

Mental



Prepare in Advance

Facilitator: In advance of the session:

- Retrieve, review, and have ready the video's listed below (links are provided on this session's webpage).
- Familiarize yourself with all of Acts 10) to help better facilitate the discussion.
- Have the *Bible Background Video* ready to view.

Introduce

Before reading the text, ask the following question to introduce today's session:

- When we think of “conversion” we often think of unbelievers. To what degree do believers still need to be “converted?”
- Now have someone read Acts 10:9-48 out loud, then show the *Bible Background Video*.

Peter's Conversion

Discuss together the vision that Peter received from God. Use the following questions to do so.

- How was God preparing him for the experience to come?
- How do the animals of the vision – things that are considered unfit to eat – correspond to the Gentile people?
- Why is this such a big deal for a practicing Jew?
- What realization has Peter come to in verses 34-35? How has God’s appearance changed Peter’s beliefs and actions?
- What (or who) is the focus of Peter’s message to these Gentile believers? Although the Jewish believers and Gentile believers will worship differently, what (or who) is their common ground?
- What surprising ways did Peter find God at work in Cornelius and the Gentile people (especially vs. 3-6, 44-48)? How did these other ways serve to confirm what God had shown him in the vision?

Epiphany

Say: This week begins the season of Epiphany – a word that Christians usually define as the appearance of a deity. Alternatively, it can also mean a moment in which you suddenly see or understand something in a new or very clear way (both definitions from Merriam-Webster).

Use the following questions to continue discussion.

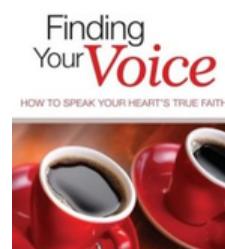
- How could one definition lead to the other? How does this story illustrate that?
- In this story, using either or both definitions, what was the epiphany for Cornelius and his friends?
- What was the epiphany for Peter?
- How was God’s appearing unexpected for Peter?
- What do these definitions and this story teach us about the ways, times and reasons that God often chooses to appear to us?

Closing

Reflect together on what we’ve seen in the story today.

- Where do you typically expect to see an “epiphany?”
- When and how has God surprised you in the past?
- Where have you seen God’s presence lately, and what do you think God might be guiding you to do in response?

By Jon Parks



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