

SHINE Devotional

Week 8 – Lesson 1



Gladly Receive the Word

Scripture reading Acts 2:41

“Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls.”

In December 1977, Anna and I had been married a little over seven months. Anna suddenly began to get sick every time we ate. When we couldn't figure out what the problem was and finally we made an appointment with a doctor friend of ours. After giving her a thorough examination, he sat us both down in his office and explained that Anna was suffering from a condition that would not go away for nine months. When he said that, I had no idea what he was talking about. Then, it dawned on me that Anna was pregnant with our first child. I got a smile on my face that I could not wipe away. We had gone into the doctor's office expecting bad news and were given good news. That good news brought joy into my life and a smile on my face. We asked the doctor exactly what we should and shouldn't do. He gave us specific instructions, and we **gladly received** his instructions because we wanted to do what was best for Anna and our new baby.

In Acts 2, We read the record of the first converts in the New Testament church. The Bible says about these three thousand souls that they **gladly received His Word**. What did they do upon receiving the Word?

1. They got saved.
2. They received instruction about the church.
3. They were baptized into the church.
4. They became members of the church.
5. They continued in the teaching of the church.

God wants every believer to SHINE. The more you are activity involved in your church and **gladly receive** His Word, you will SHINE.

SHINE Devotional

Week 8 – Lesson 2



Is Church Membership Important

Scripture reading Acts 2:41 & 47

“Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls....Praising God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved.”

Membership in a local church is so important that God emphasizes it twice in this anointed meeting of the first local church. The first three thousand people who got saved were baptized into church membership. Then as others got saved, they were added to the church the same way. God established the local church as a support group for His sons and daughters. When you got saved, you were born into the family of God. As a member of His family, He wants you to be part of a local church. Why?

1. The local church is where the Gospel is preached. (Read the message Peter preached in Acts 2)
2. The local church is a place of fellowship for believers.
3. The local church is a place of encouragement for believers (Hebrews 10:24-25).
4. God has given pastors and teachers to the local church to bring Christians to maturity (Ephesians 4:11-12).
5. The local church is where we observe the ordinances that God has given, baptism and the Lord’s Supper.
6. Every member in the local church has been gifted, and you need the help of your brothers and sisters in Christ (1 Corinthians 12 & Romans 12).

Every New Testament book written by the Apostle Paul, except for Philemon, was written to a local church or to the pastor of a local church. Obviously, God thinks going to church and membership in a local church is important.

If you are a believer God wants you to be in a local church and be heavily involved in a local church. When you are, you, as a believer, will SHINE.

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Week 8 – Lesson 3

The Apostles Doctrine



Scripture reading Acts 2:42

“And they continued stedfastly in the apostles’ doctrine...”

The first purpose of the church meeting together should be the teaching of the Apostles’ doctrine. In Ephesians, we find the foundation of the local church is *“...built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone;”* (Ephesians 2:20). If a local church is to be strong and make an impact in its community for the glory of Jesus Christ, it must be rooted and grounded in the doctrine of the Apostles. This doctrine includes Jesus Christ’s virgin birth, life, death, burial, resurrection, deity, humanity, substitutionary death, salvation by grace through faith, the eternal judgement of the lost, and the eternal joy of the saved.

When you attend church, you do not attend church to get a preacher’s opinion. You should attend church to hear the preaching and teaching of God’s Word is. The New Testament referred to as the Apostles’ doctrine was given to us by the apostles. It is God’s Word that tells us how to be saved. It is God’s Word that teaches us how to live. It is God’s Word that teaches us the importance of the local church. It is God’s Word that teaches us about baptism and the Lord’s Supper. If we are going to be faithful to do what God wants us to do, we must be faithful to study His Word. God has given New Testament believers the local church and Bible teachers within the local church to help them understand and apply the Apostles’ doctrine to their lives.

When looking for a local church, look for one that emphasizes the teaching of the Word of God. Then, you, as a believer, will SHINE.

SHINE Devotional

Week 8 – Lesson 4

Fellowship



Scripture reading Acts 2:42 & 46

“And they continued stedfastly in...fellowship.... And they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart,”

Any believer that is going to grow in Christ, needs to have the fellowship of believers. When our church was two years old, there was a man who was attending who had the gift of giving. He knew how to make money and he was very generous in his giving to the local church. One day, he surprised me by telling me he was going to attend another church. I asked him why. His response was quite shocking. He said, “I believe that I give more to this church than anybody else in this church. I noticed when I tithe that the offering will double from the previous week.” He then went on to say he did not want the church to be dependent upon him and so he was going to go to another church. I was so shocked at what he said I did not know how to respond. I later thought, what if everyone who had a dominate spiritual gift left their local church because they didn’t want the church to be dependent upon their gift. I, for example, was and am the primary teacher of my church. What if I decided that I didn’t want the church to depend on me, so I stopped coming Sunday morning, Sunday evening, and Wednesday evening. That would be ridiculous, because God has given me the gift of preaching to use to benefit His church. If I didn’t come, I wouldn’t preach. Fellowship is bringing together the diversity of gifts that God has given us and using those gifts to build one another up, whether by preaching, teaching, giving, exhorting, or mercy showing. Fellowship is coming together, encouraging one another to do what God wants us to do. No one is more important than anyone else. The ultimate goal is the advancement of the team or in this case the local church.

We all need fellowship. God tells us in these Scriptures that fellowship is one of the primary reasons He established the church. I encourage you, as the writer of Hebrews did, to not forsake the assembly of yourselves together. You may not think you need to fellowship, but others need your fellowship and your gift. When you fellowship with other believers, iron will sharpen iron and you will SHINE.

SHINE Devotional

Week 8 – Lesson 5



Breaking Bread – the Lord’s Supper

Scripture reading Acts 2:42 & 1 Corinthians 11:23-26

“And they continued stedfastly...in breaking of bread...” “For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, that the Lord Jesus the same night in which he was betrayed took bread: And when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, Take, eat: this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me. After the same manner also he took the cup, when he had supped, saying, this cup is the new testament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me....”

In Acts 2, Luke tells us the early church met together to “break bread,” this expression could mean they met together to eat or to partake of the Lord’s Supper. I personally believe that this refers to partaking of the Lord’s Supper. Christ does not want you or me as believers to forget what He did for us. The night before He was taken to be crucified, He broke bread with His disciples and explained that the broken bread was a symbol of His broken body. His body would be placed on a tree and nails would be driven through His feet and hands. His body would be broken by a crown of thorns that would be placed on then driven by a rod into His head. His body would be broken as they pierced His side with a Roman spear. His body would be beaten and ripped apart by a cat of nine tails when the Roman soldiers scourged Him. Jesus wants us to remember His body was broken.

Jesus’ body was broken, and His blood was shed so that our sins could be paid for by Him on the cross. The early church remained close to Christ because they were regularly reminded of what He did so that they could have eternal life. As a believer, one reason God gave you the local church is so that you can remember the Lord’s Supper, and there-by remember what He did by allowing His body to be broken and His blood to be shed. I encourage you to find out when your church serves the Lord’s Supper and make sure you attend. When taking the Lord’s Supper in a local church, it unites and purifies the church as the church remembers what the Saviour did so that it could be redeemed. When you, as a believer, partake of the Lord’s Supper at your local church, you, as a believer, will SHINE.

SHINE Devotional

Week 8 – Lesson 6



Prayers That Change the World

Scripture reading Acts 2:42 & 4:31

“And they continued steadfastly...in prayers. And when they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together; and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spake the word of God with boldness.”

Prayer is powerful. After a ten-day prayer meeting in Acts 1, the Holy Spirit fell at Pentecost and the world was changed forever. When an unbeliever recognizes that he is a sinner, calls on Jesus in prayer, and asks for the gift of eternal life, his life is changed forever. When the blind man cried out and prayed to Jesus to give him sight, he received it in answer to prayer and his life was changed.

Prayer is communication with the most powerful Being in the universe. Prayer is our access to the throne room of God. Prayer lifts you up from the physical realm and places you in the center of spiritual reality. Paul tells us that we are to take on the whole armor of God found in Ephesians 6 and then enter into prayer. Through prayer, we acknowledge our belief in a sovereign God. By prayer, we acknowledge our dependence on Him for all our needs. In prayer, we express our faith in His power. When we pray publicly, we acknowledge before the world that we believe our God can meet every need we have. The word *prayer* means to ask. Asking is not powerful, but asking the right person can change everything. The Bible tells us that the early church met together to pray. Corporate prayer is powerful. It communicates the unity of the believers and God honors that. The early church prayed together, and through their prayer God changed the world. As a Christian, I encourage you to unite with your brothers and sisters in your church for prayer. God will use your church to impact your world as you pray together. When you do, you will SHINE.