

# SHINE Devotional

## Week 3 – Lesson 1

### Are You a Friend of God?

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Scripture reading Acts 1:1

*“The former treatise have I made, O Theophilus, of all that Jesus began both to do and teach,”*

Today we are going to look at Theophilus, the man who received the Book of Acts written by Luke, *“the beloved physician.”* He has a significant name because it means, *“friend of God.”* We believe that Theophilus was a man who held a public office because in Luke 1, he is referred as *“excellent Theophilus.”* The term *excellent* is used to address those in authority. It is a title of respect. It is interesting that this revered, government figure was a friend of God.

The question we want to ask today is what makes a person a friend of God. Let’s allow Jesus to answer that question.

1. A friend of God is one who has a fearful respect for Him. Jesus said, *“And I say unto you my friends...Fear him, which after he hath killed hath power to cast into hell; yea, I say unto you, Fear him”* (Luke 12:4-5).
2. A friend of God is one who obeys His commands. *“Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you”* (John 15:14).
3. A friend of God is one who believes God and trusts Him only for salvation. James, the Lord’s brother tells us this in James 2:23, *“Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness: and he was called the Friend of God.”*

You can be a friend of God having a fearful respect for Him, obeying His commands, and by placing your trust in Jesus Christ.

When you, as a believer, do these you will SHINE for Him.

# SHINE Devotional

## Week 3 – Lesson 2

### Can I Be an Apostle?

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Scripture reading Acts 1:2

*“Until the day in which he was taken up, after that he through the Holy Ghost had given commandments unto the apostles whom he had chosen:”*

Several years ago, I was at the Clark County Fair with my wife and teenage sons. We were walking through a display area, when both of my sons anxiously ran up to me and asked if I could help them. They were in a discussion with some Mormon missionaries who wanted me to answer their questions. I hesitantly followed them and when I got to their display table, they began to ask me questions. They stated that they believe their church was the true church because their church had apostles. I told them, “Well, we have apostles too.” They told me that they did not realize we had apostles. I said, “Oh yes, Liberty Baptist Church has apostles.” They asked me what the names of our apostles were. I told them our apostles were named Peter, James, John, and the original twelve. They said, “Oh, but they are dead.” I said, “Not according to Jesus.” Jesus said that God is not the God of the dead but of the living.

Jesus picked twelve apostles, one of them was a traitor but was later replaced by another man. Those twelve apostles were chosen according to Acts 1:21-22 to be eye witnesses of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. The word *apostle* means sent one. We cannot be apostles in the sense that those twelve apostles and Paul were, but are all sent by God. God knows exactly who you are, where you live, and where you work. Jesus told the twelve, *“Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit.”* (John 15:16). Just as Christ chose the twelve apostles and then the Apostle Paul to be eye witnesses of His resurrection, He has chosen us and sent us forth to declare the Good News to a world that is in darkness. Though you and I are not eye witnesses to the resurrection of Christ as were the twelve. You and I can testify about what Christ has done in our lives, teach people the truth of God’s Word, and represent Him everywhere we go. When you understand that God has chosen you and sent you forth and you do what God has called you to do, you will SHINE.



# SHINE Devotional

## Week 3 – Lesson 3

### Everyone Is Different

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Scripture reading Matthew 10:2-4

*“Now the names of the twelve apostles are these; The first, Simon, who is called Peter, and Andrew his brother; James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother; Philip, and Bartholomew; Thomas, and Matthew the publican; James the son of Alphaeus, and Lebbaeus, whose surname was Thaddaeus; Simon the Canaanite, and Judas Iscariot, who also betrayed him.”*

Have you ever thought about how different each of these apostles were? They all came from different backgrounds. They all had different jobs. The only one we know for sure was married was Peter. Peter was a big fisherman. Simon was the zealot one who was going to fight the Roman Empire. Matthew was a tax collector, probably a man of means. James and John were called the sons of thunder and were very ambitious. Jesus had to rebuke them from time to time. Bartholomew, who was also called Nathanael, was obviously an Old Testament scholar. When he heard that Jesus was from Nazareth, he thought, “It can’t be. The Messiah is supposed to come from Bethlehem.” Thomas, being very analytical, was called the doubter because he questioned whether or not Jesus had really risen from the dead. Andrew was a soul winner. He was the one who brought Peter to the Lord Jesus Christ. We know very little about Thaddeus. He was probably very quiet and attentive. All of these men had different personalities, different likes and dislikes, yet, God called each and every one of them.

They are referred to as the foundation of the local church. How can these men with such different backgrounds be united together to present the Gospel? Three things come to mind:

1. They all believed the same thing. Jesus was God and the only way to salvation is through Him.
2. They all prayed the same prayer (Luke 11:1-13).
3. They all obeyed the same command. They were to love one another (John 13:35) and they were to spread the Gospel (Mark 14:15).

Whenever a local church is unified in these three areas that church will SHINE.



# SHINE Devotional

## Week 3 – Lesson 4

### God Can Use You

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Scripture reading 1 Corinthians 15:9

*“For I am the least of the apostles, that am not meet to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God.”*

I am so glad that God uses imperfect people. If God called you and you received Him as your Lord, Savior, and God, you are a child of God and He has a plan and purpose for your life. I am always amazed when I look at the diversity in the lives of the apostles. The Scripture is clear that these men were not perfect. Paul said he was the least of the apostles. He said he was not even fit to be called an apostle because he had persecuted Christ. He was so stubborn that Christ had to meet him on the road to Damascus personally, knock him down, and explain to him who He was. Yet, God chose to use him. Peter was so lifted up with pride that he tried several times in the life of Christ to correct the teachings of Jesus. Could you imagine someone with that audacity? John and James were so hot headed that they wanted to call down fire from heaven to consume someone that didn't do it exactly the way they did it. They were so ambitious that they wanted to sit at the right and left hand of Jesus in His kingdom. Judas betrayed Christ. Peter denied Christ. Thomas doubted Christ. All of them fled for their lives and left Christ alone in the garden, but God used each one of them in a powerful way.

As previously I stated, we are not apostles as they were. My point is very simple if God can use them, God can use you and me. God knows where you work, there are people at your work who God wants to reach. God knows where you shop, there are people where you shop who God wants to reach. God knows where you live, there are people in your neighborhood who God wants to reach. God knows where you go to school, there are people in your school who He wants to reach. He wants to reach them through you. You very simply have to be willing to SHINE. You may not be called to be a preacher or teacher. You may never have your name up in lights, but God has a plan and purpose for you. Wherever you are, whatever you do, wherever you live or work, God wants to use you to SHINE.

# SHINE Devotional

## Week 3 – Lesson 5

### The Resurrection Verified

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Scripture reading Acts 1:3

*“To whom also he shewed himself alive after his passion by many infallible proofs, being seen of them forty days, and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God:”*

The thing that distinguishes Christianity from any mere religion on this earth is that our God became a Man. He lived among us for thirty-three and a half years. Then He died in our place to pay for our sin. That was the greatest expression of love the world has ever seen, but that is not the end of the story. Three days later, Jesus rose from the dead, proving He was God. We know this is true because as our passage today states, *“he shewed himself alive after his passion by many infallible proofs.”* The Apostle Paul reiterates this truth when he says, *“For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures: And that he was seen of Cephas, then of the twelve: After that, he was seen of above five hundred brethren at once; of whom the greater part remain unto this present, but some are fallen asleep. After that, he was seen of James; then of all the apostles. And last of all he was seen of me also, as of one born out of due time”* (1 Corinthians 15:3-8). Obviously, Jesus was seen by hundreds of eye witnesses and five hundred at one time. In a court of law you only need one eye witness to nail down a conviction for a crime. These eye witnesses were so convinced that they were willing to die for the testimony of Jesus Christ.

After His resurrection, Jesus ate, walked, talked, and gave commands to His disciples. This was not a spiritual resurrection; it was a complete physical resurrection. The apostles were sent to share that truth with the world and so are you and I. When you become convinced of His resurrection and power and tell others about Him, you, as a believer, will SHINE.



# SHINE Devotional

## Week 3 – Lesson 6

### The Promise

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Scripture reading Acts 1:4-5

*“And, being assembled together with them, commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which, saith he, ye have heard of me. For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence.”*

The last words that Jesus spoke on the cross were *“into thy hands I commend my spirit”* (Luke 23:46). This is very significant and very deliberate. Before He left, Jesus had promised the disciples in John 16, that He was going to ascend to the Father. When He did, He would send His Holy Spirit to baptize or fill each believer with His Spirit. When Jesus came into the world, He was the light of the world. When He left He took that light with Him but He promised He would send that Light through the Person of the Holy Spirit.

There is no way on our own that we can shine. You and I are flawed individuals. We are sinners. Paul said, *“For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not”* (Romans 7:18). It is not just hard to live the Christian life; it is humanly impossible. So, how can I shine for Jesus? The answer is through the power of the Holy Spirit working through you, you can be the light God wants you to be. Jesus knew you could not live the Christian life on your own. At His death, He surrendered His Spirit to God the Father. He died, rose from the dead, and went back to the right hand of God the Father. When you called on Jesus to save you, He asked the Father to send the Holy Spirit into your life. The Holy Spirit came into your life, made your dead spirit come to life, and now He lives inside of you through the Holy Spirit.

You can SHINE for Jesus when you surrender to the control of His Holy Spirit which lives inside of every believer. This is the fulfillment of the promise made by the Old Testament prophet, Joel, by John, and by the Lord Jesus Christ Himself. When you surrender to the control of His Holy Spirit, you will SHINE.