

WARM-UP

- What is one activity you love doing with your family? Tell us about one of the best memories you have with your family.
- Think of a puzzle or challenge you couldn't solve at first. What helped you complete it?
- Recall a project that you led at work or school. How did you work as a team to finish it?

WORD *²⁷For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. ²⁸There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. ²⁹And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to promise.*

GALATIANS 3:27-29

(Read also **ACTS 10-11**.)

God's plan for all families to be blessed and be a blessing is not only for the descendants of Abraham, but also for the Gentiles. This was accomplished through the finished work of Christ and is now proclaimed to all. The gospel is not limited to any age, ethnicity, or gender. During the early days of the church, God demonstrated the impartiality of the gospel through Peter and Cornelius the centurion. Today, we will look at how God uses people from different backgrounds to make the gospel known and become a blessing to their families.

1 | Even before Cornelius heard the gospel, God was already at work in his life.

¹At Caesarea there was a man named Cornelius, a centurion of what was known as the Italian Cohort, ²a devout man who feared God with all his household, gave alms generously to the people, and prayed continually to God. ACTS 10:1-2

Cornelius was a Roman military figure who led about a hundred soldiers (and possibly more). God had drawn him to be what was known as a God-fearer, which was a Gentile who was just short of fully converting to Judaism, devoted to the one true God, worshiped in the synagogues, and obeyed God's word. God had empowered Cornelius to set an example and lead his entire household in following God and in doing charitable acts, like giving alms to the poor. In spite of all these, God was not finished with him yet. God would create circumstances that would lead him and his household to put their faith in Jesus Christ. Why is it important to recognize God's active work as we influence our family and others toward God?

2 | Cornelius responded in obedience to God's call.

⁷When the angel who spoke to him had departed, he called two of his servants and a devout soldier from among those who attended him, ⁸and having related everything to them, he sent them to Joppa. ACTS 10:7-8

The Lord continued to work in Cornelius and his family by sending an angel to Cornelius and by appearing to Peter in a vision. While Peter was perplexed trying to understand the meaning of his vision (Acts 10:9-16), an angel instructed Cornelius to send men and invite Peter to his household. Even if there was no explanation why this instruction was so,

Cornelius understood that it was from God and immediately acted upon it. Little did he know that his obedience would change those around him and become a catalyst for the gospel to be preached. As we trust and obey God even when things don't make sense, we will eventually understand and see His plans fulfilled. Recall a time when God called you to do something you couldn't understand at first. How did you respond?

3

Cornelius invited his relatives and close friends to hear the gospel.

And on the following day they entered Caesarea. Cornelius was expecting them and had called together his relatives and close friends. ACTS 10:24

Cornelius knew that what Peter was about to say was something he and the people around him shouldn't miss. When Peter finally arrived, Cornelius had already invited his relatives and close friends to expectantly hear God's message for them. As a result of Cornelius's obedience, leadership, and influence, God's word was preached, and he and his family and friends put their faith in Christ and were baptized. This also paved the way for more Gentiles to come to Christ. The mindset of the Jews toward the Gentiles was broken when they saw that *God has granted repentance that leads to life* (Acts 11:18). The gospel we have heard is also for everyone else around us who has not heard it yet. It also empowers us to make a difference in our spheres of influence, through our faith, obedience, and helping others follow Him. Recall a time when a family member or friend heard the gospel for the first time. How did he or she respond?

APPLICATION

- How may you set a godly example for your family and community today? What steps can you take to bless the people around you and point them to God?
- Are there members in your family or group of friends who have yet to hear the gospel? What are some actions you can take to help them do so this week?
- God shows no favoritism and the gospel is a message for all. How can you preach the gospel to someone you're not familiar with? What will you say?

PRAYER

- Thank God for raising people to lead godly families and communities. Thank Him that His love is for all people, regardless of demographic.
- Ask God for forgiveness for any pride and indifference when an opportunity to preach the gospel is presented.
- Pray for an open door to preach the gospel to your family and friends. Ask God to help you be a good example and a living testimony of His love to them.



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