

SMALL GROUP STUDY GUIDE

JAN. 4 & 5 - ACTS 10 - PETER & CORNELIUS

OPENING QUESTION

Think about the various tables where you've eaten meals throughout your life. Of all of them, which one would you consider to be your favourite? Why? What was it about that particular table that brings back strong memories?

READ TOGETHER

Acts 10

BIG IDEA

God wants people of all kinds to be part of his family.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. If your Bible has a map in the back of it, find Caesarea up the north-western coast of Israel. You can see that this story moves us further away from the gospel's "hometown" of Jerusalem. Having studied the book of Acts since the beginning, why does it make sense that this is happening?
2. Read verses 1-8. What do we know about this man named Cornelius? Why do you think God does for Cornelius what He does?
3. Read verses 9-16. Why would the vision Peter has be incredibly puzzling to Peter? (read Deuteronomy 14:3-20 for help on this)
4. In light of what you know from reading this whole story in Acts 10, what point was God making when the voice in verse 15 says, "*Do not call something unclean if God has made it clean*"?
5. Assign each of the following passages to various members of your small group and read them out loud one by one. Genesis 12:1-3; Psalm 22:27; Isaiah 49:6; Jeremiah 16:20-21; Zechariah 2:11; Matthew 28:19-20. Who is the good news of the gospel for?
6. Read Acts 10:17-23. How does Peter respond to what God is teaching him?
7. Throughout the rest of the chapter, as you have already read, you discover that Peter travels to Cornelius' home and for the first time, Gentiles (non-Jews) hear the gospel and experience salvation. Read Acts 1:1-8. How is Acts 10 tied to those verses?
8. Have you ever struggled with what Peter does in this chapter? Are there people in your life or attitude toward others whom you do not want or care to see as part of God's family?
9. Who is your "*Cornelius*"? Who might God be calling you to welcome into your life and home? In whose life might God want to use you to invite them to take their place around His table?

CHALLENGE

It is obvious from this story that God wants people of all kinds to be part of His family. This week commit to opening your eyes to those in your world – neighbors, co-workers, friends, connections through your kids – who might be a Cornelius in your life to whom you can become a witness for Christ.

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PRAYER

Pray for each other in your small group that God would open your eyes to see (and hear) people who need Him and to love them as God does.

NEXT STEP

One of the most fascinating discoveries many followers of Christ eventually make is that the gospel was for people of all nations and ethnicities from the very beginning of the Old Testament. If you'd like to read more on this, go to <http://home.snu.edu/~hculbert/biblical.htm> where you will find a list of 80 Old Testament passages that speak to this. Choose some of them off the list and read them.

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