

## **Mary Beth Davis/ Given at an IMPACT mtg on May 13<sup>th</sup> 2011**

I would like to tell you a little bit about how IMPACT has “impacted” my life. I’ve been a part of the group now for five years and I have to say that unfortunately, for 3 out of 5 of those years, I spent most meetings, lunches, and other events, very unattached and uninterested with the group. I didn’t look forward to going each month for reasons, which I thought were valid, but later learned, were tainted with my sinful pride and arrogance. Up until a little over a year ago, I continued on with this attitude and even worse, I was perfectly content living this way. But, leave it to God to shake things up right when I least expect it.

I attended an IMPACT meeting In July 2009 begrudgingly. I hadn’t prepared or even prayed for the meeting at all, in fact, it had probably been weeks since I even cracked open my Bible. But when I walked through those doors, I could tell something was going to be different, and it started with worship. The Lord definitely began to work in me during that short time, revealing my sin and how I had allowed my prideful, selfish attitude to affect my view of this group. He reminded me of Hebrews 10:22-25 which says “...let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, with our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water. Let us hold fast to the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who promised is faithful. And let us consider how to stir one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near.” This definitely was not my approach while attending these meetings. It didn’t matter to me if I even missed the meetings. I wasn’t looking for ways to stir others up; I was more concerned with my needs and how they weren’t being met. I am so thankful that God would graciously give me correction and encouragement through those verses and through the prayers of others there that evening.

During our discussion, Tom, our leader for the night, asked all of us what we wanted to get out of IMPACT. Normally, this would’ve been a time where I would’ve tuned out and let someone else answer, however, I felt the Lord encouraging me to share with the group what He had been revealing to me all throughout worship. I expressed how my attitude towards this group and my sin, had greatly impacted my actions, and how none of this was bringing any glory to God. I recognized that I was not a benefit to the group, because I was not an active part of the group. I expressed that I had always wanted to see this group function as a team, linking arms with one another, investing in each other’s lives; yet all this time, I wasn’t willing to do any of the work. It was always everyone else’s fault and not my own. I explained how God quickly revealed that this was only occurring because of MY pride and MY selfishness. I realized that night that, “surprise, surprise” this group isn’t about ME- it’s about God. This group wasn’t important to me, because I had lost sight of what was important to God and not just concerning the group, but my entire walk. I had been making my Christian walk an "extracurricular activity". I was taking God and trying to fit Him into my life when it was convenient for me, hence my irregular walk in the Word, and specifically for that particular evening, my horrible attitude towards going to IMPACT. That

evening, I was reminded that this Christian walk isn't convenient, not by any means. It wasn't convenient for Jesus when he was being flogged, given a crown of thorns, mocked and then nailed to a cross. There was a sacrifice there...an example I am to follow...humility...finding myself at the bottom rung of the ladder, and yet for so long, I felt like I was above it all.

Finally, we closed with prayer. The Lord graciously put another word on my heart. I remember praying from Matthew 10:38-39: "And whoever does not take his cross and follow me is not worthy of me. Whoever finds his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it."

This was an important prayer for me. I needed to be reminded that I must lose my life for the sake of Christ in order to find it. I needed to be reminded to carry my cross at.all.times. This isn't just something reserved for church, caregroup or even IMPACT. This Gospel is supposed to radically affect **every single inch** of my life. There is not one area where Christ is not preeminent.

You're probably thinking...wow...that's a lot to get out of an hour and a half long meeting. But when God has something to say...He says it. And I am so grateful He did. I certainly had no idea this was where God would lead me when I left for that meeting. I haven't forgotten and don't ever want to forget what the Lord did that night; I want to carry it with me, as I continue on applying the eternally relevant and always functional Gospel of Jesus Christ. That night was a HUGE turning point for me. I left that meeting feeling re-energized and super excited about how the Lord would use me in this group for HIS glory. I talked with Daryn about everything that God was doing in my heart shortly after the meeting and expressed my newfound love for the group. He then asked me to consider being a part of the new IMPACT admin team. I can honestly say that was probably the best thing for me as well as a HUGE means of grace.

The major thing that sticks out to me in all of this is that because of the hope I have in Christ, I was able and still am able to draw near to Him, despite my failures. He loves and cares for me enough to correct me when I'm wrong and not only that, He provides heaps of grace and hope for change! I am so glad he used that meeting as tool to convict me of my sin and reveal truth to my heart.

At the end of that night, I was -very- glad I went to IMPACT.