

SHINE IN THE DARK MISSIONS

FAMILY DISCIPLESHIP PROGRAM (FDP)

OUR MISSION

Jesus said, “*Let the little ones come unto me.*”

James 1:27 states that *pure and undefiled religion before God and the Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their trouble, and to keep oneself unspotted from the world.*

As Jesus abides in us, and we in Him, we have a strong and urgent desire to shepherd the spiritual orphans - those from whom the devil has stolen a husband to the wife and a father to the children. We want to help them come to know Jesus as their own personal Savior and Lord. As His disciples, we have so much love to offer, in action, not just emotion. We have learned that many of the underprivileged that we encounter have not even experienced dinner in a restaurant, a picnic to the river, or a field trip to the airport, circus, zoo, or to many of the places most others take for granted in normal day to day lifestyles.

If we are standing in the gap and underprivileged children come to know Jesus, we shall see a decline in the severity of dysfunctional families.

WHY WORK WITH SHINE IN THE DARK MISSIONS?

Let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as it is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and much the more as you see the Day approaching. Hebrews 10:24-25

God is calling Shine in the Dark Missions to be an assembled body of believers shining our light into a world of darkness. A bicycle in a box is worthless until it is assembled. We don't want to be like that unassembled bike. Our motives are pure; we don't tickle ears, nor flatter for gain. Jesus sends us out in numbers, door to door ... and we are going. We've come to realize that we are aging rapidly and the Day is quickly approaching. The time is short; and we are attempting to redeem the time.

Acts 2:44-47 speaks of believers and the church stating ... *All who believed were together, and had all things in common, and sold their possessions and goods, and divided them among all, as anyone had need. So continuing daily, with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they ate their food with gladness and simplicity of heart, praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved.*

Shine in the Dark Missions extends this wonderful opportunity to believers who wish to obey Jesus; become living sacrifices, deny ourselves, walk in one accord, and take up our crosses so that many will be added to the Kingdom of God daily! Ours is a collective group effort attended to by a body of individuals, not a so called "ministry" effort. In other words, **each individual's personal involvement is what makes this mission successful.**

In John 12:24 Jesus claimed ... *Most assuredly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it produces much grain.*

God wants all of you and we need you!

WHY HELP?

First, let's consider one typical situation (please keep in mind that there are infinite scenarios):

Tanisha is a fictitious person. Tanisha's mother walked away from her dad when Tanisha was just a little girl. Tanisha's father attempted to raise her the best he knew how, while working a full-time job. His heart was actually more in the pride of his labor than in bringing up a child who would someday be a mother to his own grandchildren. Tanisha has missed the personal attention her own mother should have given her, and having been neglected by her father, begins to find a false security in the fact that boys having sex with her gives her a sense of approval and self-worth. Then she gets lost in the "promiscuous" trap, due to an addiction to sex, which results in a home where a confused mother is attempting to raise children.

Who will stand in the gap for Tanisha's family?

The rich young ruler succeeded in Bible Study, and applied what he learned to his character, but did not apply it to his *way* of life. We must be cautious not to get to a place where we think we know the Bible and live the Bible, and then neglect to leave our lifestyle to *follow Jesus*. If the Lord is truly directing our steps, we will show a dependency on His Word *daily* comparable to no other dependency ... *even unto the day we depart from this earth!* We should aspire to become as much like Jesus as possible before leaving this earth, and that process stops when we *stop going* because we think we have *already* become what He expects. If we do stop, and do not realize God wants to take us beyond our own current capabilities, God cannot use us as He intends. God has authored a *big* plan for us ... helping others to get to know Him, and He so desires to finish the plan *if* we will only recognize and acknowledge that we cannot go further without Him and will not quit like the rich young ruler did. We are told to run this race with endurance, casting aside every hindrance, not looking back, staying the course, knowing that God will be *with us* to the end, and then we shall become fishers of men ... for *only with God*, are all things possible.

We are obedient to God, who sends us!

WHAT CAN WE DO?

Shine in the Dark Missions has invested several years preparing the groundwork, by building the necessary trusting relationships, and now we're opening paths for others to venture into the deep with us.

"Love your neighbor as yourself." Matthew 22:39

"By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another."
John 13:35

Shine in the Dark Missions is prepared to connect willing individuals or families in need to spiritually mature individuals or families interested in Christian discipleship:

It is of utmost importance that we *get to know* the families we are helping on a personal level while we are attempting to *share the love of God*. As we assist, it is always best to apply scriptural principles such as *Do unto others, as you would have done unto you ... asking ... is this truly a good thing I'm doing, or the best thing I can do to help this family/person?*

1. Pray for and with the family (we could very well be *the only prayer(s)* for this family).
2. Discipleship includes gathering in the name of the Lord, including Bible Study.
3. Help the family find a Bible believing congregation in their area.
4. Spend time with the Mom and/or Dad, hoping they will confide in you, so that you can mentor them better.
5. Spend time with the children, caring for them as you would your own. We will obtain, keep on file, and provide a copy to you of a signed Release of Claims Form for each child in the family.
6. Spend birthday and holiday time with the family/members.
7. Phone your new friend(s) – show you care – follow-up when you know those you are mentoring need your support.
8. Mentor and hold the family members accountable scripturally.
9. Show love and compassion always, with encouragement.
10. Offer hope in any way the Lord leads.

Many of our volunteers, who have been preparing that groundwork with much love and compassion, are unpaid hard laborers, and come from dysfunctional situations of all sorts. Their personal discipleship encourages us and inspires us to

continue casing deeper. We are most thankful for these precious people, who have a true resemblance of children of God.

FAMILY DISCIPLESHIP GUIDELINES (for your concerns)

These guidelines are presented based on experience and to give you some insight regarding how to assist a family and stay within healthy boundaries. Unfortunately, the mothers and the children we minister to are usually in their position due to abuse, misfortune, negligence, or simple ignorance. God wants us to be there to love them to Himself.

- 1) Always pray for God's guidance.
- 2) Giving alms is scriptural - we want to supply needs **only** when it is practical and beneficial.
- 3) Think and pray twice before giving cash or paying bills – and rather, know the financial situation of the mother and mentor her regarding what she is doing about it. If she is spending money negligently, and we pay her bills, we are enabling irresponsible behavior. *“Unaddressed behavior is condoned behavior.”*
- 4) We specifically want to focus on the needs of the children, regarding their health, education, and personal needs in ways which would better their self-confidence and self-esteem.
- 5) Shine in the Dark Missions can help you to claim the assistance you offer as tax deductions as we are recognized by the IRS as a 501c3 Nonprofit Charitable Organization. We will provide the necessary paperwork and procedure.

Discipleship (accountability) is a two-way street.

- 1) To be disciplined, one must be willing to be accountable.
- 2) To discipline, one must be willing to hold accountability ... that often means confrontation *in love*.

As families are assigned to work together, those who agree to work with this program, at both ends, will have a clear understanding regarding the concept of the program. There is no time period of commitment.

Initial responses to this program often include:

“I can’t do this.”

Jesus teaches us to **know** that *“I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.”* All things **are possible with God** (we **must** depend on His guidance and strength). From experience, I witness that **we can’t go all the way with God if our service is limited to what we think we can do.**

“I’m not going to enable, they need to learn to help themselves.”

Who will lead them? Sure, there is a significant difference in enabling and discipline. But, does our God expect His chosen children, a holy priest-hood and a peculiar people (1 Peter 2:9), to depend on the government to give the personal attention necessary to heal these families? Jesus said that He came for the sick, not those who are healthy. Jesus is now living in us. Regarding those who are ill ... to be irresponsible when they know better is one thing, but to be ignorant is another. Who will be their judge?

“Shouldn’t we be very selective regarding who we help?”

The good Samaritan did not stop to consider the circumstances of the *neighbor* he was helping. Do be reassured that prayer is the basis of determination regarding where we go.

“I don’t have time.”

Jesus called the disciples to drop what was on their own agenda **now** to *“Follow Me.”* Each of the twelve disciples walked away from their work to obey the Lord. Then others later said that they had things to do that were more of a priority to them (including weddings and funerals) before they could come back to **follow Jesus**. Often, we should evaluate what we are doing and whether we are actually doing *everything* Jesus is telling us to do. We probably have things we have not let go of, *not surrendering all*, for the sake of *following Jesus* and building His Kingdom.

“I’ve got family obligations; I can’t do anymore than that.”

Jesus said, *“When you give a dinner or a supper, do not ask your friends, your brothers, your relatives, nor rich neighbors, lest they also invite you back and you be repaid. But when you give a feast, invite the poor, the maimed, the lame, the*

blind.” Traditions of the world teach us to invite our family and friends to dinner ... and to exchange gifts with them, but this is not what Jesus teaches us, nor is it a full investment into His Kingdom according to the Bible. *“Assuredly, I say to you, there is no one who has left house or brothers or sisters or father or mother or wife or children or lands for My sake and the gospel’s, who shall not receive a hundredfold now in this time – houses and brothers and sisters and mothers and children and lands, with persecutions – and in the age to come, eternal life.”* Mark 10:29-30

“For if you love those who love you, what reward have you? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? And if you greet your brethren only, what do you do more than others? Do not even the tax collectors do so? Therefore you shall be perfect, just as your Father in heaven is perfect.” Matthew 5:46-48

“Helping others is probably dangerous.”

God did not give us a Spirit of fear, but of *love*, and a sound mind. The sound mind cautions us regarding unsafe situations, and the *love of God* causes us to want to take risks to help others. Those that need help are most often not going to be found in the safest of places, so we must go into the highways and byways (alleys of any sort) to get to those persons we are called to go to. *“Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one’s life for his friends.”* John 15:13

“I’m getting too old to do what I might have done if I were younger.”

We are not younger and will never go back. With age comes experience, and knowledge based on that experience. Also with age, we become an effective voice for the Lord. Where a worldly teen-ager may be rebellious to wisdom, those older even become smart enough to accept that elders can teach us something we don’t already know.

“I tithe, isn’t that enough?”

Jesus said, *“Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! Though you tithe, and have neglected the weightier matters of the law: justice and mercy and faith ... the love of God. These you ought to have done, without leaving the others undone.”* He also asks, *“When I return, will I truly find faith on the earth?”* Jesus teaches us to give alms. From experience, missionaries learn that 10% was that small requirement that taught us, after we’ve started conforming to the patterns Jesus teaches, that we can do more, because we find that we need less than the ordinary pleasures we once afforded ourselves. *I shall not want.*

“I couldn’t afford to do anything.”

Our example, Jesus, did not even have a place to lay His head, yet, He disciplined many.

Besides, we are all very rich in America. If this is not believable, consider those in other countries that only make \$2 - \$3 / day.

Command those who are rich in this present age not to be haughty, nor to trust in uncertain riches but in the living God, who gives us richly all things to enjoy. Let them do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to give, willing to share, storing up for themselves a good foundation for the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life. 1 Timothy 6:17-19

And remember ... To whom much is given, much is required

In the physical, *it is as hard for a rich man to enter the Kingdom of Heaven as it is for a camel to go through the eye of a needle.* The rich young ruler did well to obey the commandments (had developed good character), but he could not give up *his personal agenda to follow Jesus.*

In the spiritual, if we study, and do not apply what we've learned, what good is that? If a man studies many years to become a Doctor, but never becomes a Doctor, what profit came from His studies? In America, we have been given much freedom to follow the Lord, nonetheless, we are seeing that freedom being taken away day by day because we are not **fully** taking advantage of this freedom and proving to the world that God is Good.

**When we do *follow Jesus* to serve others
with no selfish interests, our heart
changes and becomes like His.
As He teaches us to live sacrificially,
in His presence, we find *unspeakable joy!***

Come dance with God, fulfilling your dreams and His!