

# Shine <sup>(9)</sup>

This is the last lesson in this discipleship series and we are going to talk about a very mature aspect of your relationship with Jesus, leading others to Him. Throughout these lessons, you have been confronted with your need to give God more of your life and to allow Him to invade every area of it. We have discussed how you can serve in the church and grow in your personal relationship with Christ. Now let us look at ways we can lead others into this same new life that you have been taught about.

## **Matthew 5:13-16**

**13 “You are the salt of the earth; . . . 14 You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. 15 nor does anyone light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on the lamp stand, and it gives light to all who are in the house. Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven.”**

- What does verse 13 call us? \_\_\_\_\_
- What does verse 14 say that we are? \_\_\_\_\_

Every Christian is called to be something extraordinary: the very tools that God uses to bring eternal life to mankind. Part of that is going out and being the spice of life, the salt of the earth. We need to form relationships with people who need God and allow Him to draw them closer to Jesus by the witness of our lives and the words of our mouths.

The way we live our lives will influence people, but we **MUST** be vocal about our faith in Jesus.

Think about what Jesus has done for us on the cross. He died a horrid death and rose again to save us from sin and eternal death. This news should be spread, which is exactly what evangelism is all about. Evangelism is simply spreading the good news about what Jesus did on the cross, and how He rose again and has victory and power over sin and death.

### **Gospel:**

The “Good News” of Jesus’ death, burial and resurrection.

## **Acts 1:8**

**But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth.**

Jesus says that we will be His witnesses. A witness in court testifies what he has seen or heard or had happen to him. If the person testifying has a bad reputation though, then his testimony is difficult to believe. The same applies to all who have been saved. If we are running around telling people about how great God is, but our lives are not reflecting what we are saying, then people are not going to believe any of what we have to say. It is very likely that we will push people further away from caring about God.

Knowing how much of an influence we can have on what others think about God can be stressful. We know the wrong things we do, and know that at times people see the wrong things we do. A response to all this pressure may be to just clam up and not tell anyone about God because we feel so unworthy.

**Mark 16:15**

***(Jesus speaking) Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation.***

Unfortunately sometimes we psych ourselves out. This is an all too frequent event. A person might truly desire to tell people about Jesus, but finds it difficult to explain the gospel. What will I say? What if they ask me questions I don't know the answer to? Why can't someone else do it?

Notice in this verse that it does not say to go into all the world and preach the gospel if we feel like it. Jesus is giving a direct command here, and to disobey would be rejecting Jesus' authority. Yes, it is not easy to share the gospel to others, especially those close to us, but when you think about how good the news is you will find that not sharing is hard to do.

**Remember:** You don't have to have all the answers to share Jesus with someone else. You just have to have the heart to share

**Matt 28:19-20**

***19 "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, 20 teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age."***

- What are we to teach others? (vs. 19) \_\_\_\_\_
- Are you ever alone in doing this? (vs. 20) \_\_\_\_\_

Notice verse 19 says to make disciples. Jesus does not want us to simply share the gospel. We are to help Christians that are young in their faith to grow closer to God, and have them make disciples as well.

## **Romans 10:14**

**How then will they call on Him in whom they have not believed? How will they believe in Him whom they have not heard? And how will they hear without a preacher?**

- Romans 10:14 tells us that people will not hear about Jesus without a \_\_\_\_\_.

We are all called to give account (or testify) to what the Lord has done for us. Some may call this preaching, others call it sharing your faith. The point is to share the gospel with those who are lost. We do this best by the words we speak and the praises we give up to God.

The best testimony of your life is the worship and praise you offer up to Jesus. Do this openly and sincerely.

## **1 Peter 3:15**

**But sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts, always being ready to make a defense to everyone who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you, yet with gentleness and reverence;**

- What are we always to be ready to do? \_\_\_\_\_
- According to this verse, what attitude should we have while we share our faith?

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How do we introduce our faith into people's lives? Jesus is the greatest thing that ever happened in the history of our planet! What does the Bible say about reaching the lost? How do we show our friends that Jesus is what they are missing? Let us first address these issues with some wrong approaches to evangelism.

### ***Evangelism:***

Sharing the gospel of Jesus with those who don't have a relationship with Him.

## **Things not to do**

### **1. The Bible Thumper**

The bible thumper is someone who gets into someone's face and is extremely confrontational about the person's stance with God. Although their intention is founded in the fact that they want people saved, their method is harsh. Direct confrontation often leads to a feeling of "better than you." This offends people and sends them away with a bad taste for Christians in their mouth. Remember, when we share Jesus we should act like Him: clothed with humility and gentleness.

## 2. *The Ambush*

Often, well meaning Christians bring people to events with another motive in mind. For instance, if an unsaved person is invited to church expecting to play baseball, and instead finds himself listening to a salvation message for a half hour in the middle of the game, they will feel deceived. Why? Because they have been ambushed. They'll also feel the person who invited them really doesn't care about them. The gospel cannot be spread by tricking people into it. The most likely response will be for people to leave and not accept another invitation from you. We must be honest with our intentions, people will respect that.

## 3. *Hard Contact*

In our culture, people are usually reserved and want to present their best side for others to see, especially strangers. A hard contact is opening communication with a total stranger about the gospel of Jesus. If you go up to someone and attempt to start a conversation about God chances are, the person you're talking to will put up a defense. For anyone to listen to you, you have to first ***earn the right*** to share your faith with them.

A shot in the dark usually misses the target.

There will be rare occasions when a hard contact is necessary. For example, there are times when God speaks inside your heart. You feel a tug to tell someone about the gospel, maybe even a specific phrase pops into your mind. The Holy Spirit is talking to you. God has brought you to a place for a special meeting. When He tugs on your heart to speak to somebody, do it, and say what He has placed on your mind. The timing couldn't be in better hands.

## 4. *Little Trinkets*

Door-to-door: going door-to-door in order to tell your neighbors about Jesus may seem like a terrific idea, but this falls under the same category of Hard Contact. Without a personal relationship we have not ***earned the right*** to talk about personal issues. People also associate the door-to-door method with cults and telemarketers.

Tracts: Tracts are small paper packets or sheets that walk a person through the gospel. They explain the need for salvation and how to receive Jesus. Many Christians leave tracts for people to find or hand them out in public areas. However, there is no relationship involved with handing out tracts so why should anyone read them?

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Now it's time for the good news. Here are some tools to help you share your faith. Understand, in most circumstances you need to earn the R.I.G.H.T. to talk to them on a personal level.

**Relationships** are the key to evangelizing in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The majority of people saved come to know Jesus because of the time and energy somebody put into their life. Within that relationship, your **integrity** is of the upmost importance. If your life looks no different than anybody else's, then when the time comes for you to tell them about Christ, why would there be a reason for them to listen to you? Your testimony as you live out the gospel you believe in will make a huge impact on those around you. Remember though, that having a Christ-like testimony will never make up for opening your mouth.

**Romans 10:17**

***So faith comes from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ.***

- What responsibility do you have for your friends hearing the word of Christ? \_\_\_\_\_
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**Genuineness** is an important quality. If you aren't genuine in your relationship with somebody, then isn't your investment in their life nothing more than a sales pitch? Yes, it is eternally important that people are saved, but keep in mind that Christ died for all because "God so loved the world." When you invest in somebody's life, don't take that lightly. If all you want to do is tell a person the gospel as quickly as possible and then move on, they will take notice and tune you out like a telemarketer. Don't forget to have fun and spend quality time developing the relationship.

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When we become Christians, there can be a temptation to begin looking down on others around us, especially those who aren't saved. We are not to judge one another, or even the world; that is God's job. We must remember with **humility** where we came from and the sin that we have been saved from.

When we tell people the gospel, we can't view them as a second-rate human being. That is no way to have a relationship.

**James 4:6**

***"God is opposed to the proud but exalts the humble."***

- What attitude do you think will better help you in a relationship? \_\_\_\_\_

After you've gained the right to talk to somebody about the gospel, having made a true friendship with somebody so that they've seen your testimony, you should have gained their **trust** by this time. If they trust you, they will listen to what you have to say. Even if they reject your offer, they will at least respect you for telling them the most important thing in your life.

There must be a time in your relationship with somebody that you tell them about Christ. The presentation doesn't have to be perfect, but at some point you'll have to be straightforward and tell them the gospel. If you're their friend, the gospel coming from your mouth will make the biggest impact. A great tool you have is the evangelism packet named "Questions."

Don't expect your pastor or another Christian to share the gospel with your friends. This is **YOUR** job!

One of the most effective tools in the sharing of your faith is your personal testimony. Your testimony is your story, your experience with Jesus. It should include what your life was like before you had a relationship with Jesus, then transition into what difference Jesus makes in your life. We have included a testimony of an individual who helped create this discipleship material for you to learn from.

"My life before Christ was limited to Transformers and He-Man action figures. I can't claim that I had a thirst to know God or needed to change the way I lived my life, I was seven. I had been brought up into a moral, God fearing home where my mother laid down spiritual roots for my sister and me to build upon. I remember, one day I went into my mother's room to ask her about heaven and Hell. I was curious about something I had either heard or seen. She was in the bathroom fixing her hair. She sat me down on the tub and explained to me that believing Jesus died for your sins and rose again meant that you could go to heaven and be with Him one day. I believed in Jesus right then and there. I felt that the whole experience was rather simple and that everyone must believe in Jesus since it made so much sense to me.

Since that day I have grown in my knowledge and relationship with Christ. It is this relationship that has kept me from sliding into a life of destruction and pain. Were it not for Christ in my life I would be given over to the lust of my flesh and a useless life spent serving only myself. It is my relationship with Jesus that keeps me living for Him and able to face the challenges that life throws at me. He fills me with joy and purpose, and I consider it a privilege to serve Him."

If you are rejected, don't let the relationship fade. After you've told somebody the greatest truth stick with them, it lets them know that you care for them as a person even to a greater degree. Don't give up, but be patient.

**Your testimony should answer this singular question:**

What difference has Jesus made in your life?

If the person does come to know Jesus, here's the challenge: build them up yourself and bring them through this discipleship course. We are told to "build one another up in righteousness." The bible commands that "older men teach the younger men, and the older women to teach the younger women." Spiritually speaking, as somebody who has been a Christian several months now and has gone through this course, you are older and should be disciplining somebody else. Through a friendship, tell somebody the gospel. Shine your light. Let the whole world know that Jesus is Lord.

## *Discussion Questions*

- 1. What do you think it means to be “salt of the earth” and “light of the world?”*
- 2. How do you know that you are never alone in serving the Lord?*
- 3. How is our service to God through evangelism a form of worship?*
- 4. Why is a relationship so important in sharing the gospel?*
- 5. List three friends that need to hear the gospel.*
- 6. Define the following terms*  
*Gospel:*  
*Evangelism:*  
*R.I.G.H.T.*
- 7. Write your personal testimony.*