

New Man Story

Don Mitchell — Impact of an Exemplary Friend

Don Mitchell graduated from the General Motors Institute and retired from GM as Executive Director of Quality for North America following a successful 40 year career there.

From his appearance and peaceful demeanor today, it's hard to imagine Don ever leading anything other than a perfectly wholesome and stable life. However, that wasn't the case. Although he grew up in a loving home, Don became very rebellious in high school. His bad behavior and poor decisions continued into his freshman year at the University of Michigan where he was politely asked not to return for his sophomore year. That's when he enrolled at The GM Institute.

While he worked hard in all his manufacturing assignments at GM and at achieving a successful marriage and family, life wasn't turning out the way he had envisioned and planned. As Don describes it—"I had built my life on things that could be taken away, and they were...every one of them." He ended up divorced, living alone in an apartment in Oklahoma City and asking himself the question, "How did I get here?"

With his life at rock bottom and not knowing where to turn, Don started to become friends with his new boss at the plant in Oklahoma City. He noticed that when crises came up in the plant, his friend would handle them calmly and methodically. This impressed Don and caused him to wonder why he had so much peace in his life? The two eventually became close friends.

One night after work, Don's friend told him that he read the Bible every day. While that information might have been unremarkable to some, it wasn't to Don. He equated the impressive behavior he saw at work with his Bible reading and determined if that worked for his friend, it might work for him. He purchased a Bible the next day.

Not knowing where to begin, Don asked his friend where to start and was told to read the Gospel of John, which he did that night. The next day Don proudly told his friend that he had finished John, but that he didn't understand it. He was told to go back and read it again. After three or four iterations, Don finally understood with his heart what Christ had done for him on the cross. For the first time in his life, there alone in his apartment, he realized that he could be forgiven for all of his past and start life over again...fresh and clean. He told the Lord he was deeply sorry for his mistakes and asked Him to come in and take charge of his life. That night, some forty-two years ago, Don was born again.

Don told his friend what he had done and was told that there were two things he needed to remember now that he had decided to follow Christ—Allow God to plan his life going forward and spend time in the Bible every day. Don took that simple advise to heart and all things truly did become new for him.

Discussion Questions

1. What direction might Don's life had taken had he not observed his boss's behavior at work?
2. What Christian example are you giving to those around you?
3. Why did Don have to read John's Gospel several times before understanding it with his heart?

Click below to watch a 7 minute clip of Don's MGF talk
[**vimeo.com/455506322/56da44ad7d**](https://vimeo.com/455506322/56da44ad7d)