

Acts 10



Prejudice Broken

Life Group Leaders should read through this material and choose a few questions to talk over in your group. Your group will not have time to cover all the material. The guide is for personal study and for choosing a few questions that you and your life group would like to discuss.

Read Aloud Acts 10:1-23

Before we break down this section of Scripture, describe what is happening in your own words. (Being able to summarize Scripture is a great way to see if we are comprehending what we have just read.)

Acts 10:1-8

1 One of our main characters in Acts chapter 10 is a man named Cornelius. He has various qualities mentioned that are worth taking note of.

- A Centurion:** These were officials in the Roman army. Typically a Centurion was in charge of around 80-250 men. He was the primary bridge between the high ranking officers of Rome and the foot soldiers of Rome.
- B Italian Cohort:** This was a special cohort of Centurions. Some scholars think they were sent to Caesarea for a specific mission or protection of a high ranking officer.
- C Devout man who feared God:** Most Bible scholars agree that this is in reference to Cornelius being a proselyte (a Gentile convert to Judaism). This description means that Cornelius feared YAHWEH, the God of Israel. He was devout in his prayer to the One True God.
- D Giving Alms:** Alms were offering beyond what was mandated by taxes or religious law. Alms were given to the poor and destitute, oftentimes widows, orphans, or beggars. God commonly rebuked Israel for neglecting people in need. Cornelius understood the heart of God in giving to the poor.

2 God was pleased with Cornelius worship. God promises that those who seek Him will find Him, those who offer true sacrifice from their heart, will be heard by their God!

What God desires: Psalm 51:16-17, Hosea 6:6, Isaiah 11:11-31

God answers a seeking heart: Isaiah 55:6-7, Matthew 7:7-8, Matthew 5:8, Psalm 24:3-4


Read: Isaiah 11:11-31 & Psalm 24:3-4


? **Question: From the above Scripture and description of Cornelius, what sticks out to you about seeking God and prayer?**

Acts 10:9-23

The one thing that Peter and Cornelius had in common was that they were men of prayer. Both of them were in a season that was new, and they did not know what they did not know. Yet, as they sought God He revealed His truth to them one step at a time, and both men were willing to obey the commands given to them.

God gave Peter a vision based on food. The Jewish people had been given dietary laws to keep them separate from the other nations. Up to this point, Peter had observed these laws strictly. Yet God was doing something new. Did this mean that the Word of God in the Old Testament was not true? No. Rather, God was establishing His New Covenant, a Covenant that fulfilled and furthered the Covenant given to Moses. Peter did not have full revelation of the New Covenant yet. If you are interested you can read the following Scripture that talks about the Old and New Covenants.

 The books of Galatians and Hebrews break down the details of the Old and New Covenant. This can be a hard concept to understand, and God gave us two books fully devoted to this subject!

 **Question: Peter and Cornelius did not know this was the day God was going to speak to them. They were simply doing what they always had done. Oftentimes, this is how God speaks: during the day-to-day habits in our lives. If we are not practicing spiritual disciplines such as prayer, we may miss His voice. What does your time of prayer in solitude look like? What are some ways you could develop intentional and private times of prayer?**


Read Aloud Acts 10:24-48

Describe what is happening in your own words.

Acts 10:24-33

God was moving powerfully in the life of Cornelius. Cornelius was open to learn from God and was aware that He had more to learn about the One True God. However, even in the midst of God moving, Cornelius had a lot to learn. He began worshipping the servant of God rather than God Himself.

Peter also was learning throughout this process. By the time he had arrived at the house of Cornelius, he had realized that the vision God had given him was not about food but rather about people. However, in the midst of Peter growing, he was still mistaken. Nowhere in the law does it prohibit a Jewish man from going to a Gentile man, especially a proselyte. In fact, God sent Jonah to an entire Gentile nation! Peter was still bound up in the traditions of his fathers. He thought he was following God's Word, but he was still blinded by the traditions of man.

 **Question: It is easy to be influenced by what we see. That could be a specific leader we are drawn to, or that could be the traditions we have grown up in and experienced. It took real life experiences for these men to realize where they had been mistaken. Can you remember a time/experience that exposed a false belief in the tradition of men or the idolatry of a leader in your life?**

Acts 10:33-43

Peter began to preach the Gospel to Cornelius. This has been a very common occurrence throughout the book of Acts. Let's look at the points he emphasizes and see if there is one point that sticks out to you.

- A God shows no partiality** - God is a righteous judge, all fall short of the glory of God. At the same time, any man can be saved by grace through faith in Jesus!
Romans 3:23, 1 Corinthians 1:27, Romans 10:13
- B Fear God** - The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge; this is where we recognize our sin and that we deserve judgement.
Proverbs 9:10
- C Does what is right** - This means obeying God's Word with the heart of God. This requires faith.
Hebrew 11:6
- D The good news of peace** - The sacrifice of Christ reconciles us to God. We are no longer enemies of His, but rather His friends.
Ephesians 2:1-10
- E The life of Jesus** - This includes the perfect life of Christ, and His miraculous ministry.
Matthew, Mark, Luke and John
- F Jesus died on a cross/tree** - This was a symbol of being cursed. Jesus became sin for us so that we could become the righteousness of God.
2 Corinthians 5:21, Deuteronomy 21:22-23, Galatians 3:13
- G Jesus rose from the dead** - Jesus brought victory through the resurrection.
1 Corinthians 15
- H The Apostles** - The commissioned men that Christ sent out to preach the Word and establish the church as eyewitnesses of His resurrection.
- I The Prophets Bear Witness** - The entire Bible points to Jesus! He fulfilled over 300 prophecies.
Luke 24:44-45
- J Forgiveness of sins** - We are saved by grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone. He is the only way to salvation!
John 14:6



Question: What stands out to you in this sharing of the Gospel?

Acts 10:44-48

As Peter preached the Gospel, the Holy Spirit demonstrated His power. This has happened a few times now. If you have noticed, it always happens a little differently. God is not a God of equations but rather of faith.



We have mentioned that the book of Acts is both descriptive and prescriptive. Descriptive means the Scripture simply describes what happened during an event. That is what is happening here. Why would God want this event described? It was a pivotal moment for the Jews to see that the salvation God was offering Israel was the same exact salvation He was offering the Gentiles. The Jews and Gentiles had different roles, but they were saved by the same Messiah and received the same Holy Spirit.



Question: Have you ever experienced God move in a powerful or miraculous way? Did you find yourself chasing that experience or for God to do the same thing in the same way? If you have done this, why do you think this can be unhealthy? If you have not done this, what keeps you from chasing specific experiences?



Weekly Challenge

In this chapter, Peter is confronted with his own prejudice. Peter did not even know this type of behavior was in his heart. It became exposed through obedience to God. What is a group of people that you find hard to love? Maybe this is a racial group, economic group, religious group, political group, etc. If there is a certain group of people you find hard to love, pray each day this week for that demographic of people. Not only pray for them but ask God if there are any ways you could serve them.

Memory Verse

Acts 9:31 ESV

So the church throughout all Judea and Galilee and Samaria had peace and was being built up. And walking in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Spirit, it multiplied.