

## **A PERSONAL STATEMENT FROM NATHANIEL JONES**

Former Head Football Coach at St. Augustine High School, New Orleans, LA



As the lyrics say, “God is the God of the hills and of the valleys”, and He knows the hearts of men. I thank Him for the opportunity to have been the Head Coach at St. Augustine High School and hope to have made Him proud of the work I tried to do. My ultimate goal is to live a life for Him and for His glory. I believe being a coach, teacher, and mentor is what God has called me to be in his Kingdom.

On Tuesday, October 1, 2019, I was made aware by an outside source of a video posted on social media showing our players using the “n-word” prior to the John Curtis football game. At the time, I didn't realize that the chant was led by a coach. I was upset that our players would use such language. I was also upset that someone had disregarded Team Rules which do not permit cell phones in the locker room. Moreover, I was upset that someone would violate the sanctity of the locker room and post such a thing on social media. I regret that I didn't take more forceful action to address this behavior.

In no way, shape, or form do I want anyone to believe that I led any chant using the “n-word” or that I was present in the locker room at the time of the incident(s). It is regrettable that it happened, and I am apologetic to those who have been impacted by these recent events, including parents, teachers, students, the alumni, the Josephites, the administration, and the football players.

I did and still do believe that this is a very teachable moment to all involved on how to conduct ourselves, how we use social media, and how we make good decisions. We should always consider the impact of our actions.

I’m speaking out today because I want those of you who do not know me to get a glimpse of who I am and of my character. I am husband to Jaclyn and father of three girls, which I believe is the greatest calling on my life. I also don't take lightly my roles as coach and teacher because coaches often act as father figures to young men under our leadership. I

am not perfect by any means, and oftentimes would share my imperfections with the players in hopes that my transparency would help them to become better men. The conduct and language captured in the video(s) is far from who I am as a husband, father, teacher, coach, and most importantly, as a Christian. I can recall the last time that I used profanity; I was in a KFC drive thru in Monroe, LA on a Friday in 1997. I felt disappointed in myself because two days prior the Lord had convicted me about the use of foul language. This is one example of the types of stories I would share with my players. I wanted them to see a real man in me, one who feared God and who would not just talk about it but live it out. I am a firm believer that our best testimony is the one that we live out each day. The support many in the community have shown me via texts and phone calls confirm the living testimony to which they are witnesses. I've included a few below for your reference:

*"Coach, I just wanna take this time out to say I'm sorry for what happened. It's not fair at all. You're a man of God, integrity, and authority. As a player, you've helped my game go to another level by being more smart and more physical. As an individual, you've helped me look at life in a whole different perspective and always reminded me to never give up. We (the team) are hurting from your absence but, everything will be alright. Love you Coach. P.S. thanks for being on me when I was being disrespectful or not reaching my full potential" (St. Augustine football player)*

*"Good evening coach. We are literally hurt and disappointed with the decision of you no longer coaching the young men. I know that you're a man of GOD and your love for them is enormous and genuine. I just want you to know that I appreciate and am very thankful for all the talks and prayers for \*\*\*\*\* and my family. We love you and won't ever forget you. I know that GOD has a plan for you. You're a great man in a lot of people's eyes." (St. Augustine parent)*

*"Coach, You're most definitely in my family's prayers. My son is broken behind this; you definitely played a big part in his growth. Please keep the Faith!!!" (St. Augustine parent)*

Thanks to each of you who have expressed concern and support. I am truly humbled by your words and actions. My family and I are forever grateful and encouraged by your love. To all the young men of St Augustine, I leave you with this, "Win today, brothers!!!"  
*John 14:6 & Romans 10:9."*

Respectfully,

*Nathaniel S. Jones*

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