

Life Group Leader Guide: “Loyalty to God vs Loyalty to Rules”

Dates: 11/8/20- 11/14/20

Video:

Show the video. It is about 3 minutes long.

Scripture: Acts 10: 23-48

23 So he invited them in to be his guests. The next day he rose and went away with them, and some of the brothers from Joppa accompanied him. **24** And on the following day they entered Caesarea. Cornelius was expecting them and had called together his relatives and close friends. **25** When Peter entered, Cornelius met him and fell down at his feet and worshiped him. **26** But Peter lifted him up, saying, “Stand up; I too am a man.” **27** And as he talked with him, he went in and found many persons gathered. **28** And he said to them, “You yourselves know how unlawful it is for a Jew to associate with or to visit anyone of another nation, but God has shown me that I should not call any person common or unclean. **29** So when I was sent for, I came without objection. I ask then why you sent for me.” **30** And Cornelius said, “Four days ago, about this hour, I was praying in my house at the ninth hour, [d] and behold, a man stood before me in bright clothing **31** and said, ‘Cornelius, your prayer has been heard and your alms have been remembered before God. **32** Send therefore to Joppa and ask for Simon who is called Peter. He is lodging in the house of Simon, a tanner, by the sea.’ **33** So I sent for you at once, and you have been kind enough to come. Now therefore we are all here in the presence of God to hear all that you have been commanded by the Lord.”

Gentiles Hear the Good News

34 So Peter opened his mouth and said: “Truly I understand that God shows no partiality, **35** but in every nation anyone who fears him and does what is right is acceptable to him. **36** As for the word that he sent to Israel, preaching good news of peace through Jesus Christ (he is Lord of all), **37** you yourselves know what happened throughout all Judea, beginning from Galilee after the baptism that John proclaimed: **38** how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power. He went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with him. **39** And we are witnesses of all that he did both in the country of the Jews and in Jerusalem. They put him to death by hanging him on a tree, **40** but God raised him on the third day and made him to appear, **41** not to all the people but to us who had been chosen by God as witnesses, who ate and drank with him after he rose from the dead. **42** And he commanded us to preach to the people and to testify that he is the one appointed by God to be judge of the living and the dead. **43** To him all the prophets bear witness that everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name.”

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The Holy Spirit Falls on the Gentiles

44 While Peter was still saying these things, the Holy Spirit fell on all who heard the word.

45 And the believers from among the circumcised who had come with Peter were amazed, because the gift of the Holy Spirit was poured out even on the Gentiles. **46** For they were hearing them speaking in tongues and extolling God. Then Peter declared, **47** “Can anyone withhold water for baptizing these people, who have received the Holy Spirit just as we have?” **48** And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. Then they asked him to remain for some days.

Reflection Time

- We recommend taking about 4-5 minutes for people to reflect after the passage. But before you do, say something like:
 - “I encourage you to first take a couple minutes to reflect on this passage and the video, come up with any questions, connections, or what the passage says to you tonight.”

Question: What is a time that you felt excluded? What is a time that you have intentionally or unintentionally excluded someone else?

Observation: Prior to verse 23, Peter actually resists God’s prompting to minister to the Gentiles three times. He had done ministry with Jesus for years, who clearly loved and ministered to Gentiles.

Question: What factors do you think stopped Peter from following God’s command and Christ’s example in including Gentiles?

Question: Cornelius was a righteous and god-fearing person. But scripture is clear that this was still not enough. Why did he need an encounter with Jesus?

Question: What are some habits and mindsets that the church has adopted from culture that God’s Word and Gospel challenge? Where did you learn those mindsets?

Question: What are the criteria that help you know when a mindset or conviction you hold are based in scripture or God’s calling, or an external influence.

Question: What do we risk when we go against social norms or rules and follow God?

Observation: After the Holy Spirit changes Peter’s intent, he still has to take the risk of initiating with a person he does not feel comfortable with.

Question: What kind of person would feel like a *risk* for you to engage in deeper relationship with?

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Observation: The fruit of Peter’s decision was the release of the holy spirit, and the salvation of many.

Question: What kind of practical fruit can we expect to see when we follow God’s leading to engage with people we normally wouldn’t?

Prayer:

(LIFE GROUP LEADERS):