

SESSION 2

Opening Prayer

We love you, God. We thank you for all the ways you bless us. Lord Jesus, thank you for loving us. Thank you for dying for us. Thank you for your gift of the Holy Spirit. Be with us now, Lord, as we gather together. You promise us, Lord, as you promised those in your time, that “when two or three are gathered together in your Name” that you are here in our midst. Lord, call us home to you and open our eyes to anything and everything in our lives keeping us from heaven. Mother Mary, please continue to pray with us and for us. We ask these things in your Holy Name, Lord Jesus. Amen.

What is your goal in life? Is it to be rich, popular, or famous? To be successful in your dream job? To get married and have a family? To be respected and admired? To have people wait on you and serve you? To be “in charge”? If given the opportunity, would you rather be the boss or the employee? Would you rather own the building or be the janitor?

Part of our sinful human nature is the desire for prestige, affirmation, and power. We want what we don't have and seek what we think will fulfill us. Many of us try to live two lives, one in which we can be powerful and amass wealth and the other as a Christian who looks good in God's eyes.

Being a true disciple, however, takes surrender. We simply cannot serve both God and the world (see Matthew 6:24). In this session, you will hear of several people like Ananias, Sapphira, Saul, and Simon the Magician, among others. They are not unlike us today, seeking power in a variety of different ways. Proud people often look at these flawed characters and feel superior; humble people look at them and see a little bit of themselves.

In the midst of each situation, pay close attention to how the apostles act and react. In their witness, you will see the face, voice, and presence of God, in His Holy Spirit.

The Chapters Covered in this Lesson

Acts, chapters 3-8

Opening Question

What is the goal of your life?

Verse to Remember

Acts 4:20

Breaking it Down

1. What was the first miracle recorded in Acts (3:1-10)?
Peter healing the lame beggar.
2. How does Peter refer to Christ (3:15) in His address in the Temple?
The author of life.
3. Why was the Sanhedrin annoyed with Peter and John in Acts 4?
They were bolder than ever.

4. Where does boldness come from?
It comes from God through prayer.
5. In what ways does the Holy Spirit's power work "most powerfully" through the apostles (in chapters 4 and 5)?
1) Their testimony is going to have greater power.
2) They will have the authority to pass judgment on what is sin.
3) They are given the power to perform miracles
6. In the second trial (Acts 5:27-42), what do we learn through Gamaliel's wisdom?
God is in control and no earthly power can stop God.
7. What qualities did the apostles look for in the seven men chosen as deacons in chapter six, and what purpose did they serve?
A good reputation, moral men, filled with the Holy Spirit, and able to provide for the needs.
8. Where did Stephen say that Israel had gone wrong and what was their response?
They had begun to worship the Temple instead of worshiping God. They stoned him.
9. What did Simon the Magician try to do and what was Peter's response?
He tried to buy the power of God. Peter told him to repent.
10. What was the Eunuch's response to Philip when asked if he understood the reading (8:31)?
He cannot understand unless someone explains it to him.

Play the DVD - Disc 1, Segment 2

Talking it Out

Discussion Questions

1. Have you ever had an experience (like Peter's) when your passion for God or the faith caused other people to be uncomfortable? Offer an example.
2. How well do you know Jesus on a scale of 1 (barely) to 10 (living saint)? Explain.
3. Have you ever seen someone "use" their faith for their own glory rather than God's glory? Offer an example.
4. Why are deacons still so important to the Church? Why are religious sisters and brothers, too, so important to the Church? Have you ever discerned a vocation to religious life or priesthood?
5. If we didn't have a Church to help us, how well would you do in understanding Scripture on your own? Why is that episode in Acts 8 (with the Ethiopian) such an important example, still today? Explain.

Thinking it Through

If you lived each day with heaven as your goal, how different would your day look? Beginning with the morning, write out ways that your life might look different (i.e. relationships, conversations, decisions, time spent doing certain things) if you lived every waking moment for Heaven.

Closing Prayer