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## Pure Motives

Acts 8:1-25  
By Kirk Gambrell

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### sing This Study

#### ❶ EXAMINE His Word

What does God SAY? Open your time with prayer. The words God uses to communicate matters, so go back and pay close attention to the details that are emphasized or repeated in the passage.

#### ❷ EXPLORE His Word

What does God MEAN? Asking questions of the text helps surface how the details relate to the message God wants to communicate.

#### ❸ EMBRACE His Word

Why does it MATTER to me? Embrace God by responding to what you discover in His word in faith and obedience.



Chapter 7 of Acts was the breakout of persecution against the Christians. They are forced to scatter across the ancient world fleeing for their lives. True to God's great character He uses this evil for good. As the Christians scatter they take the word of the Lord and the message of the Gospel with them to people all over. In Acts 8, we see Philip sharing the gospel, first with Samaria, and then with the Ethiopian that he meets traveling along the road. In this first encounter we will see what true belief is and the importance of repentance as the believer turns to God.



## **EXAMINE His Word (Observation)**

What does God SAY? Prayerfully note significant details and terms emphasized in the passage.

### **Read Acts 8:1-25 (NET)**

<sup>1</sup> And Saul agreed completely with killing him.

Now on that day a great persecution began against the church in Jerusalem, and all except the apostles were forced to scatter throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria. <sup>2</sup> Some devout men buried Stephen and made loud lamentation over him. <sup>3</sup> But Saul was trying to destroy the church; entering one house after another, he dragged off both men and women and put them in prison.

<sup>4</sup> Now those who had been forced to scatter went around proclaiming the good news of the word. <sup>5</sup> Philip went down to the main city of Samaria and began proclaiming the Christ to them. <sup>6</sup> The crowds were paying attention with one mind to what Philip said, as they heard and saw the miraculous signs he was performing. <sup>7</sup> For unclean spirits, crying with loud shrieks, were coming out of many who were possessed, and many paralyzed and lame people were healed. <sup>8</sup> So there was great joy in that city.

<sup>9</sup> Now in that city was a man named Simon, who had been practicing magic and amazing the people of Samaria, claiming to be someone great. <sup>10</sup> All the people, from the least to the greatest, paid close attention to him, saying, "This man is the power of God that is called 'Great.'" <sup>11</sup> And they paid close attention to him because he had amazed them for a long time with his magic. <sup>12</sup> But when they believed Philip as he was proclaiming the good news about the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they began to be baptized, both men and women. <sup>13</sup> Even Simon himself believed, and after he was baptized, he stayed close to Philip

constantly, and when he saw the signs and great miracles that were occurring, he was amazed.

<sup>14</sup> Now when the apostles in Jerusalem heard that Samaria had accepted the word of God, they sent Peter and John to them. <sup>15</sup> These two went down and prayed for them so that they would receive the Holy Spirit. <sup>16</sup> (For the Spirit had not yet come upon any of them, but they had only been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.) <sup>17</sup> Then Peter and John placed their hands on the Samaritans, and they received the Holy Spirit.

<sup>18</sup> Now Simon, when he saw that the Spirit was given through the laying on of the apostles' hands, offered them money, <sup>19</sup> saying, "Give me this power too, so that everyone I place my hands on may receive the Holy Spirit." <sup>20</sup> But Peter said to him, "May your silver perish with you, because you thought you could acquire God's gift with money! <sup>21</sup> You have no share or part in this matter because your heart is not right before God! <sup>22</sup> Therefore repent of this wickedness of yours, and pray to the Lord that he may perhaps forgive you for the intent of your heart. <sup>23</sup> For I see that you are bitterly envious and in bondage to sin." <sup>24</sup> But Simon replied, "You pray to the Lord for me so that nothing of what you have said may happen to me."

<sup>25</sup> So after Peter and John had solemnly testified and spoken the word of the Lord, they started back to Jerusalem, proclaiming the good news to many Samaritan villages as they went.

1. Who is involved in the text? Author, audience, main characters.

2. Where and when is this taking place? Geography and timeline.
3. What actions are carried out or commanded? Look for the verbs.
4. Is there anything repeated?
5. What is emphasized?
6. Is there anything in this passage that is related to other areas of scripture?
7. Are there things to be noted that are alike or unlike such as similes and metaphors?

### **🕒 EXPLORE His Word (Interpretation)**

What does God MEAN?

8. a. What happened in chapter 7 that was a catalyst for the persecution in chapter 8?  
  
b. What was the result of the persecution of the church (8:1,4)?
9. In verse 3, why was Saul trying to destroy the church?

10. In verse 13, it says that Simon, who was practicing magic, believed, but in verses 20-22, it tells us that Simon was given no part in what they were doing and does not seem to receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. What did he believe? Was he saved when he believed?

11. Why were Peter and John sent to Samaria?

12. In this passage, the Spirit is received with the laying on of hands. Are there examples in scripture of the Spirit being received in other ways?

13. In verse 24, Simon asked the Apostles to pray to the Lord for him. What does this tell us about Simon?

### ③ **EMBRACE His Word (Application)**

#### **Why does this MATTER to me?**

14. a. Simon claimed the gospel with improper motives. What is the right motive for receiving the gospel?

b. What is true repentance?

c. How do we clearly communicate this to people?

15. We observed that the persecution of the early church resulted in the spread of the gospel. How has persecution or difficulty led to opportunity or growth in your life?

16. a. Do you ever desire to see miraculous works of the Holy Spirit in your life or ministry?

b. What are your motives behind this desire?

17. In what ways have you tried to buy or earn the gifts of God?

**Follow-up Home Study:**

Peter stated that Simon's heart was full of bitterness and that he was captive to sin. Examine your own heart for any bitterness or captivity to sin. Write a prayer below repenting of anything God brings to mind. Ask for forgiveness or for God to change your heart.

**Summarize your thoughts on the passage:**

Write about what God wants you to KNOW, to FEEL, and to DO...

**SERMON NOTES**