



Week 6 | The Magician: When Power Meets the Gospel

OPENING PRAYER

We come before You today asking that You would search our hearts. Help us to see where we may be chasing power, influence, or success instead of seeking You. Teach us to value Your presence above everything else. Fill us with Your Holy Spirit so that our lives would reflect humility, repentance, and obedience. As we open Your Word today, shape us into people who build Your Kingdom and not our own. In Jesus' name, Amen.

OPENING QUESTION^(OPTIONAL)

If you suddenly had **unlimited power or influence for one week**, what would you do with it first?



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WORD

Acts 8:9–25 (ESV)

9 But there was a man named Simon, who had previously practiced magic in the city and amazed the people of Samaria, saying that he himself was somebody great.

10 They all paid attention to him, from the least to the greatest, saying, “This man is the power of God that is called Great.” 11 And they paid attention to him because for a long time he had amazed them with his magic. 12 But when they believed Philip as he preached good news about the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women. 13 Even Simon himself believed, and after being baptized he continued with Philip. And seeing signs and great miracles performed, he was amazed. 14 Now when the apostles at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent to them Peter and John, 15 who came down and prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Spirit, 16 for he had not yet fallen on any of them, but they had only been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.

17 Then they laid their hands on them and they received the Holy Spirit. 18 Now when Simon saw that the Spirit was given through the laying on of the apostles’ hands, he offered them money, 19 saying, “Give me this power also, so that anyone on whom I lay my hands may receive the Holy Spirit.” 20 But Peter said to him, “May your silver perish with you, because you thought you could obtain the gift of God with money! 21 You have neither part nor lot in this matter, for your heart is not right before God. 22 Repent, therefore, of this wickedness of yours, and pray to the Lord that, if possible, the intent of your heart may be forgiven you. 23 For I see that you are in the gall of bitterness and in the bond of iniquity.” 24 And Simon answered, “Pray for me to the Lord, that nothing of what you have said may come upon me.” 25 Now when they had testified and spoken the word of the Lord, they returned to Jerusalem, preaching the gospel to many villages of the Samaritans.

REFLECTION AND COMMENTARY

The story of Simon the Magician confronts a powerful question about what we really want from God. Simon had influence, reputation, and a following in Samaria. The people even described him as “the power of God that is called Great.” Yet when the Gospel arrived through Philip’s preaching, the focus shifted away from Simon’s reputation and toward the supremacy of Jesus.

The sermon reminds us that the Gospel is not about spiritual techniques or mystical experiences but about a relationship with God. As the message stated, “Simon believes, but he doesn’t repent. He’s amazed by the power, but he hasn’t encountered the Person.” This highlights a subtle but serious danger: we can be fascinated by the works of God without ever surrendering our hearts to Him.

Simon also exposes a deeper issue — the temptation to treat God transactionally. When Simon offered money for the power of the Holy Spirit, Peter’s response was immediate and strong. The problem was not curiosity about spiritual power; it was Simon’s assumption that God’s gifts could be bought, controlled, or leveraged for influence. As the sermon put it, “Spiritual power divorced from the gospel is always about control.” The Gospel, however, reminds us that God’s grace is a gift. We cannot buy it, earn it, or use it to build our own platform. We receive it humbly and live it out for His glory.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS (pick one from each section)

1. In the sermon, a question was asked: **“What does power look like?”**

What are some ways our culture defines power or success today?

2. Simon amazed people with his magic and influence.

Why do you think people are often drawn to displays of power or spiritual experiences?

3. The sermon said, **“Simon believed, but he didn’t repent.”**

What is the difference between being impressed by Jesus and truly following Him?

4. Simon tried to buy the power of the Holy Spirit.

In what ways can people today treat faith like a commodity or something to leverage?

5. Peter told Simon that his problem was a **heart issue**, not just wrong actions.

Why does genuine repentance matter in our relationship with God?

6. The apostles continued preaching the Gospel despite distractions.

What would it look like for us to live lives where people remember **Jesus more than us?**

Activation

1. Examine the Heart

Take time this week to ask the Lord honestly:

“Am I seeking You, or am I seeking what You can give me?”

Write down any areas where you may be tempted to pursue influence, recognition, or control instead of intimacy with God.

2. Refocus the Mission

Share your faith with at least one person this week.

Like Philip, keep it simple: talk about Jesus, His Kingdom, and what He has done in your life.

CLOSING PRAYER

Father, Thank You for the gift of the Gospel and the grace that we could never earn or purchase. Forgive us for the times we have treated faith as something transactional or tried to use Your name for our own purposes. Purify our hearts and teach us true repentance. Fill us with Your Holy Spirit so that we may live lives that reflect humility, service, and love. Help us to proclaim Christ faithfully and to build Your Kingdom above all else.

In Jesus’ name, Amen.