

LifeGroup Member

Preparing for Life Lesson 7: The Vision for the Church February 12, 2012



Key Verse(s): “Opening his mouth, Peter said: ‘I most certainly understand now that God is not one to show partiality, but in every nation the man who fears Him and does what is right is welcome to Him.’” Acts 10:34

One Church Connection: The church is a body of believers who fear and obey God, all of whom are welcomed eternally into His family.

Focal Passage(s): Acts 10

Context: If there are any doubts concerning the ability and the intent of our God to communicate His vision for His people, may they be forever laid to rest by this LifeLesson. God is able to speak in whatever way He chooses (reference Hebrews 1:1,2). When He speaks He makes the intent of His heart clear to all who listen (reference 2 Peter 3:9). God loves those whom He creates and thus provided a plan that all who believe in His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, shall be saved (reference Romans 10:13). For the early apostles, who were all Jewish, such a doctrine seemed heretical. Therefore, God orchestrated a way to reveal to the hearts of both a Gentile and a Jew His true intent. In this story God’s revelation was communicated through visions, the words of the Holy Spirit and the conversations of men. As these men prayed, listened and spoke, God’s vision for His church was understood. Through God’s faithfulness to Cornelius and Simon Peter, the church discovered that Gentiles, as well as Jews, were able to receive the gospel, the Holy Spirit and baptism. God was welcoming all who would respond in faith to His Son. For over two millennia and in every nation under the sun, the church has accepted this revelation as a source of truth.

Connecting to the Passage

No Partiality with God

Deuteronomy 10:12-21

Living in a world punctuated by partiality and prejudice speaks to the failure of human beings to see people as God sees them. When God looks at His creations He does not see the color of their skin, their nationality, their socio-economic condition or any other human characteristic that so often results in separation or division. Jesus explained it this way, “*For God so loved the world that He gave...*” (John 3:16 NASB). You know the rest of that verse. The question is, does it permit you to embrace the world view that His Son died for? Many people return to Old Testament passages to defend the cultural partiality that lingers in their hearts.

God is speaking to His chosen people—the nation of Israel. God does not mince words in saying to Israel, “*So show your love to the alien, for you were aliens in the land of Egypt*” (Deuteronomy 10:19 NASB). The Bible points out that such behavior is evidence of a heart that fears Him, serves Him, and clings to Him.

Lancaster has become a culturally diverse city. Thankfully, this diversity is reflected in the body of Second Baptist. Opportunities abound to demonstrate that our God “does not show partiality,” and that we are looking forward to a day when the saints “*from every tribe and tongue and people and nation*” (Revelation 5:9 NASB) will rejoice around His throne forever!

Dear Lord, I recognize you as the Creator of all and I see your love for every creature. Help me to see each person I meet like you see them; showing no partiality, but exercising a spirit of love. Amen .

Connecting with the Passage

1. Read Acts 10.
2. What are the key words that stand out to you in this passage?
3. What is the main idea of this passage? Is there more than one theme?
4. What does this passage reveal about who God is?
5. What does this passage reveal about what it means to be a disciple of Christ?
6. Is there a truth or a phrase from this passage that is particularly meaningful to you in your current life circumstances? How can this truth or phrase strengthen your walk with Christ?
7. Is there a word, phrase, or verse that you have questions about? If so, write down your questions. Pray and ask the Holy Spirit to increase your understanding. Read the passage again.
8. Ask God to help you apply the truths of this passage today. If this time of study has brought to mind any prayer requests you can bring to God about your friends, family, church, nation, or world, talk with God about these prayer concerns.



Preparing for LifeGroup Discussions

1. Cornelius was a Gentile, but what evidence do you see that he was seeking to worship God in truth (vv. 1-4)?
2. Consider Acts 10:24 and 33; what do these actions of Cornelius tell us about Cornelius' search to know God personally? His desire to influence others for God?
3. Peter had the vision from God before he knew what God was preparing him to do (v. 17, 19). How do you stay attentive to all God wants to teach you today so you'll be prepared to serve Him in the future?
4. Like Cornelius, there are people around the world who don't yet know the truth about Jesus Christ, but they're seeking to worship God in truth. How does God's interaction in Cornelius' life give you confidence that God is able and willing to reach even lost people who live in remote locations?