

PHILIP IN SAMARIA

Acts 8:1-25

STRUCTURE

Key-person: Philip

Key-location: Samaria

Key-repetitions:

- Persecution: persecution broke out (Ac 8:1); Saul tried to destroy the church (Ac 8:3); Saul put men and women in jail (Ac 8:3).
- Gospel proclaimed: those who scattered told the Good News wherever they went (Ac 8:4). Philip proclaimed Jesus in Samaria (Ac 8:4-5); Peter and John proclaimed the gospel in Samaritan towns on their way back to Jerusalem (Ac 8:25).
- Scattered/traveled: the church in Jerusalem suffered persecution and most believers scattered throughout Judea and Samaria (Ac 8:1-2); Philip went to Samaria (Ac 8:4-5); Peter and John went to Samaria (Ac 8:14-17); Peter and John went back to Jerusalem (Ac 8:25).
- Magic: Simon practiced magic (Ac 8:9); Simon amazed Samaritans with his magic (Ac 8:10, 11).
- Miracles: Philip worked miracles (Ac 8:6); evil spirits were expelled and lame people healed (Ac 8:7); Simon was amazed at miracles Philip performed (Ac 8:13).
- Holy Spirit: Peter and John placed hands on Samaritans, and they received the Holy Spirit (Ac 8:17); Simon saw that the Holy Spirit was given when Peter and John placed their hands on them (Ac 8:18); Simon offered Peter and John money to be able to give people the Holy Spirit (Ac 8:18-19).

Key-attitudes:

- Saul's fury when he persecuted believers.
- Believers' fear of persecution.
- Philip's confidence in Jesus.
- Peter and John's suspicions about Philip's ministry in Samaria.
- Selfish greed of Simon when he offered Peter and John money for the power to manipulate the Holy Spirit.
- Peter's harshness when he reprimanded Simon.

Initial-situation:

The number of believers grew among both Hebrew-speaking and Greek-speaking Jews. The church's first conflict was when Greek-speaking Jewish believers complained because Greek-speaking widows were neglected each day when food was distributed. The church chose seven men (all had Greek names) to distribute the food to the widows. Among the chosen were Stephen and Philip. Stephen became the church's first martyr.

Initial-problem:

A great persecution broke out against the church in Jerusalem. Except for the apostles, most believers scattered throughout Judea and Samaria.

Final-situation:

Peter and John preached in many Samaritan villages as they returned to Jerusalem.

BIBLE STORY

Widespread persecution broke out against the church in Jerusalem. Except for the apostles, most believers scattered throughout Judea and Samaria. Saul tried to destroy the church. Saul went from one house after another to drag out men and women and put them into jail (Ac 8:2-3).

The scattered believers told the Good News wherever they went. Philip went to a city in Samaria and told people about Christ. The Samaritans heard Philip and saw him work miracles. Evil spirits came out of many; paralytics and lame people were healed.

A man named Simon practiced magic in the city. He boasted that he had great power. Simon amazed the Samaritans with his magic and they followed him. However, when Philip preached the Good News about the kingdom of God and the person named Jesus Christ, Samaritan men and women believed and were baptized. Simon himself believed and was baptized. Simon followed Philip everywhere, amazed by the miracles he saw (Ac 8:4-13).

The apostles in Jerusalem heard that Samaritans accepted the word of God. They sent Peter and John to them. Peter and John prayed for the Samaritan believers to receive the Holy Spirit. Peter and John placed their hands on the Samaritans, and the Samaritans received the Holy Spirit.

Simon saw that the Spirit was given to people when Peter and John placed their hands on them. Simon offered Peter and John money saying, "Give me the ability to place my hands on people and give them the Holy Spirit."

Peter answered, "May you and your money go to hell! You think you can buy God's gift with money! You have no part in this ministry. Your heart is not right before God. Repent of your wicked thoughts and pray to the Lord. Maybe God will forgive you for such a thought. You are full of bitterness and ruled by sin."

Simon answered, "Pray to the Lord for me so that the things you've said won't happen to me."

Peter and John preached in many Samaritan villages as they returned to Jerusalem (Ac 8:14-25).

GENERIC DIALOGUE QUESTIONS

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| 1. What catches your attention in the story? | 4. What problems did the characters face? |
| 2. Is there anything in the story that is hard to understand? | 5. How did the characters face their problems? |
| 3. Who are the main characters in the story? | 6. How have you faced similar problems? |

7. Is there someone in the story who is similar to you or who is different from you? 8. What does the story tell about God?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What positive result came from the persecution of the church?
2. What happened when Philip went to Samaria and preached?
3. In your life, how has God used bad experiences and turned them into good results?
4. Samaritans were considered as religious heretics and cultural enemies to Jews. (See John 4:9, 19-22.) Why did Peter and John go to Samaria?
5. Considering the Jewish-Samaritan conflict, why would God delay pouring out his Holy Spirit until Peter and John arrived in Samaria?
6. What cultural or ethnic prejudices do believers have today that make it hard for them to minister in Jesus' name to people they dislike?
7. Why did Peter become harsh with Simon the magician?
8. "Simony" means trafficking in sacred things. The origin of the word came from when Simon the Sorcerer offered money to Peter and John in order to buy Holy Spirit power. Why should people who serve God despise the practice of simony?

LIFE-LESSONS

1. **Jesus transforms the prejudices of his followers.** The Holy Spirit liberates Christians of prejudice against people of a different culture, and enables Christians to minister to former cultural enemies. Apostle John had the nickname "Son of Thunder" (Mk 3:17), and he wanted to call down fire from heaven on the Samaritans (Lk 9:51-55). Later, John became God's instrument to bring the Holy Spirit to the Samaritans (Ac 8:14-17). An evidence of John's transformation is that he put his hands on the Samaritans' heads. A strict Jew would never touch a Samaritan.
2. **The believer in Jesus is part of a people group that has cultural enemies; nevertheless, the gospel is for everyone, even one's cultural enemies.** The Jews and Samaritans were cultural enemies. Jesus evangelized the Samaritan woman (Jn 4). Philip was a Jewish believer who took the gospel to the Samaritans (Ac 8:4-13). John had wanted to call down fire from heaven on the Samaritans (Lk 9:51-55); yet, John became the instrument God used to bring the Holy Spirit to them (Ac 8:14-17). Jonah wanted to see his enemies destroyed; yet God sent Jonah to preach the message that brought them salvation (Jon 1:1-2; 4:2-11).
3. **Opportunity may come disguised as opposition, problems, and persecution.** The murder of Stephen and the persecution that followed, resulted in Jesus' followers taking the gospel to other locations (Ac 8:4).
4. **The person who selfishly desires to gain power and finances with the gifts of the Holy Spirit, becomes a partner with Satan.** "Simony," means trafficking in sacred things. The origin of the word came from the encounter between Simon the

Sorcerer and Peter. Simon the Sorcerer saw that the Holy Spirit was given when the apostles put their hands on people, and Simon offered money to Peter and John in order to buy the same power. Peter basically told Simon, “May you and your money go to hell!” (Ac 8:18-22).

5. **The desire to escape suffering, which is the consequence of sin, is not the same as repentance.** Simon didn't want to suffer the consequences of trying to negotiate for the gifts of the Spirit; however, he showed no regret that he sought to buy those gifts (Ac 8:24). Cain protested against his punishment for killing his brother Abel, but he showed no regret for his crime, nor did he admit the justice of his punishment (Gen 4:13-14). Repentance involves both being sorrowful for wrong actions and changing the way one thinks and acts.

LEARNING ACTIVITIES

1. **Chant:**

Words in **bold and underlined** are to be stressed. Stress words by stretching them out instead of increasing volume.

All	
“And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose” (Romans 8:28 NIV).	
Group 1	Group 2
And we <u>know</u> .	We know <u>for sure</u> .
In all things	This includes everything.
In all things God works for the <u>good</u>	<u>Not all things</u> are good; some are evil.
In all things God works for the good	Is this always true?
In all things God works for the good of those <u>who love him</u>	For those who love God, <u>everything</u> works for good.
In all things God works for the good of those who have been <u>called</u> according to his purpose.	For those whose purpose is to do God's calling, <u>everything works</u> for good.
All	
“And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose” (Romans 8:28 NIV).	

2. **Twitter Prayers** (short, concise prayers):

Invite listeners to pray about the story in “twitter” length prayers. Tell God:

- How they feel about persecution resulting in the spread of the gospel.
- About their cultural or ethnic prejudices against people loved by God.
- How they feel about Peter's harsh words to Simon the magician.
- Decisions they need to make as a result of hearing the story.