

True Faith and Phony Faith that Does Not Save Acts 8:9-25

Introducing people to Christ without sharing the secret of Christian growth and victory is like recruiting a soldier and sending him into battle without training and without a weapon. The moment a person becomes a believer, he or she is free of one set of problems but inherits another. A Christian must now face living the new life in an evil and tempting world. For that we need the power of the presence of Jesus Christ; the Holy Spirit. Very often, people make a profession of faith because they are looking for a quick fix to their problems. But there is a difference between just believing in Christ and genuinely surrendering to Christ. **Acts 8:9-25** gives us a perfect example in the account of a man named Simon.

The Sorcerer's Profession of Faith

⁹ But there was a certain man called Simon, who previously practiced sorcery in the city and astonished the people of Samaria, claiming that he was someone great, ¹⁰ to whom they all gave heed, from the least to the greatest, saying, "This man is the great power of God." ¹¹ And they heeded him because he had astonished them with his sorceries for a long time. ¹² But when they believed Philip as he preached the things concerning the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, both men and women were baptized. ¹³ Then Simon himself also believed; and when he was baptized, he continued with Philip, and was amazed, seeing the miracles and signs which were done.

The Sorcerer's Sin

¹⁴ Now when the apostles who were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent Peter and John to them, ¹⁵ who, when they had come down, prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Spirit. ¹⁶ For as yet He had fallen upon none of them. They had only been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. ¹⁷ Then they laid hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit. ¹⁸ And when Simon saw that through the laying on of the apostles' hands the Holy Spirit was given, he offered them money, ¹⁹ saying, "Give me this power also, that anyone on whom I lay hands may receive the Holy Spirit." ²⁰ But Peter said to him, "Your money perish with you, because you thought that the gift of God could be purchased with money! ²¹ You have neither part nor portion in this matter, for your heart is not right in the sight of God. ²² Repent therefore of this your wickedness, and pray God if perhaps the thought of your heart may be forgiven you. ²³ For I see that you are poisoned by bitterness and bound by iniquity." ²⁴ Then Simon answered and said, "Pray to the Lord for me, that none of the things which you have spoken may come upon me." ²⁵ So when they had testified and preached the word of the Lord, they returned to Jerusalem, preaching the gospel in many villages of the Samaritans.

1. **Read Acts 8:9-13.** Do you believe Simon was actually saved?
2. **Read Acts 8:14-17.** Why did Peter and John go to Samaria?
3. How did Simon respond to the gospel message of salvation after Peter and John came to Samaria?
4. **Read Acts 8:18-19.** What distinguished him from the other believers?
5. **Read Acts 8:20-24.** What was Peter's response to Simon's offer? What was Simon's response to Peter?
6. Why do you think Simon was "full of bitterness" about what was happening in Samaria? Why is this such a dangerous sin? Have you ever felt the same way?
7. Does Simon heed Peter's warning and repent (vs. 24)?