



## Week 17: Acts 8-14

### Study Guide for the week of April 20-26

#### Personal reflection / journaling exercise

This week spend extra time with Acts 11:1-18, the summary of the Gentile Pentecost.

Paul argued that some of the best evidence for the Holy Spirit's work in a person's life is a changed life. Write about or think through your own life. Describe what your life was like before you came into a relationship with Jesus. Now describe your life-changing encounter with Jesus – remember, this may have been a dramatic experience or quite a gentle one; both are equally valid!

Finally, describe how your life has changed. What are the most dramatic changes you've experienced? Spend time each day thanking God for the changes he's brought in your life. Where had you hoped to see greater changes? What barriers to God's transformation have you raised? How will you work in God's grace to dismantle those barriers? Spend time in prayer, asking God to show you strategies to grow into a more transformed life.

#### Discussion starters

1. Is it true that everyone has their price? Reread Acts 8:18-24. What is Simon hoping to buy? What is Peter's response? Do you know people who cannot be bought? What do you think their guiding principles may be?
2. Philip is a great example of meeting people where they are to explain God's story (Acts 8:26-40). What was the Ethiopian reading? Notice that not only the New Testament can be used to share God's story! What did the Ethiopian ask Philip? Who is instructing you so you grow in faith?
3. Reread the story of Paul's conversion, Acts 9:1-26. What strikes you most about Paul's experience: his encounter with Jesus, his confession of sin, his surrendering his life to Christ, his resolve to obey Jesus, his transformed life? Where do you identify with Paul's experience? Whether you had a dramatic conversion experience like Paul or a more gradual and dawning recognition, have you confessed your sins, surrendered your life, resolved to obey all Jesus' commands?
4. Reread the story of Tabitha in Acts 9:36-41. Who are the unsung heroes in your life? What can we learn about following Jesus from the quiet gift of Tabitha's life?
5. Have you ever had a "Rhoda moment" – a time when you were surprised at the answer to your prayer (Acts 12:12-14)? Share the story with your group. Are you surprised more often by answered prayer or unanswered prayer?
6. The account of Herod Agrippa's death in Acts 12:20-23 is a graphic story of how the sin of pride can consume a person from the inside out. Do you believe pride is really this destructive? Why or why not? Can you cite other examples of pride or other sins destroying a person?

#### Bible verse to memorize: Acts 10:34