

# SHINE Devotional

## Week 28 – Lesson 1



### Has Your Tongue Changed?

Scripture reading Acts 9:1 & 20

*“And Saul, yet breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord, went unto the high priest...And straightway he preached Christ in the synagogues, that he is the Son of God.”*

What a change! Here is a man that *“breathed out”* threats and slaughters. He used his tongue to intimidate. When you heard him speak, you could sense the anger. James tells us, *“And the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity: so is the tongue among our members, that it defileth the whole body, and setteth on fire the course of nature; and it is set on fire of hell”* (James 3:6). He continues, *“the tongue can no man tame; it is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison”* (James 3:8). Saul used his tongue to persecute, intimidate, criticize, and belittle. Because the tongue is used in such a perverse manner, the world is filled with bitterness, discontent, anger, and murder. The only way the tongue can be controlled is by surrender to the Holy Spirit of God. That is what happened to Saul. His tongue was changed. When he got saved, the Spirit controlled him and instead of breathing out threatenings he was preaching Christ. He would later say, *“Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice”* (Ephesians 4:31).

When a person puts their faith and trust in Jesus Christ, God will change them. Change will begin in their heart. The Spirit of God will regenerate the soul. They will become spiritually alive and that which was used for evil will be able to be used for good. However, that only happens as the believer daily surrenders his tongue to the Holy Spirit of God. God’s Word is clear. *“Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers”* (Ephesians 4:29).

I want to encourage you to surrender your tongue to the control of His Holy Spirit, so that you too, can minister grace to those who hear you. When you do, you, as a believer, will SHINE.

# SHINE Devotional

## Week 28 – Lesson 2



### Has Your Doctrine Changed?

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Scripture reading Acts 9:22

*“But Saul increased the more in strength, and confounded the Jews which dwelt at Damascus, proving that this is very Christ.”*

Saul was an enemy of Jesus Christ, because his doctrine would not allow him to believe the claims of Christ or of His disciples. He believed that to accept the teachings of Jesus would be to deny there is only one God. Christians are unique amongst world religions in what we believe. We believe in a God who is beyond our understanding. Christians do not teach that there are three Gods. The Scripture is clear. There is only one God. *“[W]e know that an idol is nothing in the world, and that there is none other God but one”* (1 Corinthians 8:4). However, we believe that He reveals Himself in three Persons: God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. Saul would state that there is only God and He has no Son, which is what present-day Muslims teach. Here is a quote from one of their books, *“...Christians say that Christ is God’s Son. Such are the sayings they utter with their mouths, following in spirit associations made in earlier times by people who denied the truth. [They deserve the implication] May God destroy them! How perverted are their minds!”* Saul believed it was blasphemy to claim that Jesus Christ was the Son of God. He thought, as do Muslim terrorists today, that those who proclaim that truth are deserving of death. However, when he met Jesus on the road to Damascus, his doctrine changed. He began to use the Scripture to convince those in the synagogue that Jesus Christ truly was the Son of God. *“I will declare the decree: the Lord hath said unto me, Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee”* (Psalm 2:7). This messianic psalm, along with many others declares that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. When Saul got saved, his life was changed and his doctrine was changed. Now he was teaching that Jesus was the Son of God, God in human flesh, that He died for our sins, was buried, rose from the dead, was seen by hundreds of eye witnesses, and He is the only way to heaven.

It is important that you, as a Christian, understand the doctrine of Christ, and that you are willing to open your eyes and ears to the truth of God’s Word and share it with others. When you do, you, as a believer, will SHINE.

# SHINE Devotional

## Week 28 – Lesson 3



### Has Your Attitude Changed?

Scripture reading Acts 9:21

*“But all that heard him were amazed, and said; Is not this he that destroyed them which called on this name in Jerusalem, and came hither for that intent, that he might bring them bound unto the chief priests?”*

The heart of a man is revealed in two ways.

1. What comes out of his mouth. Jesus said, *“...for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh”* (Matthew 12:44).
2. The look on a man’s face. Solomon said *“A merry heart maketh a cheerful countenance: but by sorrow of the heart the spirit is broken”* (Proverbs 15:13).

I believe that when the Christians in Damascus met Saul, they were shocked. His entire attitude about life was changed and it was reflected by the words he spoke and the look on his face. We are told in Acts 9:2 that he *“desired...letters to Damascus.”* He was going to do what he wanted to do. In his self-righteousness and self-will, he had determined to crush this new Christian movement. It was all about Saul. Because of his own self-will, he had separated himself from the blessing of God. *“But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear”* (Isaiah 59:2). When he got saved, his attitude changed. His self-righteousness melted away. He had to confess his self-will as sin and recognize that his self-righteousness had made him ignorant to the righteousness of God. *“For they being ignorant of God’s righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God”* (Romans 10:3). Saul came to the end of himself and had a new attitude of humility. He had an attitude that said, *“what wilt thou have me to do?”* (Acts 9:6), instead of an “I’ll teach you” attitude. He had a spirit that said, “Please teach me.” When he met Ananias and the disciples, he truly became a learner himself.

How is your attitude? Do you have an attitude of self-will? Or is your will surrendered to the will of the Lord Jesus Christ? When you surrender to Him, your heart will have a teachable spirit. Your attitude will reflect submission to Him and confidence in His Word. When you allow God to change your attitude then you, as a believer, will SHINE.

# SHINE Devotional

## Week 28 – Lesson 4



### Have Your Actions Changed?

Scripture reading Acts 9:20-21

*“And straightway he preached Christ in the synagogue...all that heard him were amazed, and said; Is not this he that destroyed them which called on this name in Jerusalem...?”*

Saul did not just talk the talk; he walked the walk. Both his actions and his attitude changed when he received Christ as his Saviour. He went from living a life of condemnation and destruction, to living a life of surrender and service. He would write later, *“I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind”* (Romans 12:1-2). As fervent as he was against the new Christian movement, he was now fervently for it. He had met Christ and Christ did not just change him inwardly, he had changed his outward practice. Over and over in Scripture, we read how God changed a man’s actions when he gets saved.

Luke told the story of the maniac who was filled with a legion of demons. He was so controlled by devils that he ran naked through tombs and harassed the citizens of that city. When they tried to bind him with chains, he broke the chains. He was uncontrollable, until he met Jesus. The citizens were amazed when *“they went out to see what was done; and came to Jesus, and found the man, out of whom the devils were departed, sitting at the feet of Jesus, clothed, and in his right mind”* (Luke 8:35). He had gone from being a raving lunatic who ran naked through tombs to a man clothed and in his right mind sitting at the feet of Jesus. Meeting Jesus will change your actions. The drunk becomes a sober, caring, loving husband and father. The harlot becomes a woman focused on Jesus and caring for others. The drug addict becomes addicted to Jesus. The one who seeks pleasure, pornography, and immorality now seeks to serve his Saviour in church living to honor Him. I do not know how many times in our ministry that I have had someone come to me and say, “Pastor, five years ago, if you had told me I would be in church listening to Christian music and wanting to hear another sermon, I would have told you that you’re crazy.” How does that happen? When a man gets saved, his actions are changed. Why? Because his heart is changed. Surrender to God, submit to His will, your actions will change, and you will SHINE.

# SHINE Devotional

## Week 28 – Lesson 5



### Have Your Associations Changed?

Scripture reading Acts 9:19

*“And when he had received meat, he was strengthened. Then was Saul certain days with the disciples which were at Damascus.”*

Someone has said there are two types of people in the world: the saved and the lost, those who love Jesus and those who love the world. Jesus warned us that the world will hate us. He said, *“If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you”* (John 15:18). When you begin to do what God wants you to do and you live the way God wants you to live, there are certain things that are going to fall out of your life. As we saw last time, your actions will change. When your actions change, you will find that your associations will change. The high priests no longer loved Saul of Tarsus, they had begun to hate him. Saul used to hang with the spiritual elite, but found himself as a lowly disciple of Jesus Christ.

When I was a senior in high school, doing all I could to live for the Lord, I began to work at a department store in town. I worked for the sporting goods department. The longer I worked there, the more I got acquainted with the other employees. It didn't take me long to realize that every Friday after work, many of my co-workers would get together and party with each other. One day I looked at one of my co-workers, who I considered a friend, and said, “Hey, why am I never invited to any of your parties?” He looked at me and said, “Oh, David, I didn't think you would want to come to our kind of party.” I realized what he was saying, and he was absolutely right. At that same time, I was growing closer and closer to the people in my local church and I became more involved in our youth group. Associations will change when you get saved because your interests will change. Paul said, *“Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial?...Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord”* (2 Corinthians 6:14-15, 17).

You, as a believer, are not to isolate yourself from the world. You are to be a witness. However, your close fellowship should be with other Christians. When you fellowship with Christians, and they are your closest companion, they will help you walk with Christ and you will SHINE.

# SHINE Devotional

## Week 28 – Lesson 6



### Have Your Desires Changed?

Scripture reading Acts 9:22

*“But Saul increased the more in strength, and confounded the Jews which dwelt at Damascus, proving that this is very Christ.”*

Saul became a new creature in Christ. His tongue changed. His doctrine changed. His attitude changed. His actions changed. His associations changed. All of that changed because his desires changed. He desired to know Jesus Christ. He said, *“But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith: That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death;”* (Philippians 3:7-10). Before his conversion, his desires were to prove that he was right. His desires were for fame and fortune and the admiration of men. His desires were to be a big shot in the temple amongst the Sanhedrin and Pharisees, but all of that changed when he met Jesus. Now his desires were to know Him. His desires were to please Jesus Christ. His desires beyond that were to reach lost people: his friends, his family, and the world. This is his statement in Romans 10:1, *“Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved.”*

I have often said to people that when you get saved, you don't become perfect but your “want to” changes. What you used to want to do, is no longer important. What you want to do now is live like Christ, for Christ, and you want to reach other people before they slip into hell.

When you think about your desires, are they eternal desires? Oh, it is great to have fun in this world and we should enjoy the things God makes available to us. However, we should always remember the admonition of Jesus. *“But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.”* (Matthew 6:33). Let your desire be the kingdom of God, to know Him, and to please Him. Let your desire be to reach lost people with the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and you, as a believer, will SHINE.