

SIMON THE USURPER

ACTS 8:18-25

How did you see God working in your life this week? (Romans 1:11, 12)

BACKGROUND: Simony (named for Simon's actions) is trying to buy God's power (His grace) or position in order to promote oneself. Preaching, teaching, or serving just to gain recognition or status is simony. Kent Hughes, Acts, p. 114. Simony usurps the role of the Holy Spirit.

COULD NOT BUY THE GIFT. Instead of asking for the free gift, Simon asked for the power to give the gift himself. "Simon tried to obtain spiritual power to promote himself, and anytime we seek spiritual power or abilities to put ourselves forward, we make the same error." Kent Hughes, Acts p. 114. (**Acts 8:18-21, James 3:13-18, fn 3:14, 15, Matthew 10:8, fn 10:8, I Timothy 6:3-12, 6:3-5**) *How can you avoid simony in your ministry?*

WOULD NOT LIVE BY GRACE. Therefore, he was captive to sin. "Charis {grace} stands in direct antithesis to erga {works}, the two being mutually exclusive. God's grace...not only forgives the repentant sinner, but brings joy and thankfulness to him...Charis {grace}, when received by faith transforms man and causes him to seek after the righteousness of God." Spiros Zodhiates, Word Studies in the New Testament, p. 1469. (**Acts 8:21-23, Hebrews 12:15, fn 12:15, Ephesians 2:8, 9, fn 2:8, 9, Titus 2:11-14, fn 2:11-14**) *How do you know that you are living by grace instead of works?*

DID NOT PRAY. "A sinner who wants the prayers of others but will not pray himself is not going to enter God's kingdom." Warren Wiersbe, Be Dynamic, p. 103. (**Acts 8:22, 24, I Timothy 2:5, 6, fn 2:5, 6, Hebrews 4:14-16, fn 4:16, I Peter 5:5-7, fn 5:7, Philippians 4:4-7, fn 4:6, 7**) *A suggestion: In prayer time this week pray for yourself as you pray for others.*

Pray for one another's needs.

Who in your group needs your encouragement by phone or personal attention?