

SHINE Devotional

Week 47 – Lesson 1



Both

Scripture reading Acts 14:1

“And it came to pass in Iconium, that they went both together into the synagogue of the Jews, and so spake, that a great multitude both of the Jews and also of the Greeks believed.”

We need to remember that God created man with a need for companionship. *“And the Lord God said, It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him”* (Genesis 2:18). God, Himself, has never been alone. As Christians, we believe that there is one God in three persons: God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. In creation, God, speaking to Himself, said, *“Let us make man in our image”* (Genesis 1:26). God has never been alone and God does not want man to be alone.

In 1951, researchers at McGill University paid a group of male graduate students to stay in small chambers equipped with only a bed for an experiment on sensory deprivation. They could leave to use the bathroom, but that’s all. They wore goggles and earphones to limit their sense of sight and hearing, and gloves to limit their sense of touch. The plan was to observe students for six weeks, but not one lasted more than seven days. Nearly every student lost the ability *“to think clearly about anything for any length of time,”* while several others began to suffer hallucinations. *“One man could see nothing but dogs,”* wrote one of the study’s collaborators, *“another nothing but eyeglasses of various types, and so on. Companionship is absolutely essential for mental, spiritual, and social development. Solomon said, “Two are better than one; because they have a good reward for their labour. For if they fall, the one will lift up his fellow: but woe to him that is alone when he falleth; for he hath not another to help him up”* (Ecclesiastes 4:9-10). As a believer, you need a Christian companion. If you are married, thank God for your spouse and determine to serve God together and encourage one another in the Lord. The Apostle Paul was not married, and yet, was used tremendously by God, because he had the wisdom to travel with godly companions. Barnabas had disciples Paul and now they traveled together doing the work of God. When you have another Christian you are accountable to, one that you can serve the Lord together with, this companionship will help you SHINE.

SHINE Devotional

Week 47 – Lesson 2



Bad Companions

Scripture reading Proverbs 1:10-19

“My son, if sinners entice thee, consent thou not....walk not thou in the way with them; refrain thy foot from their path: For their feet run to evil, and make haste to shed blood. Surely in vain the net is spread in the sight of any bird. And they lay wait for their own blood; they lurk privily for their own lives. So are the ways of every one that is greedy of gain; which taketh away the life of the owners thereof.”

Just as good companions will bring great benefit to your life, God warns us, in our passage today, that evil companions will lead us astray. When I was in junior high, I had a dear friend that was a wholesome young man. Right after I first met him, he showed me an article that was written about him in Boy’s Life magazine. That was the official magazine of the Boy Scouts of America and this article was sent to Scouts all over the United States. The story was about my friend, Bill, saving the life of a Native American who was drowning in Lake Mead.

Bill and I made a commitment to each other. We would not get involved in drugs. We made that commitment when we were in the seventh grade and kept that commitment through our junior high years. However, after Bill moved to the other side of town, he got involved with some people who were doing drugs. One day I drove over to Bill’s house and he and I went for a ride. He pulled his car to the side of the road and pulled out some pot. I said, “Hey buddy, I thought we made a commitment to never do that?” He said, “Oh, Dave that was when we were kids.” Bill had allowed himself to be led astray with bad companions. Solomon said, *“He that walketh with wise men shall be wise: but a companion of fools shall be destroyed”* (Proverbs 13:20). This is a clear warning from God. I watched as my friend, life went downhill and, frankly, amounted to little or nothing. Your companions will make or break you. God tell us, *“Make no friendship with an angry man; and with a furious man thou shalt not go: Lest thou learn his ways, and get a snare to thy soul”* (Proverbs 22:24-25). If you hang with those who don’t do right, you might “hang” with those who don’t do right. I encourage you to surround yourself with godly companions, and to guard the companions of your children. When you do, they will SHINE and so will you.

SHINE Devotional

Week 47 – Lesson 3



Developing Good Companions

Scripture reading Proverbs 18:24

“A man that hath friends must shew himself friendly: and there is a friend that sticketh closer than a brother.”

The Apostle Paul was used by God in tremendous ways to win thousands of people to Jesus Christ. One reason he was successful in ministry was because he developed good companions. Today, I would like to share with you six principles from Proverbs that will help you become a good friend and develop good companions.

1. You must be friendly. In our text Solomon said you must show yourself friendly. Don't wait for others to approach you, instead, graciously approach others and offer your friendship.
2. You must be loyal. *“A friend loveth at all times, and a brother is born for adversity”* (Proverbs 17:17). A friend is one who sticks with his or her friend through thick and thin.
3. You must be pure in heart. *“He that loveth pureness of heart, for the grace of his lips the king shall be his friend”* (Proverbs 22:11). People read your heart by what comes out of your lips. Refuse to speak evil of others. Be gracious and kind. Reflect a pure heart, and you will make even leaders want to be your friends.
4. Be truthful even when it hurts. *“Faithful are the wounds of a friend; but the kisses of an enemy are deceitful”* (Proverbs 27:6). If I truly love somebody, I will tell them the truth. Even if it hurts.
5. Be sweet with your words so people will listen to your heart. *“Ointment and perfume rejoice the heart: so doth the sweetness of a man's friend by hearty counsel”* (Proverbs 27:9).
6. Never forsake your friend. *“Thine own friend, and thy father's friend, forsake not; neither go into thy brother's house in the day of thy calamity: for better is a neighbour that is near than a brother far off”* (Proverbs 27:10). When your friend is in need, be there. When you're in need, don't be afraid to allow your friend to help you.

Good companions are essential if you will succeed in Christ. Apply these six principles from Proverbs and you will SHINE.

SHINE Devotional

Week 47 – Lesson 4



Your Church Was Developed for Companionship

Scripture reading Hebrews 10:24-25

“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.”

Jesus Christ came to this earth to save lost souls (Luke 19:10). Beyond that, He wanted those who put their faith and trust in Him to be able to grow in Him and to have a support group to help them to continue to walk in His teaching and love. For that reason, He established local, New Testament churches. It does not take a large group of people meeting together to have church. The word *church* simply means a called-out assembly. However, it is essential that people assemble because, as we have seen, we cannot succeed unless we have companionship.

The first church *“continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers.”* (Acts 2:42). Fellowship was a key element of that first church, and it is a key element today. That is why at Liberty Baptist Church we have developed Connection Classes, our small group Bible studies that meet throughout the week. These classes give people an opportunity to interact with one another and develop friendships. At the end of 2019, we also developed Prayer Groups. Anyone who becomes a member of Liberty Baptist Church is assigned a Prayer Group Leader, and Prayer Groups meet together on a quarterly basis to pray for one another. Prayer Group Leaders contact their group members each week to see if there are any prayer requests that they can pray for. Liberty Baptist Church also has an one-on-one discipleship program that I as your pastor, encourage you to get involved with. I don't know of a greater way you can develop companionship with someone than to go through Scriptural teaching together!

God established the church for that. This church has established Prayer Groups, Connection Classes, and discipleship for you. I encourage you to get involved in these ministries so you, as a believer, will SHINE.

SHINE Devotional

Week 47 – Lesson 5



They... Spake...

Scripture reading Acts 14:1

“And it came to pass in Iconium, that they went both together into the synagogue of the Jews, and so spake, that a great multitude both of the Jews and also of the Greeks believed.”

Paul and Barnabas were always prepared to speak the truth of the Gospel. What is the Gospel? According to 1 Corinthians 15, the Gospel includes these facts:

1. That Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures.
2. That He was buried (this proves that He was really died).
3. That Jesus rose from the dead three days later.
4. That He was seen by hundreds of eyewitnesses (this is proof that He rose from the dead).

That Good News was given to the Apostle Paul to share with the world in his day. It is given to you and I to share with our world in this day. People do not trust Christ by watching your life. In order for someone to get saved, they must be told how to be saved. They must understand that Jesus is God. They must understand that they are sinners. They must understand that Jesus died, was buried, and rose from the dead for them. They must believe and they must call upon Him and ask Him to save them (Romans 10:13). We are to speak this truth, whenever we are given the opportunity. James reminds us that we should, *“be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath”* (James 1:19). The Apostle Paul reminds us how to speak. *“Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man”* (Colossians 4:6).

Let me encourage you to learn to speak the Gospel so others may come to know Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour. Paul spoke and a great multitude both of Jews and also Greeks believed. God wants to use you, too. 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). Like Timothy you should study the Gospel message and learn how to present it. When you do, you will SHINE.

SHINE Devotional

Week 47 – Lesson 6

Stirred Up



Scripture reading Acts 14:2,

“But the unbelieving Jews stirred up the Gentiles, and made their minds evil affected against the brethren.”

Satan hates the Gospel message, because it glorifies the Lord Jesus Christ. It demonstrates the love that Jesus Christ has for unsaved sinners. It demonstrates His mercy. It draws people out of the clutches of the one who would exalt himself above the stars of God (Isaiah 14:13). Because he hates this message so much, Satan stirs his people to fight against the people of God. David questioned, *“Why do the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing? The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the Lord, and against his anointed, saying, Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us”* (Psalm 2:1-3). The truth is God’s message has always been despised, because Satan wants people to be blind to their salvation. When the believers in the church of Thessalonica were being persecuted for Christ, Paul said, *“For ye, brethren, became followers of the churches of God which in Judaea are in Christ Jesus: for ye also have suffered like things of your own countrymen, even as they have of the Jews: Who both killed the Lord Jesus, and their own prophets, and have persecuted us; and they please not God, and are contrary to all men: Forbidding us to speak to the Gentiles that they might be saved, to fill up their sins alway: for the wrath is come upon them to the uttermost”* (1 Thessalonians 2:14-16). We as Christians must expect opposition if we speak the truth. *“But thou hast fully known my doctrine, manner of life, purpose, faith, longsuffering, charity, patience, Persecutions, afflictions, which came unto me at Antioch, at Iconium, at Lystra; what persecutions I endured: but out of them all the Lord delivered me”* (2 Timothy 3:10-11). Paul reminded Timothy of what he suffered in Acts 14. We must remember that if we do what God wants us to do, we will suffer persecution as well.

Paul the apostle had a spiritual companion. He spoke the Gospel with conviction and grace, and he lived expecting opposition and rejection. God wants you to live the same way and when you do, you will SHINE.