

DISCUSSION STARTER

Have you ever known anyone who claimed to have faith in Christ, but clearly with false motives?

What were those false motives? Do you think they were, or are, truly saved?

BIBLE STUDY

1. **READ ACTS 8:9-13.** What did 'Simon the Sorcerer' claim about himself, and why did the people seem to believe his claims?
2. How did the people of Samaria respond to Philip's ministry compared to Simon's 'magic'?
3. What impressed Simon about Philip's ministry? Do you think his 'belief' was genuine?
4. **READ ACTS 8:14-17.** Why were Peter and John sent to Samaria? Who sent them?
5. What pronoun is used to describe the Holy Spirit in vs 16? Why is this significant?
6. Are we to understand from this passage that its possible to believe in Jesus but not have received the Holy Spirit? Or was their salvation only 'complete' once they had received the Holy Spirit? How does this work today?
7. **READ ACTS 8:18-25.** What was the problem with Simon's offer? Why was it is sinful?
8. What does vs 21 tell us about Simon's spiritual condition? Was he a true believer?
9. What is the 'gall on bitterness' (vs 23)? What about the 'bond of iniquity'?
10. What did Peter tell Simon to do in order to be saved? Did he actually do this? Do you think Simon was saved at the end of the day?
11. Paul warns us against having, or even associating with people who have, a superficial kind of faith (see **2 Timothy 3:5**). How can you tell if a person's faith is authentic?

PRAYER

Pray for those you know who have 'superficial faith' – who claim to believe in Jesus, but whose lives are a contradiction. Pray that God will show them the err of their ways.