

# SHINE Devotional

## Week 17 – Lesson 1



### God Is the One Behind the Crisis

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Scripture reading Acts 6:1

*“And in those days, when the number of the disciples was multiplied, there arose a murmuring of the Grecians against the Hebrews, because their widows were neglected in the daily ministrations.”*

Things were going very well in the New Testament church and Satan hated it all. When God is working Satan wants to divide and destabilize His church. Today, we live in a time of crisis. We have a medical pandemic, social upheaval, evil men and women who are trying to push an ungodly agenda, and our nation is in political and financial crisis. Who is to blame? There are many people who point their finger at China. Democrats point their fingers at President Trump. Others point their fingers at Democrats. The fact is the one that is in control of this entire situation is God almighty. As Christians, we need to recognize this truth.

Nothing happens on planet earth that God does not allow. In the Old Testament God allowed a wicked king, Nebuchadnezzar, to invade and destroy the nation of Israel to fulfill His promised judgement. Was Nebuchadnezzar wicked? Yes. Did God use him? Yes. God used a wicked king to bring the nation of Israel to a point of repentance. In the New Testament, God used a spineless governor named Pilate to condemn our innocent Saviour to death, so that we, through His death, would have eternal life. Was Pilate wicked? Yes. Did God use him? Yes. Was God’s plan fulfilled? Yes. My point is that God is behind every crisis, and He will use crisis to bring glory to Himself. He will use this present crisis in our time to bring glory to His name and advance His kingdom. *“And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are called according to his purpose”* (Romans 8:28). Some have questioned the negative effect that this present crisis will have on the local church. Jesus told Peter, *“...upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it”* (Matthew 16:18). I do not know exactly what God is doing in this present crisis. The disciples did not understand totally what God was doing in Acts 6. I can tell you that Jesus was building something there. Jesus has a work He wants accomplished and He will accomplish it. The church that realizes that God is in control is the church that will SHINE.

# SHINE Devotional

## Week 17 – Lesson 2



### God Doesn't Like Complaining

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Scripture reading Acts 6:1

*"...there arose a murmuring of the Grecians against the Hebrews..."*

There is nothing more unbecoming to a Christian than an unthankful heart and a whining spirit. In our story today, one group of widows began to murmur, or whine and complain, because they were not getting what they thought they deserved. According to our theology, all anyone of us deserve is hell. That is why Jesus came. Jesus came to suffer and die to pay the penalty of our sin so that you and I would not get what we deserve. No matter happens to us on this planet, when we die, we get to spend eternity with God in heaven. We are joined heirs with Jesus Christ and children of the most high God. We have no reason to complain. The Bible teaches us that God hates complaining. *"And when the people complained, it displeased the Lord: and the Lord heard it; and his anger was kindled; and the fire of the Lord burnt among them, and consumed them that were in the uttermost parts of the camp"* (Numbers 11:1). In this story, the children of Israel were complaining about the fact that God wasn't acting in the way they expected Him to act. God has a tendency to interrupt our plans. God does things His way and not our way. When we face unpleasant circumstances in our life, God does not want us to whine or complain. He wants us to seek His face and turn from our wicked way (2 Chronicles 7:14). Then we should pray for power and boldness to get through the circumstance with His grace, and God will hear that prayer.

In Acts 6, there may have been a legitimate need, but the response to that need was inappropriate. They should have approached the apostles with the problem, asked God to take care of the problem, and trusted God to resolve it. When Jesus faced the crisis in the garden, the Bible tells us He went to God the Father and asked for power to be able to make it to the cross. The answer to that prayer, the Bible says, *"And there appeared an angel unto him from heaven, strengthening him."* (Luke 22:43). When the disciples' lives were threatened, they went back to their company and prayed together for boldness and power to stand for truth amid a trying situation. That is how we are to respond. The believer that recognizes that God is in control of every crisis, refuses to complain, and seeks God, will be a believer that SHINES.

# SHINE Devotional

## Week 17 – Lesson 3



### God Wants His Work to be Organized for Ministry

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Scripture reading Acts 6:3

*“Wherefore, brethren, look ye out among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business.”*

Our God is a God of order. That is evident by looking at nature. In Genesis 1, we see how God systematically created the heavens and the earth. God is a God of order. When God delivered the children of Israel from Egypt, He gave specific commands to Moses about how to worship Him, how to build a tabernacle, and what to do to take the land of Canaan. Joshua followed those orders and successfully conquered the land of Israel many years later.

God has a plan for His New Testament church as well. In Acts 6, God caused a crisis so that He could direct His people to organize His church. God wants His people to be fed. In one of the last conversations that Jesus would have with Peter, He said, *“Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me more than these? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my lambs... Feed my sheep...Feed my sheep”* (John 21:15-17). God wants His servants to feed His sheep. He also wants His shepherds to manage His affairs. Peter wrote to younger preachers and said, *“Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind”* (1 Peter 5:12). God wants His flock fed. God wants His affairs managed. In this situation, God wanted the widows taken care of. Today, God wants His people to be well served.

God used the crisis in Peter’s day to cause the apostles to become more effective for Him and organize the first deacons to serve in the church. When this happened, the number of disciples were multiplied. We need to allow God to use our present circumstances to show us areas where we need to organize our individual lives, the lives of our family, and the life of our church so that we may be more effective for Him. When we do, we will SHINE.

# SHINE Devotional

## Week 17 – Lesson 4



### Learning to Delegate

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Scripture reading Acts 6:2 & 4

*“Then the twelve called the multitude of the disciples unto them, and said, It is not reason that we should leave the word of God, and serve tables.”  
“But we will give ourselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the word.”*

The first New Testament church was firmly established in the teaching and the preaching of the apostles. This took a total commitment of their time. Yet, they were surrounded by new converts who had needs, and when division arose amongst the people, they had no choice but to delegate some key tasks to others. It is a fact that God calls different people to different tasks. The apostles were to study the Word and pray. The people were instructed to select men they trusted to take care of other needs. One role was not more important than the other. They were just different tasks. God enables people with different abilities. David said, *“For a day in thy courts is better than a thousand. I had rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God, than to dwell in the tents of wickedness”* (Psalm 84:10). Jesus washed the feet of the disciples as an example in John 13:5-6. He did not consider any task done for God menial. *“For even the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many”* (Mark 10:45).

How has God gifted you? What abilities has He given you? When we think of the mission field, we often think of a man going someplace and preaching to people in a foreign land, building churches and schools. Yet, not every missionary is a preacher. Not every missionary is a teacher. There are people who go to the mission field to fly missionaries from one place to another. There are people who go to the mission field to build mission compounds. There are people who go to the mission field and work in medical facilities. Every ministry needs support staff. People who work behind the scenes to accomplish the work of God. The article you are reading right now was typed and edited by a dedicated lady in our church named April. If she is not doing her job, I cannot effectively do mine. Learning to delegate is a very important aspect of ministry. When you recognize that every task is important to God and that God calls different people to do different tasks, then you, as a believer, will accomplish the tasks that God wants you to accomplish and you will SHINE.

# SHINE Devotional

## Week 17 – Lesson 5



### God Wants Men to Serve the Church

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Scripture reading Acts 6:5

*“And the saying pleased the whole multitude: and they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Ghost, and Philip, and Prochorus, and Nicanor, and Timon, and Parmenas, and Nicolas a proselyte of Antioch: Whom they set before the apostles: and when they had prayed, they laid their hands on them.”*

In Acts 2, God’s Word is clear that both sons and daughters of God are to preach. However, it is also clear in Scripture that God wants men to serve in the leadership roles in the church. Jesus selected twelve men, not six men, three women, and three teenagers. In this passage of Scripture, the disciples instructed the people of the church to select seven men who were to be appointed by the apostles. They were selected by the church and appointed to leadership by the apostles themselves.

I believe this past December, God led the pastor’s of our church to establish our prayer group ministry. God knew what He was doing. He knew this time of separation was going to take place. We needed to have our church organized into small prayer groups, so God gave us forty prayer group leaders to fulfill a very important role. As we head into the future of our church, I believe that God is going to use these small groups to allow us to stay connected and meet individual needs that we could not have met without them. God has always worked in small groups. Even Moses, while leading the children of Israel out of Egypt, was led of God to divide the entire nation into small groups. *“So I took the chief of your tribes, wise men, and known, and made them heads over you, captains over thousands, and captains over hundreds, and captains over fifties, and captains over tens, and officers among your tribes”* (Deuteronomy 1:15).

God wants to use men to lead to others within the church. God established Adam as the head of his home. God wants you as a man to step up to that position of leadership. What is it that God wants you to do? What has He made you fit to accomplish? When you determine that you are going to step up to the plate and be the leader God wants you to be, then you, as a believer, will SHINE.

# SHINE Devotional

## Week 17 – Lesson 6



### Qualifications for Leadership

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Scripture reading Acts 6:3 & 5

*“Wherefore, brethren, look ye out among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business.” “And the saying pleased the whole multitude: and they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Ghost...”*

God has always had qualifications for those who lead in His church and those who serve in His church. When we began Liberty Baptist Church forty-two years ago, our church was only a couple of months old when we decided that we needed to have individual Sunday school classes. In our services, I asked for a show of hands for people who were willing to help us teach children’s classes and several people raised their hands. That week I put together a list of qualifications for teaching that I thought any reasonable Christian would agree with. We had our very first church meeting to go through the list of qualifications. Frankly, as a new pastor I was quite shocked when after this first teacher meeting, I was approached by a very nice young mother and asked why I had such “legalistic standards” for Sunday school teachers!

It is important that we understand that when we serve in the local church, we serve as representatives of God. That is why the apostles set forth the qualifications for these first servants in a local church. What were those qualifications?

1. They had to be of honest report. Honest report means that they had to have a good reputation with those outside the church as well as those inside the church.
2. They had to be full of the Holy Ghost and display the characteristics of the Holy Spirit. “[L]ove, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, Meekness, temperance” (Galatians 5:22-23).
3. They had to have wisdom, which is the ability to see things from God’s point of view.
4. They had to be men that knew how to manage.

The Bible does not say that those who serve must be perfect. Instead, the indication is that they seek God and His will above their own. When a believer seeks to honor God by serving others, he will meet God’s qualifications and he will SHINE.