

CALVARY CHAPEL COSTA MESA

– COMMUNITY GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE –

Studies in the Book of Acts

“The Unconverted Convert” – Acts 8:5-25

FELLOWSHIP

The art of illusion can be a lot of fun. One of my sons has always been fascinated with slight of hand, especially card tricks. They are attention getters and people usually have a moment to pause from their routines to be entertained and amazed. There is something about witnessing an act that appears to defy our common sense or the laws of nature. The audience for a moment is asked to suspend their logic and take a leap of faith. The reality is that these “tricks” take hours and hours of practice, usually years to perfect. In fact, things like math and science actually play a major role in the integrity of the trick. Depending on the elements and scale of the illusion, miscalculations could even be deadly. Just ask Harry Houdini. This kind of entertainment also creates a platform. My son was impressed by a card illusionist who used his skill to illustrate his testimony and journey to Christ. The cards and their faces rose to the top at just the right moment as he told his story. All the young boys watching would remember this story for a long time as the amazement of the cards etched it in their minds. Charlatans know the power of this platform too. Purporting to have special powers above natural law, they “trick” people out of their sense, dollars, and even freedom. Satan takes this kind of deception to its highest levels. He and those under his sway, imitate the miraculous to pull people and their attention away from God. This story in Acts 8 regarding Simon the Sorcerer is a perfect example of that kind of persuasion. The people said of Simon, “This man is the great power of God.” The finger prints of the enemy are all over this, as it harkens back to the original deception in the garden, “You will be like God.” This is where the rub lies, i.e. in the message. What is the truth claim that associates the signs and wonders? Do the miracles validate platform? Or does the preaching validate the signs? The Gospel and the truth of God, do not need to be proven, they stand on their own. Simon found this out the hard way, when he tried to offer money for the power of God. The Apostles rebuked this error and called out Simon to repent as God is not interested in anything but the offering of our hearts.

READ & DISCUSS

Read out loud together **Acts 8:5-25**. The mission to Samaria continues and the authentic message of God rises above the false. Discuss those areas that can be applied to our lives.

Acts 8:14-15 Now when the apostles who were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent Peter and John to them, who, when they had come down, prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Spirit.

- *What did you believe about God and miracles before you were born-again? Where did these beliefs come from? What were your expectations of God before you were saved? What has changed since becoming a believer? What impresses you about God today? What do you expect from Him now?*
- Read **Jeremiah 32:20-21**, **Daniel 4:2**, and **Acts 2:22**. *Why are miracles good?* Now read **Matthew 16:4**, **24:24** and **John 4:48**. *Why did Jesus sometimes avoid miracles?* Read **Deuteronomy 13:1-5**, **1 Thessalonians 5:19-21**. *What is the purpose of miracles? When should we embrace or be skeptical of them? How should we test them? When have you seen a miracle and how did it minister to you or others?*
- Simon made the mistake of using Jesus to fulfill his own agenda. God was going to be the means to getting what he wanted. *Whether its sports, business, or a relationship, what area might we be using Jesus to change instead of letting Him change us?* **Proverbs 28:13**, **James 5:16**

PRAYER & TESTIMONY



Community Group Discussion Guide

Based on Pastor Brian Brodersen's message from February 4, 2018.

Watch: <https://cccm.com/teaching/the-spirit-the-church-and-the-world/video/the-unconverted-convert/>