

SHINE Devotional

Week 27 – Lesson 1



God Uses Disciples

Scripture reading Acts 9:10

“And there was a certain disciple at Damascus, named Ananias; and to him said the Lord in a vision, Ananias. And he said, Behold, I am here, Lord.”

Today, we are introduced to a new Bible character. He is only mentioned twice in Scripture and both times relate to this story, the conversion of Saul of Tarsus. Ananias is not referred to as an apostle, a pastor, a teacher or a deacon. He was simply a disciple of Jesus Christ. The word *disciple* comes from the Greek word *mathetes* and simply means a learner. A disciple of Christ is one who is wanting to learn new truth from the master. Ananias was one of many new Christians who were saved in the first church of Jerusalem, because of persecution he had fled to Damascus. Obviously, a new church had been planted in Damascus and he was a member of that new church. As a disciple (a learner) of Christ, he was open to God’s direction and leadership. At that time, the Scriptures had not been written so the only means of direction was direct revelation from God. Jesus spoke to Ananias in a vision. Because he was “a learner” his ears were open to the direction of his Master. Just after this verse, Jesus will teach him that anyone can become a believer. This will be a shocking revelation, but because Ananias was a disciple, God was able to mold him. If you want to be used of God like Ananias, you must be willing to listen and learn.

Some people never grow because they already “know it all.” They have traditions from their past and their culture that they cling to as though they are inspired. Jesus addressed this in talking to the disciples of John the Baptist. He said, *“And no man putteth new wine into old bottles; else the new wine will burst the bottles, and be spilled, and the bottles shall perish”* (Luke 5:37). Jesus was making a statement that people who are hardened by tradition have a hard time accepting truth that contradicts their culture.

A disciple must be a learner, and take his direction from Scripture, and thereby, from Jesus Christ. Jesus was about to use Ananias, “a certain disciple” because he was willing to listen and learn. As a disciple, if you will learn by listening to the direction of God’s Word, you, as a believer, will SHINE.

SHINE Devotional

Week 27 – Lesson 2



Disciples Are Given Assignments

Scripture reading Acts 9:11-12

“And the Lord said unto him, Arise, and go into the street which is called Straight, and enquire in the house of Judas for one called Saul, of Tarsus: for, behold, he prayeth, And hath seen in a vision a man named Ananias coming in, and putting his hand on him, that he might receive his sight.”

God gave Ananias an assignment to go and witness to Saul of Tarsus. Please take note that Saul did not get to chose his assignment. He was seeking God’s direction and God gave him this assignment.

When I first got saved, I remember asking God to use me. I wanted to reach as many people as I could with the Gospel of Jesus Christ. The reality of hell impacted my life and I wanted God to use me to snatch people from its flames. I knew if I was going to be a preacher of the Gospel, I would need to get training. So, I went to Lynchburg Baptist College (now Liberty University) in Lynchburg, Virginia, to train for ministry. In my junior year I became so anxious to start a church, I considered dropping out of school and coming back to Vegas before I graduated from college. This would have been a disaster. One evening while I prayed, I told the Lord I wanted to disciple people. I wanted to bring people along instead of wasting my time at school. The Spirit of God spoke in a still small voice. I was living in an open dorm with twenty-four underclassmen. His Spirit seemed to say, “All around you are younger men. Disciple them.”

In John 4, when the disciples of Christ met Jesus in Samaria, He said these words, *“Say not ye, There are yet four months, and then cometh harvest? behold, I say unto you, Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest”* (John 4:35). Jesus wants us to look around where we are. He has an assignment for you and for me. We don’t need to be looking far into the future or to some exotic foreign land. We are already in the field that is ready to be harvested.

What is the assignment that God has for you? What is it that God wants you to do? Who is it that God wants you to disciple? Listen to God, learn from Him, get your assignment, and SHINE for Jesus.

SHINE Devotional

Week 27 – Lesson 3



Disciples Know How to Pray

Scripture reading Acts 9:13-16

“Then Ananias answered, Lord, I have heard by many of this man, how much evil he hath done to thy saints at Jerusalem: And here he hath authority from the chief priests to bind all that call on thy name. But the Lord said unto him, Go thy way: for he is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel: For I will shew him how great things he must suffer for my name's sake.”

In the book Prayer: Asking and Receiving, John R. Rice makes the point that prayer is asking. I believe this will all my heart. The word *prayer* means to ask, but prayer is more than asking for things. Prayer is beseeching God for His will and His direction. Jesus said *“And he said unto them, When ye pray, say, Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, as in heaven, so in earth”* (Luke 11:2). The disciple knows how to pray effectively. He is praying in the will of God and he is asking God to allow him to be effective in reaching others with the Gospel. Ananias was in prayer when God approached him. It is interesting to note that name Saul means “prayed for.” Ananias was praying for Saul of Tarsus and he did not even know it. He had a strong desire to do God’s will and to see His holy name magnified. I believe that Ananias was pleading with God for the advancement of His kingdom. In answer to his prayer, God said, “Go, reach Saul of Tarsus.” In Psalm 2, God speaks to David and says, *“Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession.”* (Psalm 2:8). In the Old Testament, David prayed that he would be able to conquer the ungodly and take their land. In the New Testament, we are to pray for our enemies to get saved. I believe the conversion of the Apostle Paul was a direct answer to prayer. The disciples were in the midst of great persecution because of Saul of Tarsus. They prayed and God sent one, Ananias, to share the Gospel with his enemy.

Ananias was not anxious to fulfill the direction from God. He conversed with God until he was convinced that this was what God wanted him to do. The Spirit of God confirmed His commitment in this time of prayer. As a disciple, you need to be a person of prayer. When you go out and see the chaos this world is in, it is important that you and I as believers not criticize, but that we pray for those who are leading our nation. As you pray, allow God to direct your actions so you can reflect His love even to your enemies. When you have a life of prayer, you will SHINE.

SHINE Devotional

Week 27 – Lesson 4



Disciples Obey God

Scripture reading Acts 9:17

“And Ananias went his way, and entered into the house; and putting his hands on him said, Brother Saul, the Lord, even Jesus, that appeared unto thee in the way as thou camest, hath sent me, that thou mightest receive thy sight, and be filled with the Holy Ghost.”

Disciples obey God no matter how difficult the assignment. Ananias had a tough assignment. Once he got clarification from God, he moved on God’s direction. He did not have to travel around the world. He was not called to make a public spectacle. He was simply led by God to go across town and tell a very angry man who hated Christians about the love of Jesus Christ.

What did Ananias know about Saul? He knew of Saul’s reputation as a persecutor of the church. He makes that clear in his conversation with the Lord. But God revealed to him several things:

1. He told him that Saul was praying. (Acts 9:11)
2. He knew that God had chosen him to carry his truth to the Gentile world, to leaders, and to the children of Israel.
3. He also knew that Saul would suffer for the mistakes that he had made in his life.

He was not there to judge Saul. He was not there to criticize him for his past sins. He simply went in obedience to God to tell this ungodly man that God loved him, that Jesus died for him, was buried, rose from the dead for him, and that he could be saved by calling on Him. Saul obeyed the Word of God, got saved, was filled with the Holy Spirit, and followed the Lord in believer’s baptism.

If you want to be a disciple for Jesus Christ, it is absolutely essential that you be a person of prayer and willingly obedient to the direction of God’s Word in your life. When you live this way, you will SHINE.

SHINE Devotional

Week 27 – Lesson 5



Disciples Recognize Other Christians as Brothers

Scripture reading Acts 9:17

“And Ananias went his way, and entered into the house; and putting his hands on him said, Brother Saul...”

I have been a Christian for over forty-five years. Throughout those years, I have had the opportunity of leading many people to Jesus Christ. After leading someone to Christ, I often take them John 1:12, *“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.”* I then explain that when they got saved, they were born again into the family of God. God has become their Father and because we have the same Father, it makes us brothers and sisters in Christ. Paul told Timothy as the pastor of the church in Ephesus, *“Rebuke not an elder, but intreat him as a father; and the younger men as brethren; The elder women as mothers; the younger as sisters, with all purity”* (1 Timothy 5:1-2). When Paul went in to see Ananias, he determined to treat him as family. He put his hands on him as a sign of affection and he referred to him as “brother Saul.”

As a disciple, we should be praying for lost people to get saved. When they get saved, we should do everything we can to encourage them as members of our family. Just as a newborn babe should be welcomed into a warm and caring family, every new Christian should feel as though they are cared for and embraced by the family of God. Within the family of God, we may have differences but as brothers and sisters, we should not fight with one another or criticize one another. We should lift up, pray for, and encourage one another. This is especially true of new believers.

When you learn to receive and encourage your brothers and sisters in Christ, you, as a believer, will SHINE.

SHINE Devotional

Week 27 – Lesson 6



Disciples Train Other Disciples

Scripture reading Acts 9:18-19

“And immediately there fell from his eyes as it had been scales: and he received sight forthwith, and arose, and was baptized. And when he had received meat, he was strengthened. Then was Saul certain days with the disciples which were at Damascus.”

Saul of Tarsus was a Pharisee, which meant even though he was a new convert, he knew much of the Old Testament. He had memorized the Torah: Genesis, Exodus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy. He knew the teachings of the prophets. He would have been very familiar with Psalms and Proverbs. He knew the history of the Jewish people in detail. Yet, he was a babe in Christ. He had never experienced spiritual life, and he needed what every other new Christian needs. He needed to be discipled. Ananias, this disciple of Christ, went to his home. Ananias laid his hands on Saul. He got personally involved in his life. Through Ananias, Saul received his sight. Saul was baptized. Saul was fed and introduced to other disciples in Damascus. That is what disciples do. Disciples train other disciples. When people get saved, they are spiritually blind. They need you to guide them through the teaching of the Word of God. Baptism in Scripture is always by emersion. People need to be immersed into the family of God. This means you, as a believer, need to take new converts and introduce them to other new converts. Bring them into your circle of Christian friends. Your Christian friends should be centered around your local church. Saul was physically fed by Ananias. Your disciple needs to be fed the Word God. You do not need to be a Bible scholar in order to teach a new convert truth from the God’s Word. Sit down and read the Word of God with them or get involved in a discipleship book. At Liberty Baptist Church, we use Continue, a book on discipleship by Paul Chappell. Discipleship is more than book learning and a program. It is a lifestyle. It is you, as a believer, allowing Christ to pour His life through your experiences into the life of others. This is what Ananias did for Saul.

We never hear of Ananias again but there will be multitudes of people in heaven because he was a faithful disciple who poured his life into the life of one other man, and God used that man to spread the Gospel around the world. Who is it that God wants you to disciple? Ask God to lead you. Find out what your assignment is. Seek to be used by God. Determine to obey Him when He gives you direction. Find that brother or sister He wants you to help and become the disciple God want you to be. When you do, you will SHINE.