

# SHINE Devotional

## Week 19 – Lesson 1



### Be Real

---

Scripture reading Acts 6:15

*“And all that sat in the council, looking stedfastly on him, saw his face as it had been the face of an angel.”*

The word *angel* here comes from the Greek word *angelos*, which denotes a messenger from God who has good tidings. Stephen’s face was sincere, fearless, and showed confidence in God. There was a genuineness about Stephen that must be manifest if a messenger is to be heard. It is a quality that is absolutely necessary that our lives are genuine if we are to effectively share the Gospel. The world hates hypocrisy, especially in the lives of those who claim to be representatives of God. This is why Satan tempts Christians to live ungodly lives. He knows that if our lives do not display the holiness and purity of the Lord Jesus Christ that His message will not be heard. Genuineness is key to a successful witness.

I encourage you today to reflect the love of Christ to those around you by being the kind of Christian that God intends you to be in every aspect of your life. Ask God to control you. Surrender to His control daily so that you might reflect Christ as a loving husband, loving father, loving businessman, loving neighbor, loving friend, and loving coworker. Daily ask God to control you so that you might reflect Him as a loving wife, loving mother, loving civil servant, loving coworker, and loving boss. Being real does not mean pretending to have everything under control. Being real means allowing the Holy Spirit to control you so that your responses reflect Jesus Christ in any given situation.

Stephen was an effect witness because Stephen was real. When you are real, when you are genuine, you, as a believer, will SHINE.

# SHINE Devotional

## Week 19 – Lesson 2



### Be Respectful

---

Scripture reading Acts 7:2

*“And he said, Men, brethren, and fathers, hearken...”*

Over and over in Scripture and throughout the centuries of Christianity, believers have had the opportunity to stand before dignitaries and share the truth of the Gospel. Some have honored the name of Jesus Christ. Others, by their demeanor and actions, have dishonored the name of Christ. In the late 1980s, Christians in America were fighting for the freedom to educate their children in Christian schools without government intervention. The center of the battle became the state of Nebraska. Two preachers in the state, one from the western part of the state and the other from the eastern part of the state, were told by the government that if they did not close their schools their doors would be padlocked, the preachers would be fined, and then would face arrest. One preacher stood with dignity refusing to surrender to an unconstitutional mandate by the state government. Yet, he stood with respect towards those that were in authority. On the other side of the state, the other preacher went to the state courthouse and in defiance spit on the capitol steps, showing absolutely no respect for the powers that be. Both men were involved in a spiritual battle. One represented his Saviour well. The other one did not.

Paul the Apostle was illegally detained for preaching the Gospel of Jesus Christ. He was put in protective custody and brought before King Agrippa before being sent to Rome. When he addressed King Agrippa, he did not stand in arrogance or self-righteousness. He stood in humility and addressed King Agrippa with respect, giving his personal testimony and sharing the Gospel of Jesus Christ. In our story today, Stephen did the same. We must remember that our job is to represent Jesus Christ. We will never do that by showing disrespect to authority. When a Christian learns to be respectful, he will SHINE.

# SHINE Devotional

## Week 19 – Lesson 3



### Be Relational

---

Scripture reading Acts 7:2b

*“...The God of glory appeared unto our father Abraham, when he was in Mesopotamia, before he dwelt in Charran,”*

John Maxwell has said, “People don’t care how much you know until they know how much you care.” That is so true when it comes to witnessing to the lost. People are not going to listen to you if you elevate yourself above them like the spiritual elite that we find in Scripture. Likewise, people are not going to listen to you if you lack the self-confidence to speak God’s truth in love. People will listen to you if you are relational. When sharing the Gospel, Stephen put himself on the same level as his accusers. He referred to Abraham as “our father.” That statement is disarming, and it opened the ears of his accusers. By referring to Abraham as “our father,” he was saying “I know the burden that you feel. I know your history. I am familiar with the same Bible stories that you grew up with. We are brothers.”

My dad was an immigrant from Lebanon, because of that I have had the opportunity over and over to interact with people from the Middle East. I have used my ethnic background to allow me to relate to others and so that others could relate to me. Two years ago, I was in New Jersey. I was in a beautiful room around the corner from an Italian sandwich shop. The first day I walked into the shop, I was snubbed until I mentioned to the owner that my grandmother was full blooded Italian. He turned around and asked, “What part of Italy?” I said, “I don’t know.” He welcomed me with open arms. I gave him a gospel tract and told him that I was a pastor in Las Vegas. That was the only conversation I had. The next day I walked into the same sandwich shop and it was filled with Italians. None of them would look at me until the owner said, “Hey, this is the guy I was telling you about, the preacher out of Las Vegas and his grandma was Italian.” After that I was best friends with everybody in the shop. They had a way to relate to me and I was able to give them the Gospel. If you want to be effective in witnessing, be somebody who is relational. It might be through an ethnic background, a common hobby, children, the city you live in, or your favorite sports team. When you learn to be relational you, as a believer, will SHINE.

# SHINE Devotional

## Week 19 – Lesson 4



### Be Reasonable

---

Scripture reading Acts 17:2

*“And Paul, as his manner was, went in unto them, and three sabbath days reasoned with them out of the scriptures”*

The Christian ought to be the most reasonable person on the planet. We do not live in blind faith. As a Christian, you have a reason for your belief. You believe there is a God because nature declares there is a God. This planet is not an evolutionary accident. It is as foolish to believe that as it was to believe in the mythical gods of the ancient Greeks. Common sense says if there is a creation, there must be a creator. We believe that Jesus Christ is God because no one could do the miracles that He did unless He was God. You believe His declaration of deity because He walked on the water. He talked to the seas and they listened. He made a lame man walk. He made a dumb man talk. He gave sight to the blind. He raised the dead. When they put Him to death, He rose from the dead by His own power. We believe He did this because it is written in the Bible, which was written by people who saw it with their own eyes. We believe the Bible because it is written by eyewitnesses and it is verified by over 5,500 Greek manuscripts. There is more historical evidence that proves the authenticity of the Word of God than any other ancient manuscript by far.

Our belief is a reasonable belief. Stephen knew this. Because of that, he reasoned with those that had captured him by using stories from the Old Testament to convince them of their need of a Saviour. People will not always accept a reasonable explanation, but if you determine to witness with reason then you, as a believer, will SHINE.

# SHINE Devotional

## Week 19 – Lesson 5



### Be Reliable

---

Scripture reading 1 Corinthians 15:58

*“Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.”*

Do people know they can rely on you? Are you steadfast and unmovable? Obviously, Stephen was. Stephen was a man of good reputation. If Stephen said he was going to do something, Stephen did it. He was reliable. Stephen had been unjustly dragged before the Sanhedrin to be tried for declaring faith in the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. He could have denied his faith. He could have claimed that he was misunderstood. Instead he respectfully and reasonably shared with his accusers the testimony of Jesus Christ. He did not swerve in his commitment because of social pressure. Nor did he allow himself to be led astray by temptation. He was reliable.

Nearly forty-three years ago in the wilds of Pennsylvania, near a country creek, I stood under an arch beneath some beautiful pine trees and watched as a young lady walked down an isle to become my wife. For forty-three years, she has been my reliable helpmeet. She is also a consistent witness because she is so reliable. I have only accomplished what I have accomplished because I have her as a reliable helpmeet.

How about you? Can people rely on you? Does your spouse believe you are reliable? Do your children, coworkers, friends, and neighbors look at you as reliable? Are you reliable in your home, church, office, school, and neighborhood? Solomon said, *“Confidence in an unfaithful man in time of trouble is like a broken tooth, and a foot out of joint”* (Proverbs 25:19). If you want to be a great witness, learn to be reliable and your life will SHINE.

# SHINE Devotional

## Week 19 – Lesson 6



### Be Ready

---

Scripture reading 1 Peter 3:15-16

*“But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear: Having a good conscience; that, whereas they speak evil of you, as of evildoers, they may be ashamed that falsely accuse your good conversation in Christ.”*

The believer should always be ready to share the Gospel of Jesus Christ. There are people everywhere around us ready to hear good news. Last week, I walked into a CVS Pharmacy to pick up some bandages. When I walked out I handed the clerk a gospel tract. She said, “Oh, thank you. I have been looking for a church since we moved to town.” I asked her how long she had been here. She said, “We just moved here in the last few weeks and we haven’t found a church since nothing is open.” I then invited her to check out [experienceliberty.com](http://experienceliberty.com) and watch our services until we have an opportunity to open the church buildings again.

One of the members of our church has a friend whose husband is very ill. He knew she needed to get saved. He called Pastor Matt this past week and asked him to share the Gospel with her, and she trusted Christ as Saviour.

God has given us, in our culture, many ways to share the Gospel of Jesus Christ. I encourage you during this time to use every available means and be ready to give an answer to every man for the hope that is within you. Invite them to visit [experienceliberty.com](http://experienceliberty.com). Send them the link [Fivethingsyoumustknow.com](http://Fivethingsyoumustknow.com). They will hear the Gospel very clearly and have an opportunity to pray and trust Christ as their Saviour. I encourage you to join us online and when the church is open, bring them to church. As a believer we must be ready to give an answer. Are you? If you are, you will SHINE.