

SHINE Devotional

Week 29 – Lesson 1

Grounded in the Word



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 very familiar with the Old Testament Scriptures. The Scripture says here that Saul increased in strength. The words increased and strength both come from a Greek word *endunamoo*. In the Greek, this would actually mean that Saul was strengthened in his strength. That is, he continued to grow in his knowledge of the Word of God. If we are going to help other believers grow in Christ, we must get them grounded in the Word of God so they will grow in their personal walk with Jesus. Jesus said, *“Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me”* (John 5:39). Paul told Timothy, *“Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth”* (2 Timothy 2:15). Why is that important? Paul tells us *“All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works”* (2 Timothy 3:16-17). It does not matter how much I know about the Bible. What matters is the truth of God’s Word controls me and makes me an effective witness. If I do not have a continual feeding of God’s Word, I will very soon be eaten up by the philosophies of the world all around me. Paul said in Colossians, *“Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord”* (3:16). Surrendering to the Word of God is surrendering to the Holy Spirit’s control in your life.

When you teach others to be grounded in the Word, they will be strengthened in their strength and they will SHINE.

SHINE Devotional

Week 29 – Lesson 2



Protecting the Unbelievers

Scripture reading Acts 9:23-25

“And after that many days were fulfilled, the Jews took counsel to kill him: But their laying await was known of Saul. And they watched the gates day and night to kill him. Then the disciples took him by night, and let him down by the wall in a basket.”

In these three verses, we read twice that the Jews wanted to kill Saul of Tarsus. Saul was aware of his enemies. It is absolutely important that you remind disciples that they have an enemy. *“Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour”* (1 Peter 5:8). The Christians in Damascus were concerned for Saul’s safety. They knew he had an enemy. They informed him of his enemy, and they did all they could to protect him from his enemy.

As a believer, you must understand that though Satan uses human beings, our fight is not with flesh and blood. *“For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places”* (Ephesians 6:12). Satan loves it when Christians fight other people, especially other Christians. How can we protect young believers from the enemy’s influence? As a parent, I can make sure my children get a Christian education. As a teacher, I can make sure that I am instructing my students about the dangers of worldly influence. As a pastor, I must make my people aware that we have an enemy and encourage them to submit to God in order to resist Him.

We must teach new believers that in our own strength, we do not have authority to overcome Satan. Temptations are all around us and Paul warned, *“Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall. There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it.”* (2 Corinthians 10:12-13). Teach young Christians there is a Devil and he is their enemy. The only way they can overcome him is by submission to God. Do all you can to protect new converts from the influence of Satan and you will help them to SHINE.

SHINE Devotional

Week 29 – Lesson 3



Learning to Wait on God

Scripture reading Galatians 1:15-19

“But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by his grace, To reveal his Son in me, that I might preach him among the heathen; immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood: Neither went I up to Jerusalem to them which were apostles before me; but I went into Arabia, and returned again unto Damascus. Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem to see Peter, and abode with him fifteen days. But other of the apostles saw I none, save James the Lord's brother.”

We learn from this passage that soon after Saul was converted in Damascus, he was led by the Spirit of God to the desert of Arabia. That is where he was personally taught by the Lord Jesus Christ. I can imagine that Saul at this point was anxious to begin a work for Christ. However, God put the brakes on Saul. He has to escape Damascus out of a window in a basket. He then went to Jerusalem, where he was not trusted by believers and was hated by the Jews. Eventually for his own safety, the believers took him to Caesarea and sent him back to his hometown in Tarsus. When Saul went back to Tarsus, he waited another three or four years before Barnabas would come get him again. Barnabas took Paul to Antioch where he was commissioned to start churches all over the world. King Solomon said, *“To every thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven... He hath made every thing beautiful in his time”* (Ecclesiastes 3:1, 11). Every great leader that has been used by God, has been taught to wait on God's timing. Moses waited forty years in the desert. Joseph was thrown in a pit. David was anointed king and then became a fugitive. God is not in a hurry. He has His plan and you and I have the privilege of being a part of that plan.

It is important that we teach new believers to wait on God and that we learn that lesson ourselves. Saul was called by God, yet, God told him to wait. When you teach new believers to wait on God, that they are His servants, that it is His work, and that He will accomplish things for His glory, in His time, you are teaching believers to SHINE.

SHINE Devotional

Week 29 – Lesson 4



God Has Everything He Needs

Scripture reading Acts 9:25

“Then the disciples took him by night, and let him down by the wall in a basket.”

Not everyone in the city of Damascus lived on the wall or in the wall. Not every house in the wall had a window, but when the Saul needed a house with a window in the wall of Damascus to escape in a basket, God provided everything he needed.

In 2014, a dear friend, out of the kindness of his heart purchased a new car for me to drive. It was a beautiful 2014 Infinity Q60 hard top convertible. It was amazing! I drove the car for two years and then one of our staff members, who had been driving an older church vehicle, let me know that his car had died with 300,000 miles on it. I thought this man needs a car. I have this beautiful very expensive car, maybe I could trade this one car in for two cars and we would both have nice cars to drive. Through a series of other events I was directed to go to CarMax. When I pulled my car into CarMax and walked around the parking lot, I saw two Buicks sitting across from each other. Both had approximately the same number of miles of the car I was driving. I went to the dealer and asked if I could trade the one car for those two particular cars. He said, “Absolutely.” We made the trade and for the last four years we have both been driving these cars that God provided. God knew exactly what I needed.

God knows what you need, whether that is a rope, a basket, a window in a wall, or a new sports car that you can trade in later for two other cars to meet the needs of someone else. I am firmly convinced that if we call on God and do exactly what God tells us to do, that we will have everything we need whenever we get to wherever He directs us. The Apostle Paul will tell us later, *“And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose... He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?”* (Romans 8:28, 32). When you teach others that God has everything we need, then you will teach others to SHINE.

SHINE Devotional

Week 29 – Lesson 5



The Importance of Good Fellowship

Scripture reading Acts 9:26-28

“And when Saul was come to Jerusalem, he assayed to join himself to the disciples: but they were all afraid of him, and believed not that he was a disciple. But Barnabas took him, and brought him to the apostles, and declared unto them how he had seen the Lord in the way, and that he had spoken to him, and how he had preached boldly at Damascus in the name of Jesus. And he was with them coming in and going out at Jerusalem.”

Believers will not grow in Christ if they do not have good, solid, Christian fellowship. Christians cannot grow alone. As a believer, you need the interaction of other believers. You need their insight. This is why God established the local church.

Saul needed to be with believers. The writer of Hebrews put it this way, *“Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; (for he is faithful that promised;) And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works: Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching.”* (Hebrews 10:23-25). The writer of Hebrews knew that the temple was going to be destroyed soon. He knew there would be great persecution throughout the land of Israel, and he knew how important it was for Christians to meet together to encourage one another. We don’t do good alone. In Luke 10, Jesus sent out seventy disciples. He sent them out *“two and two.”* When you see a young Christian come into your local church, you should do everything you can to introduce him or her to fellow believers. Communion is absolutely necessary if we are going to be strengthened as believers. That truth is emphasized nowhere more clearly than in the story of the conversion of Saul of Tarsus. It is obvious that the early Christians were very suspicious of Saul. It would have been very natural for them to suspect his motive. Yet, Barnabas made a huge effort to assure the suspicious disciples and the apostles that Saul’s heart was sincere, and even gave personal testimony of Saul’s walk with Christ.

When you determine to introduce young Christians to fellow believers, not only will you SHINE, but you will help them to SHINE.

SHINE Devotional

Week 29 – Lesson 6



Supporting Them That Serve

Scripture reading Acts 9:29-30

“And he spake boldly in the name of the Lord Jesus, and disputed against the Grecians: but they went about to slay him. Which when the brethren knew, they brought him down to Caesarea, and sent him forth to Tarsus.”

As a new, young, bold Christian, Saul would make many mistakes. Because of his bold witness in Damascus, his life was threatened. Because he had completely changed his position of a person of Jesus Christ, he was now considered a traitor by both the Jews and the Grecians. The Grecians were Hellenistic Jews, who though they held to the doctrines of Judaism had adopted the lifestyle of the Greek and Roman cultures. Saul was surrounded by opposition from the Jews and Grecians, and he was an irritant to the Romans. The believers were suspicious of him because of his past. The Bible tells us, however, that Saul was filled with the Spirit and that he preached the Word of God with boldness. This is what happens when a person is controlled by the Holy Spirit. Jesus said, *“But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth”* (Acts 1:8). When the Word of God is preached in power, there will be a response. There will be those that reject the truth and those who receive truth. Because that is true, preachers will either be loved or hated. It is so important for true believers to support those who serve!

Saul needed the support of his fellow church members in Jerusalem. Saul needed the strength of those who walked with God. Saul needed encouragement, protection, and support. It is essential that as a local church that we be supportive of new believers and help others grow. If you consider yourself a mature believer, God can use you to advance His kingdom. You simply need to determine to reach out to new members, receive them, and support them. Saul was a new believer, but he was a converted terrorist. So how did they help him? They helped ground him in the Word. They protected him from his enemies. They taught him to wait on God. They taught him God has everything he needed. They introduced him to fellow believers, and they supported him as he ministered to others. When you do that for a new believer, you will SHINE.