

# Midweek Study



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## Authentic Faith

Acts 19:1-20:16

Paul arrived in Ephesus to find twelve men calling themselves “disciples,” but something didn't seem right. Paul's diagnostic question to them remains the ultimate test for every believer today: **“Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?”** To have authentic faith, we need to distinguish between head knowledge and heart transformation, between religious activity and spiritual reality.

### I. THE DANGER OF INCOMPLETE FAITH (19:1-7)

- **V.2** - This is not teaching a second work of grace. You receive the Holy Spirit when you become a Christian (**Romans 8:9**). This was Paul's test question of whether a person is a Christian.
- They had submitted to John's baptism of repentance, but they were still anticipating the promised Messiah. Christian baptism signifies the believer's union with Jesus' death, burial, and resurrection (See **Rom. 6:3-5**).
- When Paul laid hands on them, the Holy Spirit came on them. They spoke with tongues and prophesied. These were signs that they had the Holy Spirit and were saved. **Today, they are not.** Before, they were simply baptized and religious. Now they were true Christians for the first time.

INSTANCES OF MIRACULOUS EVIDENCE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT			
Passage	Subjects	Observers	Purpose
<b>2:1-4</b>	Jewish believers	Jewish nonbelievers	To authenticate the fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy concerning the <u>Holy Spirit</u> ( <b>Joel 2:28-32</b> )
<b>8:14-17</b>	Samaritan believers	Jewish believers	To authenticate God's acceptance of Samaritans as Christians
<b>10:44-47</b>	Gentile believers	Jewish believers	To authenticate God's acceptance of Gentiles as Christians
<b>19:1-7</b>	Jewish disciples of John the Baptist	Jewish believers	To authenticate the gospel among the Jews in Ephesus

Source: Charles Swindoll, *Insights in Acts* commentary

### II. THE DEMONSTRATION OF AUTHENTIC MINISTRY (19:8-12)

- **19:8-10** - Paul reasoned in the synagogue for three months, then taught in the school (“lecture hall”) of Tyrannus for two years. His ministry reached both Jews and Greeks.

- **19:11-12** – “Luke [shows] that God accomplished similar things through Peter and Paul. Both healed a disabled man (**3:2-12; 14:8-18**), cast out demons (**5:16; 16:16-18**), confronted magicians (**8:18-24; 13:6-11**), raised the dead (**9:36-40; 20:9-10**), and were dramatically and miraculously released from prison (**12:7-10; 16:25-26**).”<sup>1</sup>

### III. THE **DECEPTION** OF COUNTERFEIT SPIRITUALITY (**19:13-20**)

- **19:13-16** - Seven sons tried to use Jesus' name as a magical formula without having any relationship with Jesus. Spiritual authority comes from a genuine relationship with Christ, not religious rituals or using the right words.
- **19:17-20** - When genuine conversion occurs, there will be visible and even expensive evidence. **Deut. 18:9-13** condemns sorcery. These new believers didn't just hide their magic books; they publicly burned them despite their enormous value. This demonstrates the power of genuine repentance and complete break with the old life.
- “The measure of this turn from the occult was a bonfire worth ‘fifty thousand pieces of silver’ (**19:19**). If the pieces of silver were *drachmas*, each coin represented one day's wages for a common laborer (cf. **Luke 15:8**). Fifty thousand pieces represented more than **136 years of continuous labor** with no days off! For a conservative estimate of the value today, use this formula: 50,000 days × 8 hours/day = 400,000 work hours.”<sup>2</sup>

**My EXAMPLE: 400,000 hours × \$20 per/hour = \$8,000,000!!!**

### IV. THE **DIFFICULTY** OF AUTHENTIC MINISTRY (**19:21-41**)

- **19:23-24** - Paul's effective ministry threatened the economic interests of those who profited from religious deception, leading to the riot instigated by Demetrius the silversmith whose Diana idol business was suffering.

### V. THE **DETERMINATION** OF AUTHENTIC FAITH (**20:1-16**)

- **20:7** - “**Now on the first day of the week...**” - This is the first mention in the Bible of early Christians meeting on Sunday. Early Christians knew that the resurrection of Jesus Christ changed everything.
- **20:9-12** - When the young man, Eutychus (Greek word indicates between 7-14 years old), fell from the third-story window and died, Paul resurrected him, went back upstairs, and continued preaching until daybreak (likely at least 8-10 hours of preaching). The Word of God was more important than even focusing on this miracle.

#### Applications for Today:

1. **Do you have the Holy Spirit?** - This is not about a “second blessing” but about whether you have genuinely been saved. Some church members have been immersed in water but never truly born again. (see **2 Cor. 13:5**)
2. **Make sure you are not teaching partial truth** - You can't teach people more than you know. Remember the connection between Apollos and **Ephesians 19:1-6**. **James 3:1** is a strong warning to teachers of God's Word.
3. **True conversion results in costly life change** - Genuine repentance produces visible, expensive changes in lifestyle, as demonstrated by the Ephesians burning their valuable magic books.
4. **Final question: How are you attacking the work of satan in your life?**

<sup>1</sup> Charles R. Swindoll, *Acts*, Swindoll's Living Insights New Testament Commentary (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., 2016), 376.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 380.