

2/17/01 Thursday night was a tremendously special time in the new "Attitudes - a step to REAL success," class we are having for 25 men. It took three weeks have the 'first' class. That was this week and the subject was "failing." WOWOWOWOWOWOW I shared how I had quit nurses' training because I THOUGHT I was going to fail a class - and I couldn't stand to have my father's rejection. (Since I had NEVER heard him give me a compliment - I thought he would reject me for "being a failure.") I wasn't planning to, but my tears started flowing during my sharing. Tissues were passed to me (we were sitting in a large circle) from several of the men, I wiped my eyes and kept sharing. Well...you know what happened. There wasn't a dry eye in the place!! And men who had NEVER shared opened up and shared deep hurts from their past - some for the very first time ever! Needless to say, they are very excited about this class and can't wait until the next time we meet. (Thursday after next because Kairos is next weekend). Afterwards, Bruce and I sat in our car out in the prison's parking lot and exhaled deep long breaths. We both knew we had just experienced an awesome time with God's Holy Spirit using us to touch these dear men's hearts! We are so blessed!! After class many of the men stopped and talked to Bruce - thanking him for such a pertinent subject and sharing more of themselves! Several men came up to me and thanked me for being so transparent --one said he had always respected me, but after hearing me talk, I now went "through the roof," in his estimation. He said I was the first REAL godly woman he has ever met - outside his mother! I thanked him and said that is why I come to prison - so I can be an example of what a godly woman is...to show what God's unconditional love, grace, mercy, and strength, can do in the life of a woman who desires God's perfect will. Another man couldn't get over what he had seen and heard in class - how effortlessly both Bruce and I were able to "get in touch with our feelings" and share succinctly and positively, our story -- providing an example of transparency and making a safe sanctuary for each of the men. He's in a drug rehab program.

They try to teach the men to do what he said we are already doing so very well! He said he envied us. He's tried for years to tell his story but has never felt free to do so - he hasn't found the right way. Another student is a 59 year old educator...who told me he almost didn't take our class because he has the equivalent of a doctorate degree and didn't "need" any more classes - however...the men wouldn't leave him alone and told him he "HAD" to come and be part of our college classes. He was crying during the class as we shared some of our past history....As I was escorting the men from our class back to their yard, he said he couldn't believe that God would provide two people, intellectual peers, IN PRISON, who would understand some of what he has gone through! I'm not suprised ;) Isn't God great? And isn't He in the business of meeting people right where they are to heal their hurts :)

It was a very moving class. One young man works the graveyard shift and is sacrificing a good part of his sleep time two days in a row so he can be part of Bruce's two classes! (Wed. is Colossians - Thurs. is Attitudes) AMAZING!!! Class is held from 4:30 - almost 8. There isn't a break, but they are free to get up when they need to use the rest room or get a drink of water, or just stretch, and they don't even complain!! The men are so afraid they're going to miss something!

I wish all of you could have been there to experience what we saw! These men are level 3 inmates -the run of the mill - some are murderers, kidnappers, rapists - just regular guys who've made horrible choices in the past.... I know, I used too many superlatives...I'm excited --this is real living!!! Please keep praying :)

**Love,
Liz :)**