

THE BOOK OF ACTS

MOTIVES MATTER

SEPTEMBER 13, 2026

SCRIPTURE

Now for some time a man named Simon had practiced sorcery in the city and amazed all the people of Samaria. He boasted that he was someone great, and all the people, both high and low, gave him their attention and exclaimed, "This man is rightly called the Great Power of God." They followed him because he had amazed them for a long time with his sorcery. But when they believed Philip as he proclaimed the good news of the Kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women. Simon himself believed and was baptized. And he followed Philip everywhere, astonished by the great signs and miracles he saw. When the apostles in Jerusalem heard that Samaria had accepted the word of God, they sent Peter and John to Samaria. When they arrived, they prayed for the new believers there that they might receive the Holy Spirit, because the Holy Spirit had not yet come on any of them. They had simply been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. Then Peter and John placed their hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit. When Simon saw that the Spirit was given at the laying on of the apostles' hands, he offered them money and said, "Give me also this ability so that everyone on whom I lay my hands may receive the Holy Spirit." Peter answered: "May your money perish with you, because you thought you could buy the gift of God with money! You have no part or share in this ministry, because your heart is not right before God. Repent of this wickedness and pray to the Lord in the hope that He may forgive you for having such a thought in your heart. For I see that you are full of bitterness and captive to sin." Then Simon answered, "Pray to the Lord for me so that nothing you have said may happen to me." Acts 8:9-24

SIMON THE SORCEROR

1/ Simon was a Samaritan.

2/ Simon practiced dark magic.

3/ Simon "believed" and was baptized.

4/ Simon's motives were wrong.

"It is not what a man does that determines whether his work is sacred or secular, it is why he does it. The motive is everything." A.W. Tozer

People can do the right thing with the wrong motives.

So Absalom stole the hearts of all the people of Israel. 2 Samuel 15:6

He was doing the right thing, caring for people, but for the wrong reasons.

"Watch out! Don't do your good deeds publicly, to be admired by others, for you will lose the reward from your Father in heaven." Matthew 6:1

"Let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven." Matthew 5:16

People can do the wrong thing with the right motives.

Then Simon Peter, having a sword, drew it and struck the high priest's servant and cut off his right ear. John 18:10

People can do the wrong thing with the wrong motives.

"What will you give me if I betray Jesus to you?" They counted out thirty silver coins and gave them to Judas. Matthew 26:15

You can do the right thing with the right motives.

God demonstrates His own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Romans 5:8

5/ Simon's motives were challenged.

We should reject all types of "simony."

"Preaching to gain recognition or status is simony. Serving with an eye to advancement in the church's power structure is simony. Seeking spiritual gifts for the promotion of oneself is simony. Even seeking to be godly so other will think we are godly is a type of simony."
Kent Hughes

God will challenge our motives.

People may be pure in their own eyes, but the Lord examines their motives. Proverbs 16:2

"Search me, O God, and know my heart. Test me and know my anxious thoughts. See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting." Psalm 139:23-24

We should challenge our motives.

Each one should test their own actions. Galatians 6:4

Let a person examine himself... 1 Corinthians 11:28

Examine yourselves... 2 Corinthians 13:5