

SHINE Devotional

Week 24 – Lesson 1



God Is Not Impressed with the Rich, Famous, or Powerful

Scripture reading Acts 8:9

“But there was a certain man, called Simon, which beforetime in the same city used sorcery [magic], and bewitched [amazed] the people of Samaria, giving out that himself was some great one:”

God led Philip, one of the first seven deacons, to go to a city in Samaria, likely the same city where Jesus met the woman at the well (John 4). He was to preach the Gospel of the kingdom. When he arrived and began to preach, many trusted Jesus Christ as Saviour. *“And there was great joy in that city”* (Acts 8:8). One of the new converts was a man named Simon. Simon promoted himself as *“Some great one.”* Within the Samaritan community, he was considered famous, powerful, and rich.

One interesting thing about this story is that God is not impressed with any of that God simply refers to him as *“a certain man.”* As believers, we can be taken back by somebody’s position, notoriety, or by their wealth. Jesus never is. Jesus is the King of kings and the Lord of lords. We need to be aware of the fact that we walk in His presence every single day. You and I as believers are children of the most high God. One day He will return to this earth and He will rule and reign forever, *“King Of Kings, And Lord Of Lords”* (Revelation 19:11-16). He is not impressed by wealth, fame, or power, because He has it all. When He responds to people, He treats them equally.

You and I must remember that we are the children of the King of kings and Lord of lords. We are here to represent Him. We need not be intimidated by power, fame, or wealth. Let us walk as Jesus walked. Let us treat people equally. As you live your life in this world, remember who you are, who your God is, and what your purpose is. As you do this, you will treat people with the kindness and the grace of God and you, as a believer, will SHINE.

SHINE Devotional

Week 24 – Lesson 2



People Are Easily Deceived

Scripture reading Acts 8:10-11

“To whom they all gave heed, from the least to the greatest, saying, This man is the great power of God. And to him they had regard, because that of long time he had bewitched them with sorceries.”

When I was growing up, I can remember hearing stories about the great Harry Houdini. He was famous for his ability to escape any prison cell or makeshift cage. His act included escaping from chains, jail cells, ropes slung from skyscrapers, strait jackets under water, and the list goes on. People were fascinated by his unusual abilities and he became world famous. Today, here in Las Vegas, we have well known magicians that perform on the strip like David Copperfield. Mr. Copperfield is known for his amazing feats of magic. In 1983, he made the Statue of Liberty disappear in front of a live audience on Liberty Island. When people seem to do amazing things, other people are easily deceived. That is true in every avenue of life.

In 2,000 years of Christianity, Satan has sent forth many false prophets who claim to be great workers of miracles. These false prophets have deceived many into following their false teachings. That is why it is so important that we check everything by the Word of God. The Bible says that Simon, who promoted himself as “the great one,” had deceived people that were great and least. That means that he deceived the rich and the poor, the known and the unknown, and the powerful and the not so powerful. The only way we can avoid deception is by faithfully clinging to the Word of God. Remember as in our story today, the crowd is often wrong. We must not follow the politically correct crowd. We must follow the teachings of the Word of God.

As a believer if you will cling tightly to the truth of God’s Word, you will not be easily deceived and you, as a believer, will SHINE.

SHINE Devotional

Week 24 – Lesson 3



Faithfully Preach the True Gospel

Scripture reading Acts 8:12

“But when they believed Philip preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women.”

Philip was exactly where God wanted him to be. He was in the wicked city of Samaria. He was there to preach the truth of God’s Word. He was in a place that taught false doctrine. Yet, he faithfully preached the true Gospel in the midst of this false teaching. The Bible is very clear, there is only one way to heaven. *“Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me”* (John 14:6). Simon was rich, famous, and powerful but Simon did not know how to gain eternal life. Peter made it clear when he said, *“Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.”* (Acts 4:12).

Several years ago, I was invited to juvenile hall here in Las Vegas to speak to a group of young juvenile delinquents. There was no restriction placed on me about what I could or could not share. I was invited by one of the officers inside the facility. When I signed in, I was interviewed by the manager of the facility who explained to me that he was a Mormon. Mormons have a different belief about God and salvation. They believe in salvation by grace plus works, and that one day believers will be gods. I was tempted at that point not to say anything, but the Spirit of God would not allow me to stay quiet. I explained to him that though that may seem to be a small difference, it is huge. Jesus either paid it all or He did nothing at all. Salvation is fully and completely by the grace of God. Though we disagreed, he still allowed me to preach the Gospel to those teenagers. It is important that we never compromise the truth of the Gospel message.

There is only one way to heaven, which is through the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. We must put our faith and trust in Him and share that Gospel with others. When you do, you will SHINE.

SHINE Devotional

Week 24 – Lesson 4



Everyone Gets Saved and Discipled the Same Way

Scripture reading Acts 8:12-13

“But when they believed Philip preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women. Then Simon himself believed also: and when he was baptized, he continued with Philip, and wondered, beholding the miracles and signs which were done.”

I don't know how many times over the last forty-five years I have heard people say, “There are many roads to heaven. You find yours and I will find mine.” That all sounds great except that it is a lie from the pit of hell. God's Word makes it clear that there is only way to heaven. Everybody gets saved the same way, whether they are rich or poor, black or white, young or old, famous or infamous. In order to be saved, first you must hear the Word. *“So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God”* (Romans 10:17). Then you must believe the Word. *“But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name”* (John 1:12). *“And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house”* (Acts 16:31). It doesn't matter if you are poor or rich, known or unknown, weak or powerful, fat or skinny, black or white, everyone gets saved in the same way by putting their faith and trust in Jesus Christ and what He did for them. *“For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved”* (Romans 10:13). Nothing changes that. Then to grow as a Christian, the next step is baptism into a local New Testament church. That is what happened to the multitudes who followed Philip. That is what happened to Simon Magnus. The Bible records that they believed and that he believed. They were baptized and he was baptized. Through that baptism they became members of that local church.

If you want to grow in Jesus Christ, you need to first get saved, then baptized, and you need to get involved in a good, solid, Bible believing, local church where you can be mentored and grow in the grace and knowledge of Him. Always remember everybody gets saved the same way and if you want to grow you need to be involved in the local church. As you grow in Christ, you will help others grow and you, as a believer, will SHINE.

SHINE Devotional

Week 24 – Lesson 5



God Does Not Need Your Money

Scripture reading Acts

“And when Simon saw that through laying on of the apostles' hands the Holy Ghost was given, he offered them money, Saying, Give me also this power, that on whomsoever I lay hands, he may receive the Holy Ghost. But Peter said unto him, Thy money perish with thee, because thou hast thought that the gift of God may be purchased with money.”

Our God is the God that created the heavens and the earth. He does not need your money. Since that is true, why does God want us to tithe? Why does God want us to bring offerings to the church? The answer to that question is very simple. When you give to the house of God, it binds your heart to the house of God, because *“where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.”* (Matthew 6:21).

Simon, who had just gotten saved, was still thinking like a man of the world. Thinking as a worldly man and being very ambitious, when he saw Peter laying hands on others and their being filled with the Holy Spirit of God through this act. He wanted what was given only to the Apostles. The only means he had of getting what he wanted was through money. So, he made his ungodly offer. Peter rebuked him soundly, because his offer cheapened the gift of God.

It is important to understand that God does not need our money. The Psalmist said *“Hear, O my people, and I will speak; O Israel, and I will testify against thee: I am God, even thy God...If I were hungry, I would not tell thee: for the world is mine, and the fulness thereof.”* (Psalm 50:7 & 12). Jesus had everything He ever needed in heaven. He owns everything. We serve a God who watches out for us and protects us and can meet every need we have. God wants you to give so you have the privilege to participate in His ministry. He does not need your money. Understanding this truth will help you as a believer to SHINE.

SHINE Devotional

Week 24 – Lesson 6



It Is Very Easy to Get Right with God

Scripture reading Acts 8:21-23

“Thou hast neither part nor lot in this matter: for thy heart is not right in the sight of God. Repent therefore of this thy wickedness, and pray God, if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee. For I perceive that thou art in the gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity.”

Simon sinned against God through his ignorance and ambition. Peter rebuked him by saying, you are in the *“gall of bitterness.”* Gall means poison, and what he was saying was he was poisoned by bitterness. Bitterness comes when we do not get what we think we deserve. He was poisoned by the desire to have a position that God did not have for him. In Hebrews, we are warned about bitterness. *“[L]est any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled”* (Hebrews 12:14). Bitterness can defile not only you, but many that are around you. Peter also said he was bound by iniquity. Iniquity equals self-will. Simon was poisoned by bitterness and bound by his own self-will. Self-will separates us from God (Isaiah 59:1).

Poisoned by bitterness, bound by his own self-will, Peter says to Simon:

1. “You need to repent.” Repent is to change your mind. Quit wanting to do what you want to do and surrender to what God wants.
2. “Pray for forgiveness.” *“If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness”* (1 John 1:9).

Peter made it quite easy for Simon to get right with God. He needed to confess his sin, change his mind, and pray for forgiveness. That is how simple it is for you and me when we wander off in our own covetousness, bitterness, and self-will. We can get right with God very simply by confessing our sin, asking Him to control us, and seeking His forgiveness. Simon did this. The question is, will you? If you do, you, as a believer, will SHINE.