



## Discussion Guide



Sermon Title: "Simon's Illusion"

Date: October 1, 2017

### OPENING DISCUSSION

1. ⌚ What are some strategies or methods the church could use to expand its influence into other locations in the Lehigh Valley?

### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What differences do you notice between Stephen and Saul?
2. ⌚ Some people say the church was disobedient by not going into Samaria, Judea and elsewhere until the persecution scattered them. Discuss your agreement or disagreement with this view.
3. What is a more accurate understanding of what the word "go" means in Matthew 28:19?
4. What action is actually being emphasized in Matthew 28:19?
5. What attracted people to give attention to Simon?
6. What attracted people to give attention to Philip?
7. How do you see God's hand in sending Philip to Samaria before sending any of the Apostles?
8. ⌚ What reasons can you think of for the Holy Spirit not falling on the people of Samaria until the Apostles showed up?
9. ⌚ How did they know the people received the Holy Spirit?
10. ⌚ What is the difference between receiving the Holy Spirit at salvation, and receiving the "gift" of Holy Spirit subsequent to salvation?
11. What is the difference between "saving" faith and "believing in vain"?
12. ⌚ How do you know you are truly saved?

### FURTHER REFLECTION

1. Do you believe God is going to send persecution to America? Why or why not?
2. Share about some famous people who you believe have genuine faith.
3. Share about some famous people you thought were true believers at one time but now you wonder.

☞ Feel free to use the questions marked with a "⌚" if your time is limited ☞

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**NOTES:**

## **SCRIPTURE REFERENCES** (NASB unless otherwise noted)

### **📖 Main Text: Acts 8:1-24**

1 Saul was in hearty agreement with putting him to death. And on that day a great persecution began against the church in Jerusalem, and they were all scattered throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles. 2 Some devout men buried Stephen, and made loud lamentation over him. 3 But Saul began ravaging the church, entering house after house, and dragging off men and women, he would put them in prison. 4 Therefore, those who had been scattered went about preaching the word. 5 Philip went down to the city of Samaria and began proclaiming Christ to them. 6 The crowds with one accord were giving attention to what was said by Philip, as they heard and saw the signs which he was performing. 7 For in the case of many who had unclean spirits, they were coming out of them shouting with a loud voice; and many who had been paralyzed and lame were healed. 8 So there was much rejoicing in that city. 9 Now there was a man named Simon, who formerly was practicing magic in the city and astonishing the people of Samaria, claiming to be someone great; 10 and they all, from smallest to greatest, were giving attention to him, saying, "This man is what is called the Great Power of God." 11 And they were giving him attention because he had for a long time astonished them with his magic arts. 12 But when they believed Philip preaching the good news about the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were being baptized, men and women alike. 13 Even Simon himself believed; and after being baptized, he continued on with Philip, and as he observed signs and great miracles taking place, he was constantly amazed. 14 Now when the apostles in Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent them Peter and John, 15 who came down and prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Spirit. 16 For He had not yet fallen upon any of them; they had simply been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. 17 Then they began laying their hands on them, and they were receiving the Holy Spirit. 18 Now when Simon saw that the Spirit was bestowed through the laying on of the apostles' hands, he offered them money, 19 saying, "Give this authority to me as well, so that everyone on whom I lay my hands may receive the Holy Spirit." 20 But Peter said to him, "May your silver perish with you, because you thought you could obtain the gift of God with money! 21 You have no part or portion in this matter, for your heart is not right before God. 22 Therefore repent of this wickedness of yours, and pray the Lord that, if possible, the intention of your heart may be forgiven you. 23 For I see that you are in the gall of bitterness and in the bondage of iniquity." 24 But Simon answered and said, "Pray to the Lord for me yourselves, so that nothing of what you have said may come upon me."

**📖 Other texts referenced:** Acts 6:8 Acts 7:59-60 Matthew 28:19 1 Corinthians 15:1-2

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