

specifically to people who were not Jewish, to outsiders looked down on by society. **Are there any groups of people our society looks down on? Who are our modern-day outsiders?**

Who is a witness of Jesus to these people?

After seeing the Holy Spirit come upon the Samaritan church, Peter and John stopped at many small villages to preach the good news. Jesus broke down the barriers between Jew and Samaritans, making outsiders brothers and sisters in the church. **What would change if you looked at the outsiders in your community the way Peter and John did?**

What could you and your small group do to reach out to the outsiders in your community?

What barriers might there be to reaching these people with the gospel?

In what ways can you pray and trust God to overcome these barriers as he did with Philip and the Samaritans?

Note: To study Simon, the Samaritan magician, go to **Go Deeper Section 1** at the end of this study.

The second group of people we see the gospel spread to are the searchers, those who are curious about Jesus and willing to ask Christians about him. Read Acts 8:26–31, 35–38.

The Ethiopian eunuch was in Jerusalem to worship God but was struggling to understand the Scriptures.

According to verse 31, what did this man need? How did Philip respond to this need in verse 35?

Every Christian should be ready for encounters like the one Philip had with the Ethiopian. If someone asks us about Jesus, we should be both willing and able to proclaim Jesus to them.

How would you share the gospel with someone who does not know Jesus? To practice, share the good

synagogue talk, what was Saul’s reputation?

Saul was completely forgiven in Christ, was baptized, and immediately began proclaiming Christ in the synagogues. Verse 22 shows us that he was an expert in evangelism, even as a new believer. But Saul, who was later known as Paul, never fully got over his past. Read 1 Corinthians 15:8–9 and Galatians 1:13.

Paul carried his past like an unhealed wound. He was painfully aware of the destruction he had caused. Some of us can relate to that pain. **In what ways might you be carrying shame leftover from your life before Jesus?**

Read 2 Corinthians 5:17–20 and Galatians 2:20.

Despite Paul’s awareness of his sin, he couldn’t help but rejoice in salvation. The life we had before Jesus has been completely forgiven by God. He knows the worst of our actions and still loves us. We cannot beat ourselves up over a stain God has washed away. We must also imitate Paul in his view of a redeemed life.

What can you do to remind yourself that you are a new creation in Christ?

What could it look like for you to live as if Christ were living in you?

God has reconciled you completely to himself, wiping away all your sin. **In what ways can you extend this grace to others when they sin against you?**

In what ways can you be a “minister of reconciliation” to people who do not know Jesus, who are sitting in the shame of their sin not knowing the forgiveness of God?

3. Samaritans, Gentiles, and the Holy Spirit

There are three times the Holy Spirit comes upon groups of people. The first is when the Holy Spirit comes upon the disciples in Acts 2 during the day of Pentecost. Read Acts 2:1–11.

**What were the defining characteristics of this miracle?
Who was the gospel being preached to during this miracle?**

Read Acts 2:32, 37–41. **What was the purpose of Peter speaking in tongues? What was the result of the Holy Spirit being expressed through tongues?**

In Acts 2, the Holy Spirit moves through the apostles to build the church. The miraculous gift of tongues was given as proof that Peter was not drunk but speaking the truth as he ministered to Jews.

Read Acts 8:14–17, 25.

**Who was Peter ministering to during this miracle?
What was Peter and John's response to this miracle in verse 25?**

Luke does not tell us how the power of the Holy Spirit manifests, but there must have been some sort of accompanying sign because Simon the Magician sought to purchase the power for himself in verse 18. As in Acts 2, the Holy Spirit moves to a new group of people, causing a new wave of ministry.

Read Acts 10:34–35, 44–48.

What are the defining characteristics of this outpouring of the Holy Spirit?

What did God teach Peter and the people who were with him through this miracle?

Peter's amazement at the salvation of the Gentiles shows us that he did not think they could be saved. In the next session of this study, we will see that some people in the church did not like that Peter baptized Gentiles (11:1–18). But after hearing that they had received the Holy Spirit in the same way the disciples had in Acts 2, the church rejoiced in the salvation of the Gentiles and began to send missionaries across the known world. The outpouring of the Holy Spirit was a sign to the skeptical Jews that all people could be saved.

The outpourings of the Holy Spirit show us, like the Jews of Acts, that all people can be saved. **Are there any people you doubt can be saved?**

What would it look like to trust God and evangelize to them despite your skepticism?

4. Acts 8–10 Reading Plan

Acts is a long book, and we won't be able to study every verse of it during each of these sessions. This reading plan will help you familiarize yourself with the entirety of the book so that you can dig more deeply into God's Word.

This week, use this reading guide to break up Acts 8–10, the stories of God's love for all people.

Day 1: Witnesses in Samaria (Acts 8:1–25)

Day 2: Witnesses throughout Judea (Acts 8:26–40; 9:32–43)

Day 3: The Conversion of Saul (Acts 9:1–31)

Day 4: Two Visions (Acts 10:1–23)

Day 5: Gentiles Receive the Holy Spirit (Acts 10:24–48)
