

LESSON 5

IT TAKES ALL KINDS

ACTS 8:1—10:48



1 Try to name at least one Christian leader in each of these people groups: Asian, African-American, Caucasian, Hispanic, the poor, a former convict, disabled.

2 What people groups are represented in your church?



Read Acts 8:1b—10:48; the “Missionaries of the New Testament and Their Journeys” chart; the Profiles of Philip, Paul, and Cornelius; and the following notes:

☐ 8:5 ☐ 8:15–17 ☐ 8:26 ☐ 8:27 ☐ 9:2–5 ☐ 9:3 ☐ 9:3–5 ☐ 9:13, 14
☐ 10:2 ☐ 10:45

3 How did the gospel come to each of the following?

Samaritans (8:5) _____

Ethiopian (8:26–40) _____

Jewish leader (9:1–20) _____

Roman army officer (10:1–48) _____

4 In what way was each of these groups or individuals controversial in the early church?

5 In what way was each of these groups or individuals important to the spread of the gospel?

6 How do church people often react when someone different (in race, dress, looks, etc.) comes into their services?



7 What kinds of people might be threatening to your church?

As the young church grew and moved out from Jerusalem, it began to include men and women from all walks of life—the rich, the poor, Samaritans, an Ethiopian government official, a persecuting Pharisee, and even a Roman army officer. No one was beyond God's grace and Christ's love. Of course, these conversions were not without controversy. Some people are threatened by anything or anyone who is different—this was especially true of Jewish believers who had suffered much for their faith in Christ. But God often surprises us with converts whom we never thought would believe, and he reaches them in ways we never could have predicted. The Samaritans were reached as a by-product of persecution. The Ethiopian official was reached through the supernatural transport of God's servant. Saul the persecutor was stopped by a light from heaven, and Cornelius discovered Christ with the help of an angel. Whom have you considered to be out of God's reach? What kinds of people have you or your church excluded? Remember, Jesus died for everyone. All are welcome at the foot of the cross.

8 How could your church make outsiders feel welcome on Sunday?



9 What kinds of people do you tend to assume would never become Christians? Why?

10 What could you do to help bring the gospel to them?



11 What can you do to make outsiders feel more welcome at your church?

12 Add to your prayer list at least two seemingly unreachable people.

A What happened as a result of the persecution of the early church (8:1–40)? How might God use the opposition and persecution you face for his glory?

B How did Simon the sorcerer respond to the apostles' actions and message (8:9–13)? What did Peter tell Simon about his offer (8:18–23)? In what situations would a rebuke like Peter's be appropriate today?

C How did Ananias help Saul (9:10–19)? Why was this difficult for him to do? What kind of difficult task might God ask you to do?

D What was Dorcas's reputation (9:36)? How can you be like Dorcas?

E Why did Peter find it so difficult to go to Cornelius (10:28)? What convinced Peter that Cornelius's conversion was genuine (10:44–48)? Why did Cornelius want Peter to stay with him for several days (10:48)? What would it take to convince you to transcend certain social barriers to spread the gospel?

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