

Life Group Leader Guide: “Magic vs the Holy Spirit”

Dates: 10/25/20- 10/31/20

Focus: The power of the Holy Spirit is necessary for believers to walk into authority and fruitfulness in the kingdom. It cannot be controlled, bought, or leveraged for personal gain.

Video:

Show the video. It is about 3 minutes long.

Scripture: Acts 8:4-25

Philip in Samaria

4 Those who had been scattered preached the word wherever they went. **5** Philip went down to a city in Samaria and proclaimed the Messiah there. **6** When the crowds heard Philip and saw the signs he performed, they all paid close attention to what he said. **7** For with shrieks, impure spirits came out of many, and many who were paralyzed or lame were healed. **8** So there was great joy in that city.

Simon the Sorcerer

9 Now for some time a man named Simon had practiced sorcery in the city and amazed all the people of Samaria. He boasted that he was someone great, **10** and all the people, both high and low, gave him their attention and exclaimed, “This man is rightly called the Great Power of God.” **11** They followed him because he had amazed them for a long time with his sorcery. **12** But when they believed Philip as he proclaimed the good news of the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women. **13** Simon himself believed and was baptized. And he followed Philip everywhere, astonished by the great signs and miracles he saw. **14** When the apostles in Jerusalem heard that Samaria had accepted the word of God, they sent Peter and John to Samaria. **15** When they arrived, they prayed for the new believers there that they might receive the Holy Spirit, **16** because the Holy Spirit had not yet come on any of them; they had simply been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. **17** Then Peter and John placed their hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit. **18** When Simon saw that the Spirit was given at the laying on of the apostles’ hands, he offered them money **19** and said, “Give me also this ability so that everyone on whom I lay my hands may receive the Holy Spirit.” **20** Peter answered: “May your money perish with you, because you thought you could buy the gift of God with money! **21** You have no part or share in this ministry, because your heart is not right before God. **22** Repent of this wickedness and pray to the Lord in the hope that he may forgive you for having such a thought in your heart. **23** For I see that you are full of bitterness and captive to sin.” **24** Then Simon answered, “Pray to the Lord for me so that nothing you have said may happen to me.” **25** After they had further proclaimed the word of the Lord and testified about Jesus, Peter and John returned to Jerusalem, preaching the gospel in many Samaritan villages.

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Reflection Time

- We recommend taking about 4-5 minutes for people to reflect after the passage. But before you do, say something like:
 - “I encourage you to first take a couple minutes to reflect on this passage and the video, come up with any questions, connections, or what the passage says to you tonight.”

Question: What is a moment in your life that you felt the power of the Holy Spirit intervene? When is a moment that you felt the power of the Holy Spirit work *through* you for someone else’s benefit?

Question: How is the power of the Holy Spirit demonstrated through Phillip? What challenges you about this? Do you think the Holy Spirit works in the same way today as with the apostles?

Question: Reread verses 9-15. Why do you think Simon gave up his sorcery to follow the way of Jesus?

Observation: Simon was so influential as a sorcerer in Samaria that he was actually revered as a God. The coming of a superior power as demonstrated through the Holy Spirit actually diminished his influence.

Question: Peter identifies Simon as carrying “bitterness” in his heart when he asks for the power of the Holy Spirit. What made Simon bitter? How can the same bitterness manifest in our lives?

Question: What specifically do you think was wrong with the way Simon pursued the empowerment of the Holy Spirit?

Question: What is the line between letting God’s power flow through you with humble authority, and allowing God’s work through us to fuel our ego?

Question: What does it practically look like to attempt to use the power of the Holy Spirit for personal gain or influence?

Observation: It is easy to see unhealthy attempts to manipulate the Holy Spirit and *withdraw* from desiring its work to the fullest

Question: How can we take *healthy* steps in activating the Holy Spirit’s empowerment and authority in our lives?

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Prayer:

(LIFE GROUP LEADERS):