

**The Book of Acts:
Chapter 8:1-25**

Pastor Don Brock

Use this guide by yourself, with a friend, or in a group to help you pursue a deeper relationship with Jesus this week!

Open

As we look at the beginning of Acts chapter 8 this week, the author of the book (Luke, who also wrote the gospel which bears his name) makes note of several critical developments in the life of the early church including the beginning of persecution, the ever-widening reach of the gospel, and a clear warning that the power of the Holy Spirit is not for sale. And while to us (reading from our vantage point two thousand years later) all of these developments point clearly to the growth of God's Kingdom, we know that to those who were experiencing them first-hand the big picture was often difficult to see. To get your group's study started, then, let people share if they've ever experienced circumstances which seemed random at the time but later became an obviously providential pattern of God's handiwork. What happened and how long did it take for them to recognize that God was at work?

BIG THOUGHT

The experience of the early church shows us that God will use our faithfulness in the midst of ever-changing circumstances to accomplish His purposes.

1. Read Acts 8:1-3. To what regions does the persecution in Jerusalem scatter the disciples? (v. 1) How does this line up with Acts 1:8? What do you think you would have felt at this point if you were a follower of Jesus and experiencing these things? Explain.
2. Now read v. 4-8. What do the apostles do as they're having to leave Jerusalem? Where does Philip preach? (v. 5) How is this experience for Philip different than the one mentioned during the disciples' trip to Samaria in Luke 9:51-56? What was Philip able to do through the Holy Spirit? (v. 6-7) How does this line up with Matthew 10:1-2?

3. Read v. 9-13. What do we learn about Simon? (v. 9) How was the people's response to him similar to their response to Philip? (v. 10-11) What was different about the effect of Philip's influence? (v. 12) How should this guide us when we're trying to be discerning about the power behind of "miraculous" events? How did Simon respond to what he witnessed? (v. 13)
4. Now read v. 14-17. What do the apostles decide to do after hearing about the response to Philip? (v. 14) What do they pray will happen for the believing the Samaritans? (v. 15-16) And what ends up happening? (v. 17)
5. Read v. 18-24. How did Simon respond when he saw the Holy Spirit being given by the apostles? (v. 18-19) What does Peter say? (v. 20-23) How do you reconcile what Peter says here with v. 13 - do you think Simon was truly converted? Why or why not? What do you think Simon was "bitter" about? (v. 23 - see v. 9-11) How does Simon respond to Peter's rebuke? (v. 24) In what way does Simon serve as a warning if we're tempted to "use" God for our own ends? Explain.

Take it Further

Talk with God and ask Him to give you the courage to stay faithful to Him in all of your life's circumstances so that He may accomplish His purposes through you.

Daily Readings

Day 1: Psalm 103:19
Day 2: Philippians 2:13
Day 3: Romans 8:28

Day 4: Proverbs 3:6
Day 5: Genesis 50:20
Day 6: Matthew 6:26

Memory Verse: Acts 8:4



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