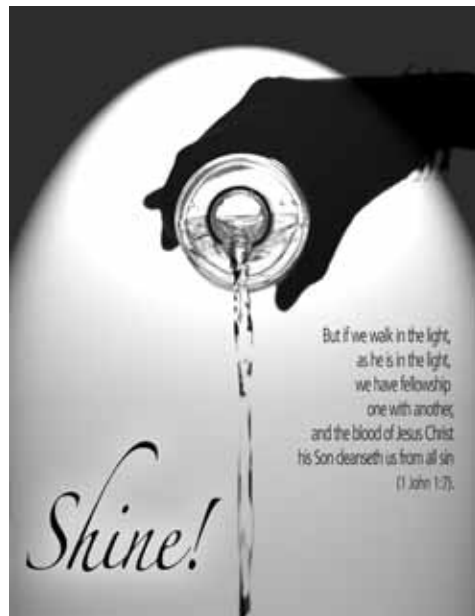


Witness

Shine!

FACILITATOR'S GUIDE
JUNE 2011



SHINE IN PURITY

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Shine IN PURITY

*How can we shine as light in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation (world)?
We can exemplify lives of purity in society.*

SHINING GOAL: We can shine as light as we understand and embrace a life of purity.

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

SHINING GEMS: *“That ye may be blameless and harmless, children of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as light in the world” (Philippians 2:15).*

“But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin. If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness” (1 John 1:7-9).

I woke up one morning in January to nine inches of snow—a very rare occurrence for us here in north Alabama. With the sun shining on the snow, the glare was so bright that I needed sunglasses. The thing that captured my attention, however, was the pure white covering of everything as far as the eye could see. What a beautiful sight God had provided for us. It was simply glorious.

That sight reminded me of David pleading with God to wash and cleanse him “whiter than snow.” I believe that would indicate David wanted the purest of pure for his heart. He truly was repentant of the sins he had committed and was trusting God to purify the ugliness he had experienced. I’m sure we’ve all had thoughts of our sins being dirty and feeling like our lives are stained beyond repair. When we think that way, read about David, who God called, “the man after my own heart.”

When God comes into our hearts and lives, He gives us a *new* heart, one that has been wiped clean of the filthiness; He makes it bright, shiny and whiter than snow. We are ready then to begin living a life that will please God and bring Him glory. To do that we must safeguard our hearts from the world around us, yet, live in the world as witnesses to others of His life-changing power. This world is sinful, dark and without a lot of purity. Christ calls us to live according to His example, drawing others to Himself. It’s not an easy task; it’s not always fun or exciting, and it may be the last thing we want to do. Yet, think. What if it were you out in darkness? Wouldn’t you want to meet or know someone who could shine a light to lead you out of that darkness? Be that person. Shine in purity in your church, in your heart and mind, in your life and with your name.

Pure Churches

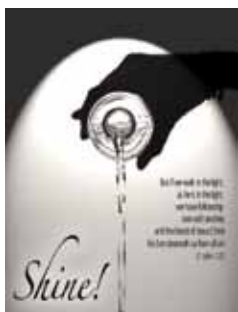
- * Write the two Shining Gems in a journal.
- * Go over the questions and answers on page 21.
- * Do you attend a perfect church? (*If your answer is yes, please send out a letter giving us all directions as to how to get there.*)
- * Is your church an effective church? What makes it effective?
- * Where was the first Christian church? (The first Christian community was founded on the teachings of Jesus in the first century A.D. and was centered in Jerusalem. The “first church” is the church recorded in the New Testament especially the Book of Acts and The Epistles of Paul. The New Testament church is the “original church” and the “one true church.” GOOGLE: “FIRST CHURCH”)



- * What defined the first church? ([1] *The Holy Spirit and* [2] *Knowing the Lord Jesus*)
- * Has that changed for our modern church? (*No, the church needs the power of the Spirit to keep His Word [which is pure] and not deny His name.*)
- * What happened on the day of Pentecost? (*3,000 souls were converted and added to the church—Acts 2:42-44,47.*)
- * Do you love your church and do everything you can to support its ministry?
- * Is your church active in times of tragedy or misfortune of members? (*See 1 Timothy 1:5. When tornadoes ripped through Alabama on April 27, 2011, one of our church families lost their home and its contents, as well as their vehicles. Our church immediately started helping them out. Other members have helped with clean up in the hardest hit areas, donated clothing, food, and money. I'm proud to be part of a church with that kind of pure love.*)
- * Does your church maintain a visual presence in the community? Is it recognized as an influence for its members and for others in your community?
- * Is the church about the building or the people?
- * Here are some biblical expectations of God's church: (1) Holiness—*Ephesians 5:27*; (2) Preaching of God's Word—*Proverbs 30:5*; (3) Love of God's Word—*Psalms 119:140*; (4) Love of the Brethren—*1 Peter 1:22*; and (5) Helps widows and orphans—*James 1:27*.
- * What have you done for your church lately?
- * Make an entry in your journal of things important to you about your church, things that need to be done to improve your church and what you intend to do about those things.
- * Close in prayer for your church, your pastor, your church family and yourself. Ask God to cleanse your church, making it a pure example of a Christ-like church in your community.

Pure Hearts and Minds

- * Read the Shining Gems together.
- * Go over the questions and answers on pp. 21-22 for this section. Read the first paragraph on p. 21 aloud to answer the next question.
- * How do you hold "fast" to the faith? (*By reading God's Word, attending church, obeying what God tells us, and keeping a pure heart.*)
- * What promise does God give those with pure hearts? (*Blessing and righteousness—Psalm 24:1-5; note v. 5.*)
- * Name an organization that works to distribute Bibles around the World. (*Gideons*)
- * Name an organization that works to translate the Word of God into different languages the world over? (*Wycliffe*)
- * Have you ever heard a speaker from either of these organizations? (*Both groups are dedicated and passionate about their work.*)
- * Does your church support either?
- * What does God expect from us in regard to spreading the Gospel? (*Matthew 28:19-20*)
- * Does He expect everyone to literally leave their homes and travel the world, baptizing? (*No, for many this would be impossible, but for those who cannot go, He expect us to give according to our abilities so others can go as missionaries.*)
- * How do we as Free Will Baptists support missions? (*Through direct giving to FWBIM, FWBHM, through WNAC—giving to the Provision Closet, Shine 75! and other special projects,*



Together Way giving, state mission plans, local church missions, and individual giving. If you know of other ways, name them.)

- * Close in a prayer of thanksgiving for a God who can cleanse our hearts and our minds.

Pure Lives

- * Are you working to memorize either of the Shining Gems memory verses? Say them together.

- * Go over the questions and answers on p. 22.

- * Have you lived a sinless, perfect life? (*Read 1 John 1:8, 10.*)

- * Yet, sandwiched between verses 8 and 10 is verse 9. What does God do to give us pure lives? (*Forgive and cleanse*)

- * Salvation is a one-time decision, but sanctification is an ongoing process. How often are we to ask God to cleanse us of our sins? (*As often as we confess our sins, the blood of Jesus is available to forgive us—1 John 1:9; 1 John 2:1,2; Psalm 32:5.*)

- * How is forgiveness found? (*In Christ alone—Ephesians 1:7*)

- * Christ personally forgave people. Look up these references and name either the situation in which forgiveness was extended or the person who experienced the forgiveness first-hand.

(1) Acts 13:38—*Paul preaches Christ as Savior*

(2) John 4:13-15—*The Samaritan woman*

(3) Mark 2:5—*Ones with palsy*

(4) John 8:10-11—*Woman caught in adultery*

- * Should we continue in sin just because we know grace is available? (*No—Romans 6:1-2*)

- * What keeps people out of Heaven? (*Sin—1 Peter 1:4; Revelation 21:27*)

- * The Old Testament uses three different words for forgiveness. One means “to cover, another to “lift away” and the third “to send away.” In the New Testament, forgiveness means separation of the sinner from his sins through the sacrifice of Christ and upon the ground of pure grace. Which do you like best?

- * Do you know people who have demonstrated a life of purity?

LEADER'S NOTE: Reverend Billy Graham made a commitment early in his ministry to high standards of purity. As a result, he is respected by believers and non-believers the world over. He is known by presidents, kings, entertainment stars, athletes, millionaires and the poor. Yet, the words slander and scandal have never been mentioned in regard to his ministry. What a wonderful testimony for God and for pure living.

- * David in Psalm 51 provides some steps to purity. (*Surely not David, the same one who committed adultery with Bathsheba? Yes, that David.*)

(1) According to 3, what is the first step? (*Acknowledge sin*)

(2) Verse 4 records that our sin is against whom? (*Recognize we sin against God*)

(3) According to verse 6, what does God want? (*God wants Truth*)

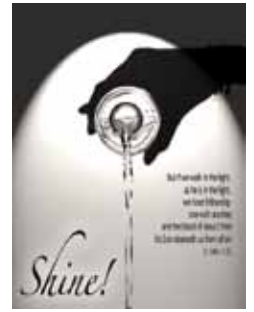
(4) According to 11, what could sin take from us? (*Sin hinders the Holy Spirit's presence and at the very least, His power*)

(5) Verses 10 and 17 admonish us to do what? (*We must repent—turn away from sin and to God.*)

- * Write these steps and verses in your journal to use as safeguards for purity.

- * Close in prayer; ask God for strength to live a life pure and pleasing to Him.

Pure Names



- ✳ Have someone say or read the Shining Gems for this month.
- ✳ Question 1, p. 23 should reference Hebrews 4:12 and Revelation 1:16; 2:12, 16. *In each of these passages, the Word of God is pictured as a sharp sword.* *
- ✳ In Question 2, p. 23, the reference should be Revelation 3:12 and 21.
- ✳ God promises “to him who overcomes” that they will be pillars in the temple of God, have a new name, and sit with God on His throne. Pillar is a symbol of strength and permanence. God promises to those who hold on a position in the life to come of strength and permanence; they will be someone who upholds things. Do you want to be a pillar?
- ✳ To whom did Paul refer as “pillars” in Galatians 2:9? (*Peter [Cephas], James, and John*)
- ✳ The reference for Question 3 should be Revelation 3:19 and 22. The exhortation that Jesus gives the church is to listen to the Spirit and be zealous and repent.
- ✳ What are some names for those who have been saved, the believers? (*Children of God—Luke 20:36; Christians—Acts 11:26; The Elect—Matthew 24:22; Heirs—Romans 8:17; Lights—Matthew 5:14; The Righteous—Psalm 34:15; Salt—Matthew 5:13.*)
- ✳ In Heaven, we’ll have a *new name* as we’re told in Isaiah 56:5 and Revelation 2:17. What would you like your new name to be? Any ideas?
- ✳ What could damage the name you have now? (Sin—Isaiah 59:2; Romans 5:12; Ezra 9:6; Jeremiah 23:40)
- ✳ What happens when a Christian behaves in unbelief? (*The world around cannot see Christ through us. The light is not shining from us in their darkness.*)
- ✳ What must distinguish our quality of life from the world’s? (*God—James 4:8; 2 Timothy 2:22*)
- ✳ Throughout the Bible, we find examples of protection, peace and power in purity. Look at the following:
 - (1) PROTECTION: Daniel (Daniel 1:8; 6:23); Elisha’s Servant (2 Kings 6:16,17); Esther (Esther 8:1-5)
 - (2) PEACE: Paul (2 Timothy 4:7-8); King Solomon’s rule (1 Chronicles 22:9); Every believer (Isaiah 26:3)
 - (3) POWER: Elijah’s life (James 5:17,18); Power in praying God’s will (John 15:7); Power to see God (Matthew 5:8).
- ✳ Have you ever asked God for His protection, peace and power?
- ✳ Close in a prayer of dedication, seeking lives of integrity and purity.

In Closing...

We may never understand or realize on earth what difference our lives make to others. That's all right as long as we are following God and living—to the best of our ability and through His strength—a life of purity. This may not be the popular thing or the easiest thing to do, but God expects such a life of us. He wants only what is right and good for our time here. Put your life on a scale and weigh the difference between impurity which brings heartaches, no hope, sinful living, and horrible consequences, or purity which means comfort, hope, joyful living, and God's help. I don't know about you, but I want my life to balance through His righteousness and holiness. That's the only way to shine!