

## **Don't Underestimate Your Impact**

The last two days, my youngest daughter, Grace, and I have driven many miles in order to get her back to her school, where she plays football for the University. Yesterday we drove for ten hours, which created a great opportunity for us to talk one on one and for me to ask some questions I was curious about.

One of the questions I asked was “besides Mom and Dad, who do you think has had the most impact on your life, either as a child or as a young adult?”

After thinking about it for a moment, she pretty quickly said “my middle school teacher, Mrs. Barnes, probably had one of the biggest impacts on my life. She was a great teacher; she was a strong Christian woman and she always encouraged me. She believed in me, even in the times I did not and made me feel like she valued me.” We spent several minutes talking about how important Mrs. Barnes was in her life, along with a few other people she mentioned.

As I was praying and asking the Lord what he wanted me to share with you today, I felt He wanted me to share this conversation I had with my daughter. You see, many of you are teachers, or you are coaches, or you're Nannie's... or you're a parent. You may not have thought about this before or in great depth, but you are uniquely positioned to be a catalyst for change in the lives of every child that comes through your classroom, church, play field or home, both mentally and spiritually. Sometimes we forget the strong positive impact that we have on children that are in our areas of influence. I know I have been guilty of that.

In Titus 2:6-8 NLT Paul is sharing how important it is to set the example for those we are teaching or influencing....

”In the same way, encourage the young men to live wisely. And you yourself must be an example to them by doing good works of every kind. Let everything you do reflect the integrity and seriousness of your teaching. Teach the truth so that your teaching can't be criticized. Then those who oppose us will be ashamed and have nothing bad to say about us.“

Because of your roles at Impact a Life, your church and your community, each of you have at least one child that is looking to you for some sort of direction, likely many more than one child.

Question for you: Are you encouraging them to live wisely? Are you teaching them what it looks like to be a man or woman that follows Jesus Christ?

I challenge each of you to take some time this week to speak words of encouragement over at least one student or child in your community that you see needs encouragement. Choose to check in on them over the next few weeks, to show them that you care and want God's best for them. If you don't know which child to encourage, simply ask God to highlight a child that needs encouragement ... He will.

I pray that through your encouragement, these children will see Jesus in you. That they will feel heard, valued and loved. I suspect that your encouragement will be just the thing to help a few of these children get through this week and coming months.

I really hope that the words I spoke today were an encouragement, but more importantly a great reminder that each of us has a significant role to play when it comes to impacting the lives of the children in our communities for Jesus. If we consistently demonstrate what it looks like to be a follower of Jesus Christ to children in our area of influence, lives will be changed for Him. As lives are changed by the saving grace of Jesus Christ, I truly believe that nations can be changed.

God bless you all and have a wonderful week, friends