

Small Group Discussion Guide

Series: Hello My Name Is

Week 1: Acts 8:4-25

Main Idea: When believers were scattered, they stayed on mission, the gospel crossed barriers, and **God showed that His church is one in Christ**. Simon's story also warns us not to confuse spiritual interest with true surrender.

Reference Texts Mentioned in the Sermon

Acts 8:4-25, Ephesians 4:4-6, Acts 1:8, Acts 2:38-39, John 4:39-42, Romans 6:3-4, Proverbs 26:11

Context

Acts 8 shows that persecution did not stop the gospel. The scattered believers kept sharing the word, Philip preached in Samaria, people believed and were baptized, and the Lord made clear that Samaritans were fully part of His one church. At the same time, Simon's story warns against going back to old patterns and treating the things of God like something to control.

Pastor Seth emphasizes that this story is not just ancient church history but part of the church's own story and heritage. After Stephen's death, believers were scattered, yet they continued preaching the word. Philip's ministry in Samaria mattered because of the long history of hostility between Jews and Samaritans. God used this moment to show that the gospel crosses barriers and that there is **one body** in Christ.

Discussion Questions:

1. What grabs your attention most in this from **Acts 8:4-25**, and why do you think Luke wants us to notice it?
2. Read **Acts 8:4** together. The believers were scattered by persecution, yet they kept preaching the word. What does that show us about their understanding of hardship, calling, and mission? Where do you see the temptation in your own life to let difficulty silence your witness?
3. Read **Acts 8:5-8** together. What stands out about Philip's ministry in Samaria and the response of the people? Why do you think the passage ends that section by saying, "So there was great joy in that city"? What does that teach us about what happens when the gospel truly takes root?
4. Read **Acts 8:12** together. Then, if helpful, read **Acts 2:38-39** and **Romans 6:3-4**. What do belief and baptism reveal about a person's response to Jesus? Why is baptism more than just a religious symbol or personal tradition?

5. Read **Acts 8:14-17** together. Then read **Acts 1:8** and **John 4:39-42**. Why is Samaria such an important place in this story? What does this moment teach us about Jesus' power to break through old hostility, prejudice, and division? Where do we still struggle to believe that the gospel is for people unlike us?
6. Read **Acts 8:9-13** and then **Acts 8:18-24** together. What seems to change in Simon, and what seems not to change? How does his response reveal the danger of trying to bring old values, ambitions, or ways of thinking into a life that is supposed to belong to Christ?
7. Look again at **Acts 8:13** and **Acts 8:18-24** together. Simon was amazed by what he saw, but Peter said his heart was not right before God. What is the difference between being fascinated by spiritual things and being genuinely surrendered to Jesus? How can that difference show up in church life today?
8. Read **Acts 8:20-23** together. Peter's words are strong and direct. Why was such a sharp rebuke necessary here? What does this teach us about repentance, spiritual seriousness, and the mercy of God in confronting us when our hearts are drifting?
9. Read **Acts 8:24** together, and if helpful also read **Proverbs 26:11**. In what ways does Simon's response feel incomplete? What are some practical ways believers can begin to drift back into old patterns? What helps us truly repent instead of merely feeling uneasy about consequences?
10. Read **Acts 8:14-17** together, then read **Ephesians 4:4-6**. What does this passage show us about the unity God was building between Jewish believers and Samaritan believers? Why does it matter that the church is not many separate peoples, but one body in Christ?
11. Looking back over the whole passage, what encourages you most about the way God works through ordinary believers in unsettling times? How might God want to use your current season, even if it feels inconvenient, painful, or uncertain?
12. Looking at Pastor Seth's takeaways, which one do you most need right now: **Believe, Be Baptized, Stay on Mission, Don't Backslide, or Walk in Unity**? As a group, what would it look like to take that seriously this week?



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