



Study Guide for Part 7 Stay on Target

ONE CHURCH Part 7 Stay on Target Acts 8:4-25

Introduction:

When is a time you have stayed devoted to something or someone even amidst significant difficulty or challenge?

When is a time you have lost courage, or even given up?

What factors influence whether someone stays committed or gives up? What makes the difference?

Read Acts 8:4-25

Historically, there was a great schism between Jews and Samaritans. They were both followers of Yahweh, but they had great animosity toward one another because of their divergent beliefs about how to practice their faith. You can read more about that divide and its place in Jewish history [here](#). All first-century Jews, including the predominantly Jewish Jesus followers, considered the Samaritans not only outsiders, but enemies.

What modern groups-consider each other to be enemies?

Philip had to break through significant societal boundaries to effectively preach to the Samaritans. What are the social boundaries we need to try and break through as a church in south suburban Denver?

Simon the Sorcerer was a Samaritan who heard Philip preach about Jesus. He believed and was baptized. Then, however, he tried to buy the Holy Spirit from Peter and John when they came. What do you think made Simon try to do this? Why did he think he could do this?

In your life, have you ever tried to “earn” or “buy” the gift God wants to give for free? What makes us think we need to do that?

Conclusion:

What is at least one practical way you can try to break down boundaries that separate you from others with whom you could share the hope of Christ?

Peter's criticism of Simon was that his heart was not right before God. What is required for our heart to be right before God?

We've been exploring this definition of the Church based on the teaching of Acts:

The church is a **community of people** who, through repentance and baptism, live lives **empowered** by the Holy Spirit and who are **devoted** to scripture, community, generosity, and prayer. Because of that, God uses the details of **their stories** to demonstrate **his power**.

Reflecting on that definition of the Church, what practices do you need in your life to continue to live with a heart that is "right before God"?

We have considered two themes from this passage – breaking down barriers and becoming right with God. How do these two themes connect with one another?