

Witness

Shine!

FACILITATOR'S GUIDE
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SHINE IN OBEDIENCE

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Shine IN OBEDIENCE

*How can we shine as light in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation (world)?
We can live in obedience to his commands.*

SHINING GOAL: An effective witness for Christ requires obedience to His commands.

SHINING GUIDANCE: Philippians 2:15; 1 John; Revelation 1-3

SHINING GEM: "...the true light now shineth" (1 John 2:8).

We've all heard the story, maybe even seen movies about "The Three Musketeers." These three fellows hung out together, fought their way out of trouble, and stood together as true friends. In the Old Testament book of Daniel, chapter 3, we also find three young men we always associate together. They were probably friends who worshiped together, and stood together in trouble. Their names were Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. These guys found themselves in hot water (not literally) with King Nebuchadnezzar. They refused to bow down and worship the king's gods and the golden image he had set up.

I can only imagine how afraid they must have been before this king, knowing he had the authority to put them to death. If they had agreed to his demand, they would have been disobeying their God. Because of their refusal to bow down, they were thrown into a hot fire (literally), which was heated seven times hotter than usual. End of story? Not quite.

All of a sudden, there were four men in the fire! I just love the song about these three that says, "...they wouldn't bend, they wouldn't bow, they wouldn't burn!" God protected them when they trusted He would, even though they didn't exactly know the outcome or how He would take care of them in this burning furnace. There will be times when we don't understand what the outcome will be, but we should have clear convictions and have our faith firmly established in our God. He will give us courage, just as he did these men, to overcome obstacles in our path. You may never hear "obey God and lose your life" as Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego heard, but you will have difficult choices along life's way. Make wise decisions and choose to obey God. You will not regret doing the right thing. Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego could have lost their lives in that situation. The fire was real. Their lives were at stake, but obedience to their Sovereign God was more important to them. God gave them courage to face whatever happened. These three young men are without a doubt among the most "shining" examples of obedience we could ever read about.

The Light We Reflect

✳ Write the Shining Gem, "...the true light now shineth" (1 John 2:8) on a 5 x 8 card. Memorize it this month.

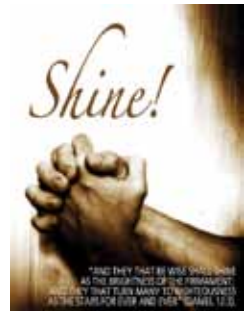
✳ Go over all the questions and answers on pp. 24-25.

✳ Our light does reflect hope. Where does that hope come from? (*The gospel of Jesus Christ—Colossians 1:5.*)

✳ Do we believe that hope if we're not obeying it? (*Matthew 7:21; Luke 6:46; 1 John 2:4-5*)

✳ The absence of hope is hopelessness. Think of some things in our society today that cause despair and hopelessness.

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|------------------------------|-----------------------|
| (1) Failed health | (6) Homosexuality |
| (2) Failed marriages/Divorce | (7) False friends |
| (3) Financial failure | (8) Unemployment |
| (4) Drugs/Alcoholism | (9) Natural disasters |
| (5) Hurtful lifestyles/Sin | (10) Tragedies |



✳ Paul wrote the book of Colossians, actually, a letter to the church at Colossae. As you read earlier in Colossians 1:5, the theme of the letter is *hope*. Why did these people need hope? (They were going through a serious threat to their faith due to errors in a mixture of religious teachings—Jewish, Greek, and Oriental influences.)

✳ What were some of these teachings? (1) Knowledge apart from Christ—Colossians 2:8; (2) Following prescribed rituals—Colossians 2:16; (3) Worship of angels—Colossians 2:18; (4) Self abasement—Colossians 2:20-23; (5) Not accepting the deity of Christ—Colossians 2:8-9.

✳ How then do we reflect the light of hope the gospel gives? (By obeying the truth of the gospel—John 15:10; 1 Peter 1:14.)

✳ How can we obey the gospel and live victorious lives? (1) With the help of the Holy Spirit—Acts 4:31; Colossians 1:8-9; (2) Letting the word of God dwell in our lives richly—Psalm 119:11; Colossians 3:16-17.

✳ Do you connect faith and love with obedience? (Yes—1 Peter 1:22; 2 John 6.)

✳ In a journal, start a list of Scriptures that teach us to obey. We've gone over several in this part of our study.

✳ Close in prayer by asking God to help you obey His Word.

The Source of Light

✳ Read the Shining Gem together.

✳ Go over the questions and answers for p. 25.

✳ Read the description John writes of Jesus in Revelation 1:13-16.

✳ Do you think there could be anything brighter than this vision?

✳ Name the imagery described in the above mentioned verses that pertain to light. (1) Eyes—flame of fire, (2) Feet-like brass burned in furnace, (3) Holding stars, and (4) Face—countenance as the sun.

✳ Do you remember any other examples of Jesus' face shining as the sun? (Transfiguration—Matthew 17:2)

✳ Jesus is our source of light—from the beginning of time (Genesis 1:3; 2 Corinthians 4:6;) and forevermore (Revelation 21:23).

✳ What happens when the source of light in our life grows dim or dark? (Our understanding becomes darkened—Ephesians 4:18; Psalm 82:5; Proverbs 4:19.)

✳ Is it always easy to follow and obey our "source of light"—Jesus? (1 John 5:3; Matthew 19:16-22)

✳ What is the outcome for those who do not obey the Gospel? (2 Thessalonians 1:8-9; Romans 2:8-9; Deuteronomy 30:17-18)



- * How do we prove that we know the “source of light”? (*John 14:23; Romans 6:12; 1 John 2:3*)
- * How do we keep our light bright? (*By being just—Proverbs 4:18*)
- * How does God view disobedience? (*As rebellion—Nehemiah 9:17; 1 Samuel 12:15, 15:23*)
- * Why did Israel continually disobey? (*They were stubborn, wicked and sinful—Deuteronomy 9:26-27.*)
- * According to Deuteronomy 10:12-13, why didn’t they just obey? (*They were always wanting to trust in something or someone other than God.*)
- * Still, God considered them His children (*just as He does us, if we’ve accepted Him—Deuteronomy 9:29*).
- * Should we pray for Israel? (*Yes—Psalm 122:6; 128:5-6.*)
- * Continue the list of obedience Scriptures in your journal.
- * Pray for the peace of Israel as you close today.

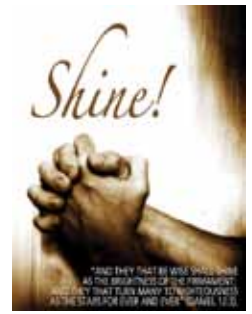
The Light of the Church

- * Say the Shining Gem together.
- * Go over the questions and answers on p. 26.
- * Why do you attend church?
- * Do you think of the church as the building or the people who make up the church? (*I believe it is the people. God calls the church His Bride (Revelation 19:7; 21:2) and tells us that Jesus is coming back for us. I don’t think He would have died, rose again, and now be planning a trip to gather all these church buildings, do you?*)
- * Why does the church shine so brightly? (*Because it’s the Body of Christ—Romans 12:5; 1 Corinthians 12:27; Colossians 1:24*)
- * The first church became a light for all to follow. How did they accomplish this? (*Acts 2:42; Romans 1:12; Philippians 1:3,5; 1 John 1:7*)
- * Name some reasons why the church is so important. (*(1) For growth—Acts 2:47; (2) Love—Ephesians 1:15; 1 Peter 1:22; (3) Care for others—Acts 20:28; (4) Christ is the head—Colossians 1:18; Ephesians 1:22.*)
- * Can a church shine if there is strife in its midst? (*1 Corinthians 3:3; 2 Corinthians 12:20-21; 1 Corinthians 6:6*)
- * Do you consider your church united as a family? *Read these verses: 2 Corinthians 6:18; Romans 8:17.*
- * What gives us the right to a family relationship with Christ? (*Obedience—Matthew 12:50; Luke 8:21; Ephesians 2:19*)
- * Share some reasons for enjoying the church you attend.
- * Close in prayer for your church and for Bible-teaching churches all across our country and the world. Ask God to make these churches the brightest lights anyone can see.

The Saints That Shine

- * Have someone say the Shining Gem from memory.
- * Go over the questions and answers on p. 27.
- * What is your definition of a saint?

LEADER'S NOTE: (The *American Heritage Dictionary* describes a saint as (1a.) A person officially recognized, especially by canonization; (1b.) A person who has died and gone to heaven; (2.) An extremely virtuous person.) Another definition I read online for Saint was: Someone who is sacred, holy, pure, blameless, dedicated. They become saints by means of the Holy Spirit. So if we put all of these definitions together, a saint is: A believer who is *holy* and in whom Christ dwells, whether in Heaven or on earth.



* What is promised for those who obey? (*Blessings—Revelation 22:14; James 1:25; Exodus 19:5; Matthew 7:21.*)

* God, as always, had a plan, but have you ever thought of what would have happened if Mary had not obeyed (Luke 1:31,37-38)? What about Ruth (Ruth 1:16; 4:13, 17)? Or Esther (Esther 2:10, 17; 8:3-4)? It is so much better to obey God than to go against Him.

* What is the spiritual heritage that saints of God can look forward to? (Partakers of the inheritance—Colossians 1:12; 3:24; I Peter 1:4)

* (Here are some verses from a Bible concordance concerning God's knowledge of saints. (Nahum 1:7—those who trust in Him; 1 Corinthians 8:3—Saints are known; 2 Timothy 2:19—knows those who are His.)

* How does God view the death of His Saints? (*As precious—Psalm 116:15; With hope—Proverbs 14:32; Triumphant—Luke 16:22; As great gain—Philippians 1:21; As fearless—Psalm 23:4.*)

* Do you believe that saints have safety/security because of their salvation? (*Proverbs 3:24; Hebrews 13:6; I Peter 3:13; Psalm 91:5; Isaiah 43:2*)

* What does Ephesians 6:18 tell us to do for all saints? (*Pray*)

* God tells us that His saints are immovable. Read some of these Scriptures. (Psalm 16:8, 125:1; Proverbs 10:30)

* In your journal, write your feelings about obedience to God.

* Close and pray for all saints of God that they will stand firm and obey what God tells them to do.

In Closing...

God doesn't give us a bunch of requirements and commands because He wants to restrict our freedoms, but rather, it's for our own good. Did your mom or dad ever tell you that getting a spanking was *for your own good*? They wanted you to obey them and felt the need for some incentive. Was it easy to obey them all the time? Probably not, because we are by nature rebellious, stubborn and sinful. That sounds familiar. We learned these traits were also the characteristics of the Israelite children. The fact is...as long as we live on earth, we will naturally want to trust in what we can see and follow our own instincts, but with faith in God, we can trust in what we can't see. We must accept the unseen, invisible hand of God to know that He seeks our good. Only then are we really obeying.