



ACTS: LIVING ON MISSION

Acts 8:4–8:25

Week of September 17, 2023

Start at 9:50–10:00

Belong: Use 5–10 minutes as an opportunity to get to know one another. The questions below are written for people to open-up and to know the group members.

Take a **few minutes** to hear about your group members' week.

Do you like to work with others on a project – as a team – OR do you prefer to work as a lone wolf?

Have you ever left a one-star review online?

10:00–10:05

Believe: Use 5 minutes to read this week's assigned Scriptures then highlight each verse that helps you to understand the passage better. Include the book, chapter and verse(s).

Last week, we saw the character and resolve of the early Church on display... and nobody said it would be easy! Through the martyr of Stephen, the hope of the religious leaders was to stifle the movement of the early church – it didn't work. This week we'll see how the gospel moved out from Jerusalem – because of the persecution – and now is sprouting among the Gentiles in Samaria and Judea thanks to the obedient ministry of Philip – but there is an old foe to gospel Christianity lurking. Have someone in your group read **Acts 8:4–25**.

10:05–10:15

Build: Use about 10 minutes to engage the passage and wrestle with its meaning.

In this section, we are going to spend about 10 minutes building up to our understanding of Acts 8:4–25.

In **Acts 8:4**, what do the Christians scattered by the “great persecution” do?

- How is this ironic based on the wishes of the Jewish leaders and Saul?
- Do you think the early Church lived in fear of the persecution OR do you think it drove them to be more obedient to God and share the gospel?

Given the history between Jews and Samaritans, what is remarkable about Philip's preaching and the response [**Acts 8:5–8**]?

- Does **verse 6** help you out?

Look at **Acts 8:13–19**, this is the story of Simon the Magician. Based on the Scripture, did Simon have a true repentance and conversion. [*focus on “even Simon himself believed”*]

- What does the word “**believe**” mean? Is **belief** enough for repentance and conversion?
- Does **James 2:18–19** help you understand this word better?

Have someone read **Acts 8:22** again. Do you think that it is genuinely possible for Simon to be forgiven? Support your answer with Scripture.

- Is **Acts 8:24** a genuine act of repentance?

10:15-10:35

Become: Use about 20 minutes to apply what you have read. How can this help me? What would the application of this verse look like in my life? What is God saying to me?

Simon's name has become synonymous with **unsavory** religious practices" that have appeared throughout Church history. In your class, have someone look up the word "**simony**" and read the definition to the class. *[does the name Simon Magus [magician] appear in connection with the definition?]*

- Have you or anyone else you have known attempted to "obtain the gifts of God with money" or expect spiritual blessing based upon their wealth or status?

Would you consider the work of Simon the magician to be a form of the **prosperity gospel**? [prosperity theology, the health and wealth gospel, the gospel of success]

Is the **prosperity gospel** dangerous? Why or Why not?

- Provide popular pastoral examples of the prosperity gospel. *[TD Jakes, Joel Osteen, Steven Furtick, Joyce Meyers - funny that these are the popular author names on Walmart or Barnes & Nobles' book shelves...which mean they are selling]*

Why has the **prosperity gospel** been so widely accepted in church circles?

Wrestle with these quotes:

- **"[The prosperity gospel] is a stalking horse that Satan is using to trap and confuse Christians and deceive non-Christians."** - Mark Dever Episode 88: On the Prosperity Gospel.
- **"The way that I define the prosperity gospel is that I believe God wants you to prosper in your health, and your family, and your relationships, in your businesses and in your career. If that is the prosperity gospel then I do believe that."** - Joel Osteen

10:35/ - Class ends at 10:45

Begin: Use the last 10 minutes for prayer. It's important that we not only hear and discuss God's Word but respond to it. (James 1:22)

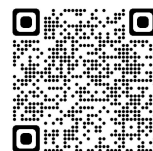
How should it change the way you pray, think, speak or act this week?

At the end of the conversation, spend some time praying as a group. Here are some prompts:

- Spend some group time-sharing requests and praying specifically for them.
- Spend some time praying for FBC and that we would be encouraged and hopeful in how God is working in and through FBC Portland.

Additional Resources:

Blue Letter Bible: [Acts 8](#): Check out the QR code to learn more.



Precept Austin: [Acts 8](#): Check out the QR code to learn more.

