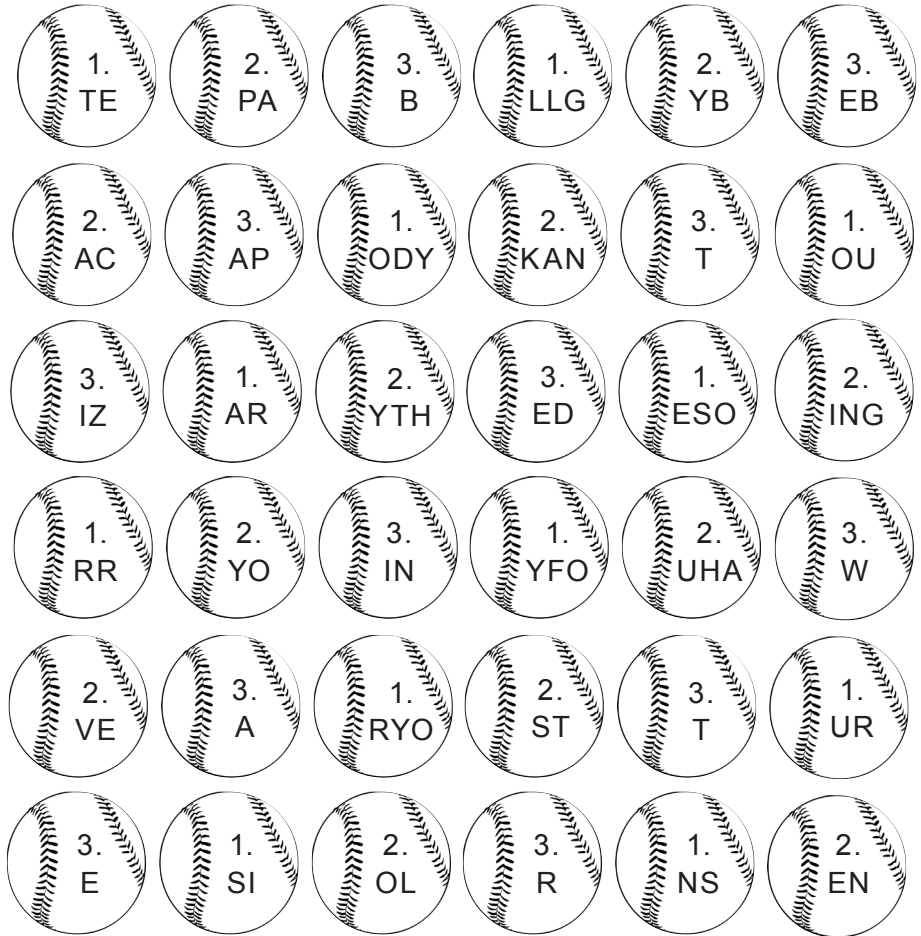
It is our privilege and responsibility to pray for our leaders that they will have wisdom to know what the guidelines of the church should be. Then we can ask God to help us understand and obey the way we should.

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Diana's run couldn't be counted because she didn't obey the rules in the softball game. How much more important it is for us to obey the rules that are designed to help us reach Heaven!

BE A WINNER!

Our *Answer* story shows that it is important to obey rules if you want to be a winner. This puzzle gives three things you should do to be a winner in life. To find out what they are, start with the softballs on the top row and write down the letters from the #1 softballs in the blank spaces by the #1 below. Repeat these steps for the #2 and #3 softballs. God wants you to be a winner! Talk to your teacher to learn more ways to win in life.



1. _____

2. _____

3. _____
