



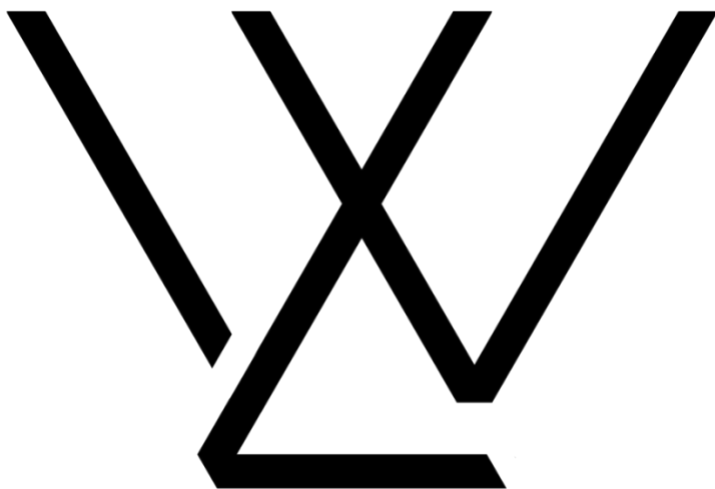
WORD TO LIFE

WEEKS 9 - 12



ON THE
RISE

ACTS 9:32 - 10:33



Word to Life's are sermon-aligned study guides, created to help the church dive even deeper into the passages we study together on Sundays.

Each week there will be five studies to help you prepare for the upcoming weekend sermon. This will also be a great discussion tool at your next LifeGroup meeting.

We hope you enjoy and grow deeper in your faith!

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Week 9: Acts 9:32-43

Day 1: Becoming Familiar with Ancient Places

READ: Acts 9:32-43

EXPLORE:

Have you ever lived in a certain area long enough to feel like you were familiar with every little detail? You could travel without having to think; each area contained a memory, and every place had its own story. Maybe your familiar place was small town or a large city. Maybe it took you a lifetime to know it well or maybe it was established in a few short months. Whatever the case may be, the reality is that places can become increasingly familiar as well as significant over time.

It can be a challenge to develop a sense of familiarity and significance with the geographical details of the Bible. Unlike the places in which we physically live, the geography of the Bible can sometimes remain distant, unexplored, and unknown. The ancient readers of Acts would have been familiar with Lydda and Joppa. We do not have that luxury. Instead, we are given the opportunity to explore and discover the significance of these places and their role within the larger story.

Acts 9:32-43 contains two distinct, but interconnected stories in the cities of Lydda and Joppa. Specifically, these ancient cities introduce and conclude two miracle moments. The Bible does not always give us specific locations, but here Luke chose to bookend his stories with specific locations. We are right to ask the question, "Why does Luke seem to intentionally mention these places?" This is our focus for today.

Lydda and Joppa were cities in the coastal region of Judea. For those who have been diligently studying Acts, the expansion of Christianity was promised by Christ to Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and the end of the earth. Acts 9 is a powerful reminder that the gospel was moving throughout the region to crucial cities. As coastal cities, both Lydda and Joppa would have played a vital role in Christianity's expansion.

Lydda was the Old Testament town of Lod which was located roughly 30 miles northwest of Jerusalem.¹ Interestingly, it is possible that Peter may have used the same route that was traveled by Philip from Azotus to Caesarea.² In a sense, Philip blazed a proverbial trail on which Peter was able to continually minister.

Joppa was the main port city in Judea which was located roughly 10 miles northwest of Lydda. Because Luke included these two geographical references, we can see how Peter continued to advance the Gospel farther in the Judean region of Sharon. The specific geography of Acts 9 leads us to two incredible insights.

First, we can see how Peter continued the expansion of the gospel through Judea in accordance with Jesus's promise in Acts 1:8. Second, we can see how Peter was being positioned by God closer to Caesarea and the supernatural blessing of a Gentile man named Cornelius. In the brief exploration of ancient geography, these two major elements in Acts come to life.

BIG IDEAS (1) As we become increasingly familiar with biblical contexts, we begin to position ourselves for right understanding. (2) Acts 9 includes specific geography which is designed to help us better understand the gospel's expansion in the ancient world.

APPLY:

- **Question:** Biblical geography can be life-giving and it can also be painstaking. How would you describe the relationship between the meticulous study of Scripture and the refreshing study of Scripture?

¹ See I Chronicles 8:12 for reference.

² See Acts 8:40 for reference.

- **Question:** A lot of Churches were established and grown in areas like Lydda and Joppa. Why do you think the Christian movement consistently involved ancient coastal regions?

- **Bonus Question:** Some scholars believe that Peter would have used the same route as the one which was pioneered by Philip. If this was the case, what conclusions or applications could potentially be drawn from the biblical text?

Week 9: Acts 9:32-43

Day 2: What is in a name?

READ: Acts 9:32-43 and Luke 7:11-17

EXPLORE:

One interesting aspect of the two stories in Acts 9:32-43 is the fact that both of the individuals who are miraculously healed are mentioned by name. It may not seem significant at first, but when we consider some of the typical patterns in Scripture, we will see that this is far from normal.

Biblical characters are often left nameless in history, even when they experience the miraculous. For example, the Syrophenician woman who asked Jesus for help with her demon-possessed daughter was never mentioned by name.³ The miraculous healing recorded in Luke 7:11-17 presents unnamed recipients of Christ's work. Even in Acts, some who are miraculously healed are left anonymous.⁴ Yet, when we encounter the healings in Acts 9, we are left with two named people who encountered the miraculous power of Christ. When we consider these examples and others like them, we are left with the question, "Why are our characters in Acts 9:32-43 mentioned by name?" It is to this question that we now turn our attention.

The first character that we encounter is a bedridden man by the name of Aeneas.⁵ He was limited by his body and left without hope. When Luke refers to him as Aeneas, he is intentionally using a personal Greek name for a Jew who had been dispersed outside of his ancestral homeland. By specifically calling him Aeneas, Luke is reminding us of the pain in his past. The specific naming of Aeneas was a reminder of the powerful work of God that could bring healing to the broken, connection to the disenfranchised, and hope to the hopeless.

³ See Matthew 15:22-28 and Mark 7:25-30 for reference.

⁴ See Acts 3:1-8 for reference.

⁵ The original Greek wording is not clear about whether he had been bedridden for eight years or from the age of eight.

In much the same way, Acts 9:36-43 records the resurrection story of a faithful woman named Tabitha in Aramaic and Dorcas in Greek. In the communication of both her Aramaic and Greek names, Luke goes out of his way to publicly identify her in history. Her life was marked by the resurrecting power of Christ and it always will be. Additionally, we are told that she was a disciple. It is important to note that this is the only time in Scripture where the female form of the Greek word for disciple is used.⁶ Although there were many women who were faithful disciples, the specific identification of Dorcas is truly unique.

More than just recording historical healings, the book of Acts was interested in identifying these two characters as the people who experienced the miraculous work of God. Aeneas and Dorcas were chosen by God and mentioned by name so that continuing work of Christ could be put on display. By mentioning them specifically, Luke gave historic and communal credibility to God's work in their life. Luke chose to include their names so that the miraculous power of God would be displayed in and through them. In their stories and others like them, we should be reminded that we too have a name and a story not for our own glory, but for God's alone.

BIG IDEA: Aeneas and Dorcas are identified by name so that their lives would serve as a tangible reminder of God's glory and power.

APPLY:

- **Question:** In your own words, why do you think some biblical characters are left anonymous while others are described by name?

- **Activity:** Compare the Acts 9:32-43 with Luke 7:11-17. Make observations about what you notice and why that could potentially be significant?

⁶ A female disciple (*mathetria*) (μαθήτρια) is a common word in ancient literature but only occurs in the Bible once.

Week 9: Acts 9:32-43

Day 3: Make Your Bed

READ: Acts 9:32-35 and John 5:1-18

EXPLORE:

“Make your bed.” There is no doubt that you have heard these words countless times in your life. Many of us have heard these fateful words more than others. For some, their day officially begins by making their bed. For others, their bed remains in a pristine condition of untouched perfection. I (Stephen) previously believed that there were only two types of people, those that made their bed and those that had given up altogether. This all changed when I went to college and met people who defied my neat categories.

In college, I encountered a roommate who broke the bed-making system altogether. His name was Brandon. Allow me to explain. Rather than making his bed every morning, Brandon chose to never unmake his bed in the first place. Instead of disheveling his bed by sleeping inside the sheets, Brandon slept with a blanket atop a pristine, perfectly made bed each and every night. Not only did he never have to make his bed, but he seldom had to wash his sheets. He was and still is a paragon of ingenuity.

His logic was simple. Why would he ever unmake it if it meant a daily process of the same thing? For Brandon, making the bed doesn't make sense if it is going to exist in an unending cycle of being done and undone. This whole discussion seems silly at first glance and rightfully so. However, when we consider Peter's words for Aeneas to rise and make his bed, this conversation can take on a new meaning.

Unlike our beds which are constantly made and unmade, Peter's words to Aeneas marked a cycle which was broken and a new day that was dawning. When Peter commanded Aeneas to rise and make his bed, he was fundamentally inviting him to a new way of life. The words spoken in Acts 9:34 do not represent that of an angry parent, but an eager and expectant witness to the miraculous work of God. Because of the

miraculous work of God in his life, Aeneas would never be the same. He would never go back.

Peter's command marked a chapter in Aeneas's life that had come to a close. The idea of Aeneas being healed only to return to his mat is preposterous. It is purely inconceivable. In Aeneas, we see the truth that God-given freedom invites us to a fundamentally new way of living. Much like Aeneas, the call of Christ in our lives is to be freed from a former way of doing life that is marked by shame, brokenness, and humiliation. It beckons us to close one chapter and start anew. In a sense, we too are invited to make our bed and never look back.

BIG IDEA: The healing power of Christ in our lives frees us from our brokenness and invites us into something which is fundamentally new.

APPLY:

- **Question:** Peter's command marked that a chapter in Aeneas's life had come to a close. How have you personally experienced the freedom of God in a way that closed a metaphorical chapter?

- **Question:** How did Aeneas respond when he was called by Peter? What is significant about his response? How do you think you would respond if you were in his position on the bed?

Week 9: Acts 9:32-43

Day 4: Obeying Immediately

READ: Acts 9:32-43

EXPLORE:

There is a great irony in the American church. We find ourselves in a fast-paced culture of busyness and urgency, yet as Christians, we are often slow to move in immediate obedience in our own faith. In our text today, there is a common undertone of urgency that is worthy of our attention.

First, we see Aeneas who has been paralyzed for eight years. Upon his healing, Peter gave him a command. He gave him something to do. Luke makes sure that we understand that Aeneas's response was not one of delay, but of immediate action. Second, with the death of Tabitha, we see two instances of urgency beginning with the disciples who come to get Peter, followed by Peter's quick response to come back with them.

As Christians, we should recognize that God expects our response to him to be immediate and without delay. There are great consequences when God's people choose to dismiss or delay obedience to the Lord. In fact, delayed obedience is destructive in two specific ways:

1. **Delayed obedience is destructive to others.** Many of God's commands to us involve other people. In our text today, we saw that Peter was obedient as he healed Aeneas. Aeneas was immediately obedient to get up and walk which was then seen by other people who responded by turning to the Lord. Peter rose to go to Joppa to resurrect Tabitha which caused people's grief to turn to joy and resulted in many people believing in the Lord. To delay obedience means that we will often delay bringing God's healing presence and salvation to those in need.
2. **Delayed obedience is self-destructive.** Delayed disobedience is disobedience. Since sin always separates us from God, our delayed obedience hinders our relationship with the Lord; thereby suppressing the work of His Spirit in our lives. Jesus says in John

14:23 *“Anyone who loves me will obey my teaching. My Father will love them, and we will come to them and make our home with them.”* Responding immediately is an act of worship and demonstrates trust and confidence in God’s will.

Immediate obedience requires faith and courage. Sometimes God asks us to do things that we believe are uncomfortable, sacrificial, and even dangerous. As God’s people, we can rest in the promise that there are great blessings that await those that live in obedience. God’s people are told in *Deuteronomy 28:1-2* *“Now it shall be, if you diligently obey the Lord your God, being careful to do all His commandments which I command you today, the Lord your God will set you high above all the nations of the earth. All these blessings will come upon you and overtake you if you obey the Lord your God...”*

BIG IDEA: Delayed obedience is disobedience. True faith calls for immediate action in response to God’s commands.

APPLY:

- **Question:** What are some areas of your life in which you feel you have delayed obedience to God?
- **Question:** Can you think of any examples in which you have obeyed immediately and God worked in perfect timing?

Week 9: Acts 9:32-43

Day 5: A Lasting Legacy

READ: Acts 9:36-43 and Romans 12:1-2

EXPLORE:

It would be incredible if churches today were filled to the brim with people who lived like Tabitha. In many ways, she is the epitome of what it looks like to leave a gospel legacy. Today, we are going to slow down in order to take a look at her life and legacy.

As we have discussed previously, Tabitha, who was also known as Dorcas, was a disciple of Jesus. This designation, on its own, is an incredible honor. She lived according to the way of Christ. Her life was full of *good works and also acts of charity*. When she is described in Acts 9:36, we are rightfully left with the impression that she spent her life following Jesus and His heart for the often overlooked.

When Peter finally arrived in Joppa after receiving the urgent message, he was greeted by widows who had been cared for by Tabitha. The specific Greek wording of this passage communicates that these widows showed the garments that Tabitha had made on themselves.⁷ The very clothes they were wearing were evidence of the Lord's kindness toward them through the life of Tabitha. In a time period in which widows were especially neglected, Tabitha stepped up. She had left a physical and spiritual legacy of goodness with her life and she would now have the opportunity to leave a lasting legacy in her death.

When we first encounter Tabitha in Acts 9, she exists as a god-glorifying example of a life well lived. Through God's resurrecting power, however, Tabitha's story represents so much more. Just as God was magnified in her life and through her death, He would receive glory through resurrection. As a result of God's resurrecting power in her life, many throughout Joppa heard the news and believed in Jesus. Tabitha was neither sinless nor perfect, but she was powerfully used by God.

⁷ The Greek text employs a middle voice for the verb "to show" to imply that the widows showed the garments on themselves.

She did not just leave a lasting legacy; she lived a lasting legacy! She lived again because the lasting legacy of the resurrected Christ can revive what was dead, recover what was lost, and redeem what was broken.

As we consider her life, we ought to assess our own. How do our lives reflect the goodness and graciousness of God? If you were to breathe your last, what legacy would you leave? Would you leave generosity, discipleship, and goodness as your legacy or something of less value? Into these questions and others like them we ought to pray that God would convict our hearts and change our lives.

BIG IDEA: Tabitha's life should make us evaluate our own. As a result, we should pray that God would convict our hearts and change our lives.

APPLY:

- **Activity:** Spend time praying that God would convict your heart and change your life for His glory!

Week 10: Acts 10:1-8

Day 1: The Expansive Mission of the Church

READ: Acts 10:1-8

EXPLORE:

The story of Cornelius, detailed in Acts 10, marks one of the high points in the Church's ever-expanding mission throughout the ancient world. God had led Peter to share the gospel message with a Gentile centurion. Through his encounter with Cornelius, Peter became committed to the Gentile mission.⁸ In Luke's retelling of Cornelius's story, we have the single longest narrative recorded in the book of Acts.⁹ The length of this story is not accidental. What occurs in this narrative is momentous and certainly worth a closer look.

The conflict between the Jews and Gentiles in the early Church can be summarized by two simple, but polarizing questions. The first question concerned whether or not the Gentiles needed to become culturally Jewish to follow the Jewish Messiah. The second question concerned how Gentiles and Jews could fellowship together as the Church if they had drastically different cultural practices. These tensions created deep conflict and they serve as the background for our introduction to the centurion named Cornelius.

In many ways, Cornelius was similar to the Ethiopian Eunuch who we encountered earlier. Cornelius was a God-fearing man and he was a Gentile. As the story of Cornelius continues, it becomes clear that he had a widespread and virtuous reputation.¹⁰ The fact that he was mentioned by name further supports the fact that he was well known in that region. In Acts 10:1 we learn a lot about Cornelius.

First, Cornelius was a military man who had risen to the rank of centurion. According to ancient historians, centurions were the backbone of the Roman army. The Roman army was divided into legions

⁸ See Acts 11:1-18 and 15:7-11 for reference.

⁹ The longest single narrative recorded in Acts is 10:1-11:18. Acts 11:3-17 serves as a summary of 10:1-48.

¹⁰ See Acts 10:2,4,22,35 for reference.

of 6000 soldiers. Those legions were often divided into ten cohorts of 600, which were further divided into groups of 100 under the leadership of a centurion, who would have been revered and respected as a leader.

Second, Luke tells us that Cornelius lived in Caesarea. Caesarea was a small town which was developed into the provincial capital and residence for the Roman governor by Herod the Great. Caesarea contained a harbor, theater, hippodrome and even a temple dedicated to Caesar. It was a predominantly Gentile city and the literal stomping ground of Cornelius.

In the description of Cornelius and in the story that later unfolds, we are meant to see the barrier-breaking power of Jesus. We are meant to marvel at our God who uses brash and impulsive men like Peter to share the gospel with Gentile military leadership like Cornelius.

BIG IDEA: The description of Cornelius and the length of his story are meant to underscore the ever-expanding, barrier-breaking power of the gospel through the early Church.

APPLY:

- **Question:** Why do you think Cornelius's story is important in the life of the early Church?

- **Question:** Gospel ministry is ever-expanding and barrier breaking. In what way(s) do you need to be challenged to view God's work as expanding and barrier-breaking in your own life?

- **Optional Question:** Matthew, Mark, Luke, and Acts all portray centurions in a positive light. Given the hostility that was experienced between Christians and the Romans, why do you think this is the case?

Week 10: Acts 10:1-8

Day 2: Faith in Private | Faith in Public

READ: Acts 10:1-8

EXPLORE:

In our text today, Luke gives us important insight into the life and faith of our Italian centurion, Cornelius. Though a Gentile, he is referred as a *devout man who feared God*. His faith was manifested through faithful prayer and a life of generosity towards people who were in need. The genuineness of his faith was evident to all and especially to those who were closest to him in *all his household*. There are a couple of simple truths we can glean from our friend Cornelius.

First, we see that genuine faith is one that manifests itself in outward action. Cornelius, though not yet a follower of Jesus, had become one who was being softened towards the Lord. In response to his becoming a God-fearer, we see that his heart was beginning to reflect God's heart. As seen throughout the Scripture, and especially in the life of Jesus, God cares greatly about those who are in need; those who are righteous will be generous to such people.¹¹ Cornelius's faith is private in personal devotion and prayer, yet overflows in a heart of compassion to others.

Second, we see that the genuineness of his faith had a tremendous impact on his family. His household would have likely included extended family, creating a multigenerational dynamic, and would have no doubt been heavily submerged in Hellenistic pagan culture. But the influence of Cornelius's genuine faith won the hearts of his family. This is an example of the power of a father's influence in the home despite the influences of the world around them. The Lord expects the home to be completely saturated with the teachings of God that overflow from the heart of parents who genuinely love God themselves.

Deuteronomy 6:4-9 says, ⁴ "Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. ⁵ You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. ⁶ And these words that I command you

¹¹ Psalm 37:21

today shall be on your heart.⁷ You shall teach them diligently to your children and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise. ⁸ You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. ⁹ You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.”

This text should cause us to marvel that God would change the heart of an Italian centurion, who probably had little to no exposure to the Lord growing up and transform him to such a degree that he would influence multiple generations of people in his family for the Lord. Furthermore, we should be amazed that this man would have a great impact on the community around him as he cared for those that were hurting the most. We should be astonished that God would take this unlikely fellow and insert him as an example of righteousness into the Holy Scriptures to be a model to the world for the rest of history.

Finally, we would be remiss if we didn't make this connection: if we devote ourselves to prayer and seek to care deeply for those who God brings into our lives, we too can transform our families and our communities and be an example to the world. God loves to transform the most unlikely people as a demonstration of His own greatness for His own glory.

BIG IDEA: The genuineness of our faith should be seen in the privacy of our home and overflow into public, both of which have the potential to have lasting impact for God.

APPLY:

- **Question:** How would you say your faith compares and contrasts with that of Cornelius?

- **Question:** Have you truly grasped that if God can transform and use Cornelius, an Italian centurion, then he can certainly use you too?

Week 10: Acts 10:1-8

Day 3: A Devoted Man

READ: Acts 10:1-8

EXPLORE:

When the Bible describes a person as a “*man of character*,” you know you are looking at someone special. The way Cornelius is described reminds us of the other great men of the Bible like Job, Moses, and Daniel. What is so remarkable about that is that Cornelius was a Gentile. He didn’t grow up learning about the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, but at some point, his heart and life was fully captured by the God of Israel.

The first thing we learn about Cornelius is that he was a devout man. This means he was devoted to the God of Israel. He was also devoted to his job as a Roman centurion, but we clearly get the sense that Cornelius put God over country. As important as his job was, he didn’t give it as much reverence as he gave his faith. Cornelius’s faith was active; he demonstrated his devotion to God in three ways.

First, Cornelius feared God with all his household. He believed that God is, and he lived accordingly. He saw his life as one that should be lived in the presence of God and in obedience to Him. Cornelius also taught his household to fear God. He was a responsible man who valued the most important things in life.

Cornelius was a man of compassion who gave alms and food generously to people who needed it. He saw his wealth as a gift from God and he stewarded it in such a way that he had plenty to give to the poor. In Cornelius’s time, Roman soldiers were not known as generous givers but as extortioners, exploiting the weak. Cornelius’s life and actions stood out as a bright light. He was not like those around him; he was like his Father in heaven.

Thirdly, Cornelius prayed continually to God. He was praying without ceasing before it became a verse in the New Testament. He reminds of us of another man of prayer in the Scriptures named Daniel. Cornelius

prayed continually to God because he loved God. We can be sure he prayed for his household, the poor, and whatever else came his way. Cornelius gives us a model of what we can be like as followers of Christ.

BIG IDEA: A devoted man or woman of God is one who fears the Lord, gives generously, and prays continuously to God.

APPLY:

- **Activity:** Cornelius feared the Lord along with his household. Take some time as a family and memorize a portion of Scripture together. Some suggestions are the Ten Commandments, the Lord's prayer, or Psalm 23. It may take you a week or two to get it down, but it is well worth the investment.

- **Activity:** This week, with your household, find someone that you can give generously to. It may be a donation to the refugees fleeing Afghanistan or it may be a neighbor next door.

- **Activity:** This week, schedule three set times of prayer for yourself each day. They don't have to be long, maybe just five minutes each, but seek the face of God and witness how He moves!

Week 10: Acts 10:1-8

Day 4: The Role of Leviticus in Acts 10

READ: Acts 10:1-8, Leviticus 2:2, and Philippians 4:18

EXPLORE:

If you were asked to guess the most popular New Year's Resolutions, what would you say? A snarky answerer might conclude that the most popular resolution is to make no resolution at all! It may come as no surprise, but the top answers include a better management of finances, an improvement of personal health, an investment in relationships, the development of a new skill, and a commitment to self-improvement.

I (Stephen) have found that one of the most popular resolutions within Christian circles is a commitment to read through the Bible in a year. Certainly, this is a worthwhile goal and altogether helpful. Unfortunately, I have found that many commitments to read through the Bible tragically shipwreck on the complicated shores of Leviticus. Many well-intentioned Christians find Leviticus to be distant and unrelatable. Sadly, we often quit when the biblical text gets challenging. Now, you might be asking, "Why is this Word to Life on Acts starting on a soapbox about Leviticus?" That is a great question. As we will discover today, the book of Leviticus unlocks immense meaning not only for Acts 10, but also for the New Testament as a whole.

In fairness, we need to acknowledge that the Hebrew book of Leviticus is quite challenging. It is filled with rituals, sacrifices, and a wide variety of ancient law codes. Despite its complexity, we have to recognize the significance of this book. I would like to challenge you to think about this: sometimes it is the texts that take the longest to understand that leave the greatest impact. Only five other Old Testament books are quoted more than Leviticus in the New Testament.

Today, we need to recognize the role of Levitical language in the angel's words to Cornelius. The angel of the Lord said to Cornelius, "*Your prayers and your alms have ascended as a memorial before God.*"¹² This

¹² See Acts 10:4 for reference.

idea originates in Leviticus. If you commit to reading through Leviticus, one phrase that you will constantly encounter is: *“An aroma pleasing to the Lord.”*¹³ Whether you have realized it or not, this idea of pleasing God is at the core of the Levitical text.

The angel in Acts 10 employed sacrificial language borrowed from Leviticus to describe how the life and faith of Cornelius had been pleasing to God. With this connection in mind, we can rightly understand the significance of the angel’s words in the life of a Gentile Caesarean centurion. His life was pleasing to the Lord! The author of Hebrews extends this profound hope to us as well, writing, *“Through [Jesus] then let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips that acknowledge his name.”*¹⁴ Praise God for this good hope.

BIG IDEAS: (1) Don’t miss out on what is best because it can seem boring. (2) The language of Leviticus helps us to understand the significance of the angel’s words to Cornelius.

APPLY:

- **Question:** The angel of God used Jewish sacrificial language to encourage a Gentile man named Cornelius. How does this connection between Leviticus and Acts deepen our understanding of Acts 10:1-8?

- **Question:** A lot of biblical texts can be challenging. In your personal reading of Scripture, what challenging sections have you encountered? What has helped you understand these difficult areas? (*Write down answers to share with your LifeGroup*)

¹³ See Leviticus 2:2,9,16 for reference among other biblical texts.

¹⁴ See Hebrews 13:15 for reference.

Week 10: Acts 10:1-8

Day 5: Divine Direction and Daily Obedience

READ: Acts 10:4-8 and I Peter 4:7-11

EXPLORE:

Imagine that you had to drive in a car across the continental United States. For some of you, the idea of a road trip is an invitation to explore and experience new things. For others, even the idea of driving that far is a pure nightmare. Regardless of where you fall on the spectrum of road trip appreciation, I want you to imagine for a moment that you have been tasked with traveling a great distance via car. Here is the question I want you to consider: if you were driving across the country, would you need to look at your GPS or the road?

Some of you might reply that you've never needed a map and that you simply go by the feel of the road. Others might mention the ancient relic MapQuest or the reliability of the atlas. For the majority of us, however, the idea of a road trip would necessarily entail a consistent movement between watching the road and monitoring the GPS. If you were to watch the GPS without considering the road, a crash would be inevitable. On the other hand, if you watched the road without ever considering the destination, you would certainly get lost.

The calling on the Christian life is not too different from the balance between the GPS and the road. As followers of Jesus, we ought to consider the end destination while maintaining a consistent focus on the road. In fact, the assurance of our destination ought to necessarily influence the way in which we navigate life day-by-day.

In Acts 10:1-8 the angel of God visited Cornelius with affirmation and direction. He affirmed the god-honoring lifestyle of Cornelius, and he gave him specific directions to go find a man named Simon by the sea. In this particular instance, Cornelius's God-given directive was location and person specific. This level of specificity is not always the case.

We need to notice that the angel revealed nothing to Cornelius about his ultimate purpose for him. Simply, Cornelius was given the

destination and the directive without all of the details. As we have discussed previously, we are often called to godly obedience without being given the full picture of what is in store. Cornelius is a model of this principle put into action. After receiving the instruction from the angel, Cornelius followed with obedience. In his immediate obedience detailed in Acts 10:7-8, Cornelius ordered his next steps according to his God-given destination. In a sense, Cornelius kept his eyes on the road without losing sight of his destination.

Not all of us will experience a direct, supernatural encounter in a way that mirrors Cornelius's. Nonetheless, all of us have been called to orient our next steps according to our model, which is Christ, and our destination, which is our eternal relationship with Him. As followers of Jesus, you and I ought to fix our eyes on the proverbial road without losing sight of our final destination.

BIG IDEA: Christians are called to correlate our daily obedience in light of God's ultimate direction.

APPLY:

- **Question:** We may not have an experience identical to Cornelius's, but all Christ-followers ought to receive God-given direction. What are some ways that we can receive godly direction?
- **Question:** Today's Word to Life utilized a metaphor of the GPS and a road to describe daily obedience in light of the end destination. In what ways is this metaphor helpful for understanding Christian obedience? In what ways is this metaphor limited in its ability to describe Christian faith?

Week 11: Acts 10:9-16

Day 1: Habit and Circumstance

READ: Acts 10:1-8; 9-16

EXPLORE:

The development of the early Church which is recorded in Acts is a masterfully interwoven collection of stories orchestrated by God's grace. The simultaneous working of God in Cornelius and Peter is yet another reminder of the Lord's perfect timing. Before we can fully appreciate the power of Peter's vision, we need to remember that God had already been at work in the life of Cornelius.

Acts 10:9 reminds us that even while Cornelius's men were on the road to visit Peter, God was already at work in the house of Simon. As we will discover today, God utilized not only the habits, but also the circumstances of Peter to prepare him to receive Cornelius as a brother in Christ. Let's take a closer look.

With Cornelius's men nearly approaching the city, Peter went to the rooftop around noon to pray. Peter's actions highlighted in Acts 10:9 are very important and packed with significance. Rooftops were relatively common places for prayer.¹⁵ It was not uncommon for housetops to be equipped with a partial canopy so that a person could find shade during a time of worship.

Although rooftops were often used for prayer and worship, noon would have been an abnormal time for daily prayer. The fact that Peter was intentionally and devoutly praying is meant to highlight his spiritual discipline and devotion. Most likely, Peter set aside three daily times to pray. Following examples like Daniel and David in the Old Testament, Peter possessed a dedicated habit of prayer.¹⁶ God chose to communicate to Peter not only in the light of his spiritual habits, but also in light of his circumstances.

¹⁵ See 2 Kings 23:12, Nehemiah 8:16, and Jeremiah 19:13 for reference.

¹⁶ Daniel and David modeled a dedicated spiritual life that included scheduled prayer at least three times per day.

Luke informs us in Acts 10:10 that while Peter was praying, he became hungry. Interestingly, noon was not a weekday mealtime for first century Jews. Customarily, Jews would have eaten a light midmorning meal with a more substantial mealtime in the late afternoon. As a result of this context, it is surprising that Peter was intensely hungry at an abnormal time. In this story, we ought to notice that Peter's hunger did not prevent God from speaking; it provided a means through which God could speak. God spoke through Peter's habit of devoted prayer and his circumstance of intense hunger.

Similar to Peter, our habits and circumstances often provide space for God to speak anew. Where godly habits and everyday circumstances collide, there is an opportunity for God to transform our hearts and lives into the image of Christ. Although our situation might not be identical to Peter's, we all have the opportunity to submit our habits to God and to entrust our circumstances to His will.

BIG IDEA: Peter's vision is a reminder of how good habits and everyday circumstances can be used by God.

APPLY:

- **Question:** Peter's time of prayer was interrupted by his hunger. In the end, this interruption was used by God. Have you ever experienced a circumstance which seemed like an interruption at first, but was powerfully used by God?
- **Question:** If you were asked to describe your daily habits, what are some things that would come to mind?
- **Question:** Do you have any time that is dedicated to spiritual development and time with God? If so, what does that look like? If no, why do you think that is the case?

Week 11: Acts 10:9-16

Day 2: Purity According to Jesus

READ: Mark 7:14-23; 24-30 and Acts 10:9-16

EXPLORE:

It would not be an exaggeration to say that Peter's world had been flipped upside-down in his wildly carnivorous dream. The vision recorded in Acts 10:9-16 brought Peter face-to-face with a new understanding of purity and holiness for the multiethnic people of faith. In today's Word to Life, we are going to take a look at how Jesus defined true purity for His Church.

APPLY:

Spend time reading the texts below. After taking notes on each individual section, take notes about how the words and actions of Christ in Mark 7 connect with the vision in Acts 10.

Mark 7:14-23

Personal Notes:

- **Question:** Why do you think that the disciples made a request for explanation in Mark 7:17?

- **Question:** How does Jesus's clarification in Mark 7:19 help us understand what He meant and what He didn't mean?

Mark 7:24-30

Personal Notes:

- **Question:** How does the teaching of Jesus in vv. 14-23 connect with His actions in vv. 24-30?

Acts 10:9-16

Personal Notes:

- **Question:** Compare Jesus's teaching and action in Mark 7:14-30 with Acts 10:9-16. What do you notice?

- **Question:** Why do you think it took Peter so long to understand the principles that Jesus had already taught to His disciples in Mark 7?

Week 11: Acts 10:9-16

Day 3: Reset Your Heart

READ: Acts 10:9-16 and Psalm 51

EXPLORE:

As a child, I (Stephen) was in constant need of discipline. On many occasions, I came home from school with a negative and toxic attitude. My Mom's creative solution to this problem was to make me walk laps around the house until my attitude improved. Some days involved more laps than others. I am honestly surprised that I did not leave a permanent pathway in the yard. My Mom knew what I often failed to perceive; I desperately needed a reset of the heart.

Whether we are young or old, the truth is that we need to consistently and willingly allow God to reset our hearts. This principle is at the core of Peter's vision in Acts 10. At the same time that God was working in the life of Cornelius, Peter's heart had to be reset.

For Peter and Jews throughout history, maintaining purity through obedience to the law were fundamental to their identity. Eating foods that were declared ritually unclean according to the Old Testament Law would have been avoided at all costs. It is hard to imagine how tough it would have been for first century Jews to wrestle with these tensions. With this context in mind, imagine how jolting Peter's dream must have been. Peter would not have required a slight adjustment to his thinking; his mentality would require a total overhaul.

It is not an accident or a coincidence that while Peter's heart was being reset, Cornelius's men were nearly inside the city. From the divinely provided dream to the everyday reality of including outsiders in the Church, Peter was being challenged to reset his perspective according to God's good design.

If Peter's understanding of purity had not been challenged, he would not have been able to have full relationship and fellowship with Gentile brothers and sisters in the faith. In the dream, God was recalibrating Peter's conception of purity, community, holiness, and even God

himself. In the sharing of a meal, followers of Christ were demonstrating their willingness to cross barriers to embrace believers from a different background. For the ancient Church and us today, the fact remains that it is really challenging to bond, serve, and even lay down your life for someone if you are not willing or able to share a meal first.

The beauty of the story that continues to unfold throughout Acts 10 exists because of the goodness of God to reset hearts. The resetting of a believer's heart will necessarily impact how they interact with others. We, as the Church, are constantly invited to a lifetime of godly change alongside the community of faith for the glory of God.

BIG IDEA: As followers of Jesus, we need to be constantly willing to have our hearts reset by God's grace and for His glory.

APPLY:

- **Activity:** Read Psalm 51 and pray that the Lord would reset your heart.
- **Question:** When you think about God resetting your heart, what comes to mind? What moments in life do you think about?
- **Question:** What godly advice and biblical counsel have helped to prepare you for a reset of the heart.

Week 11: Acts 10:9-16

Day 4: The Gospel Goes to the Gentiles

READ: Acts 10:9-16

EXPLORE:

When I (Sabino) was growing up like many other young American boys, I played Little League Baseball. I loved it and I was pretty good at it, but never great. Well as I got older, I began to hear about this thing called “Select” teams. Select teams were for good players who were specially chosen by a coach and team to play year-round. Select teams were like the AAU of basketball where only the best players are chosen to be in a special league. I always thought it was cool to be on a Select team, but I was never chosen to be on one.

The Israelites were like the Select team of the nations of the world. Out of all the nations of the world, God had chosen them to be his special people. They would receive his law and his blessing, but most importantly they would receive His covenant love. God did not choose them because they were mighty in number or because they were morally superior, but because He chose to love them and keep the promises that He made to them. He chose them not because they were good but because He is good.

This is the context and the backstory for the events taking place in Acts 10. Peter was perplexed by the vision that God gave him, but he soon came to realize that he could no longer call the Gentiles common or unclean. God was doing a new work and fulfilling a promise He made to Abraham when he first called him.

God told Abraham in Genesis 12 that, *in you, all the families of the earth shall be blessed*. Now the Israelites did not know how this promise would come to be fulfilled, but Cornelius’ story is the answer. Even when it was a challenge to perceive, God was still at work.

Those who were once not God’s people, became God’s people. Those who once had not received mercy, now received mercy. To call this a monumental shift would be an understatement. As Gentile believers,

we tend to take this shift for granted. Because the Christian faith has been accepted traditionally throughout the history of The United States, we can almost think of Christianity as our birthright. It can seem implied or even assumed. Our faith is not due to our birthright or nation of origin, but due to God's covenant keeping promises to Abraham and the finished work of Jesus Christ. We were once without God and without hope in the world, but Jesus has changed everything. He has made it possible for us Gentiles to be the chosen of God.

BIG IDEA: The gospel going to Gentiles is an overwhelming and often underrated reality.

APPLY:

- **Activity:** It was Peter to whom God sent the vision and it was Peter who wrote a letter (1 Peter) to Gentile Christians for encouragement. Read and meditate on 1 Peter 2:1-11 so that you might get a greater appreciation of the gospel going to Gentiles.

- **Activity:** Choose one foreign nation of the world and pray that God would raise up gospel witnesses to go to them.

Week 11: Acts 10:9-16

Day 5: The Role of “3”

READ: Acts 10:9-16; 15:6-11

EXPLORE:

For those who are familiar with the life of Peter, the fact that there were three, recurrent visions of the meat-filled sheet in his rooftop trance should come as no surprise. More than once in his life, Peter had endured three, consecutive experiences. Peter denied Jesus three times prior to His crucifixion.¹⁷ When Jesus appeared to Peter following His resurrection, three times Christ asked His weary disciple, “*Do you love me?*”¹⁸ As we can see in Scripture, Peter has a relatively complicated relationship with things in triplets.

In the ancient mindset, numbers held both literal and symbolic significance. Specifically, three represented completeness and wholeness. The number three is used more than 450 times throughout the Bible. The Scriptures often communicate in triplets. For example, the Patriarchs are often communicated as Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Worship is often verbalized in triplets like, “*holy, holy, holy.*” Similar to the number seven, the number three would have been utilized by biblical authors to communicate a sense of fullness.

The point of this Word to Life is not to unearth the seemingly hidden significance of biblical numbers or to muse over the complexity of Scripture. Simply stated, when we explore the biblical text, part of our goal is to understand what would have been readily understood by the ancient readers. Although we should care about handling Scripture well, we should not get so focused on the eccentric that we miss the plain meaning of the text.

With this biblical balance in mind, we ought to ask, “Is there significance in the fact that Peter received a triplet of matching visions in Acts 10:16?” When we combine that question with our understanding of the

¹⁷ See Matthew 26:69-75 for reference.

¹⁸ See John 21:15-19 for reference.

role of three throughout the Scriptures, we are left with a simple and yet profound understanding of the Peter's experience.

God chose to completely and sufficiently communicate the dream three times to Peter because of the incredible significance of the gospel's expansion to the Gentiles. The vision could have come once and it would have been monumental, but God, in accordance with His plan, chose to exhort Peter directly, repeatedly, and sufficiently. He may have been resistant to God's dream at first, but it did not take him long before he understood and applied what the Lord was teaching.¹⁹ In the same way that Jesus examined Peter's love three times following his resurrection, the Lord thrice challenged the mission of Peter to his Gentile brothers and sisters in the faith.

BIG IDEA: Because of the incredible significance of the gospel's expansion to the Gentiles, God chose to repeatedly and fully communicate the dream to Peter thrice.

APPLY:

- **Question:** Read Ezekiel 4:14 and compare it to Peter's response in Acts 10:14. What do you notice?

- **Question:** Sometimes we can get so fixated on peculiar details that we miss the primary purpose of the biblical text. How can we prevent sacrificing the text's meaning in search of something more atypical or eccentric?

- **Question:** Like Peter, we may need to be communicated to multiple times in order to understand. What are some examples from your life in which this was true?

¹⁹ See Acts 10:28 for reference.

Week 12: Acts 10:17-33

Day 1: Puzzled not Passive

READ: Acts 10:17-33

EXPLORE:

Some moments in life require time to comprehend and appreciate. Acts 10 certainly introduces us to one of those moments in the aftermath of Peter's rooftop visions. The author, Luke, describes Peter as one who was inwardly perplexed.²⁰ He had just received a jolting vision from God that would shift the trajectory of his life. He was understandably confused. As we will study today, even though Peter was puzzled, he was not passive.

When Acts 10:17 opens, Peter was still in the dark. What was the point of this wild dream about food? Luke justifiably described Peter as one who was *inwardly perplexed*. The Greek word used to describe this experience is *Diaporei*. This word occurs only five times in the New Testament, all of which can be found in Luke and Acts.²¹ It refers to a time period in which someone is filled with uncertainty, confusion, and even doubt. Specifically, this passage tells us that Peter was perplexed in himself. Peter was not experiencing a superficial problem, but a mind-consuming, life-altering question in his soul. Left to himself, Peter would have remained perplexed.

As the story continues to unfold, however, we find that Peter was not paralyzed because of the puzzle. He was perplexed, but he was not passive. Even while Peter was in a state of confusion, God provided him with the opportunity to act in obedience. In his acceptance of Cornelius's men and in his willingness to travel to Caesarea, Peter was given an opportunity to integrate and apply that which he did not yet fully understand. This invitation to faith is a gift from God!

We need to notice that God did not wait until Peter understood fully in order to call him to *rise and go*. God is not in the business of delaying a

²⁰ See Acts 10:17 for reference.

²¹ See Luke 9:7; 24:4 and Acts 2:12; 5:24; 10:17 for reference.

call for obedience until we are able to fully understand. Luke does not tell us everything that Peter thought between verse 17 and 28, but he does give a picture of what it looks like to reject passivity when we are perplexed. Peter's obedience invited the confirmation of what God had already communicated. The road from confusion to understanding is paved by obedience!

Will we, like Peter, choose to rise and go in obedience? Will we refuse to be passive because we are puzzled? The question is not whether or not we will be perplexed or puzzled by God and His ways. The question is what we will do in those moments of confusion. Let's learn from Peter's experience and faithfully obey, willingly explain, and truthfully proclaim even when we don't quite have it all together.

BIG IDEA: Obedience ought to be our priority, especially when we are perplexed.

APPLY:

- **Question:** When have you been confused about what God wanted you to do or to think? Can you think of a time when you chose to obey God even when you felt perplexed?
- **Question:** Peter did not have a full and comprehensive understanding before he was given an opportunity to obey. How might this example challenge us in our faith and thinking?
- **Question:** Left to himself, Peter arguably would have remained inwardly confused. List some biblical steps that we can take to process through doubt and uncertainty?

Week 12: Acts 10:17-33

Day 2: Rise and Go

READ: (Various Passages Below)

EXPLORE:

The Holy Spirit spoke to Peter saying, *“Behold, three men are looking for you. **Rise and go** down and accompany them without hesitation, for I have sent them.”*

A great deal of the Christian life can be summarized in two simple words: **rise** and **go**. Because of the resurrection power of Christ, we are afforded the opportunity, by grace through faith, to **rise**. The Church is a people on the rise. Subsequently, Christ has commissioned His Church to **go** together to the end of the earth as spirit-filled, gospel-centered ambassadors of His Kingdom. Followers of Christ are people who rise and go.

Spend time today studying this major theme not only in Luke’s writings, but throughout Scripture.

Activity 1: Read these passages and their surrounding contexts and make observations.

- [Luke 17:19](#)

- [Acts 8:26](#)

- [Acts 9:11](#)

- [Acts 10:20](#)

- [Acts 22:10](#)

Activity 2: Search in the Bible for other examples of “Rise and Go.” (It may be helpful to use an online resource like Bible Gateway, Bible Hub, Blue Letter Bible, etc.)

BIG IDEA: Christians are people who *rise and go*.

APPLY:

- **Question:** With the scriptural examples in mind, what would it look like in your life to faithfully rise and go in accordance with God’s will?

- **Activity:** Write down one area of life in which you need to be faithful to rise and go. Commit to pray for God’s strength in this area and ask for accountability from your LifeGroup.

Week 12: Acts 10:17-33

Day 3: God is the Main Character

READ:

EXPLORE:

From beginning to end, Acts is a story about God. God is the main character. He is the orchestrator. We need to constantly remind ourselves that Luke's retelling of church history in Acts is fundamentally about God and his goodness to form His Church. As simple as this truth seems, it can often get lost for lesser things.

While journeying through the book of Acts, one of our first studies aimed to establish the supremacy and centrality of God in the development of His Church. Acts is not merely a story about Apostles, but about the Holy Spirit's work to magnify Christ according to the good and gracious plan of the Father. This theme is constant throughout Acts and is worth restating.

As we read and study Acts, we might be tempted to focus on role players to the detriment of the underlying story that is being told. If we are not careful, we might think that Acts is designed to showcase faithful believers like Stephen, Philip, Peter, or even Paul. We might inappropriately believe that Acts is fundamentally about a missional journey or an ecclesiastical development. These people, movements, and developments are vital, but they are not the main focus. God is the central character and His grace to redeem people is the epicenter of Acts. We can clearly see this truth in Acts 10.

Cornelius received a message from the angel of the Lord. Peter had a vision, heard a voice from heaven, and was led by the Holy Spirit into obedience. It was God who had worked in them independently and it was God who was interweaving their life stories. Because of God's activity, Peter knew that Cornelius mattered deeply to the Lord. As a result of God's leading, Cornelius knew that Peter had a message. It is fitting that we should study and observe the actions of faithful men and women, but we should never lose sight of the primacy of God's role in the unfolding of history.

The supremacy of Christ does not diminish human significance, it liberates it. Think about this: as the totally righteous and all-powerful Creator, God is worthy of all attention, honor, and praise. In fact, if He were not the main focus, it would conflict with His very nature. Is it not mind-blowing that God still chooses to consider us and love us? As we continue to study Acts, we will be given many reminders of God's goodness. God's working in Acts 10 is a powerful window into the graciousness of God to graft unworthy people into His family.

Praise God!

BIG IDEA: The centrality of God's role in the book of Acts does not diminish human significance, it liberates it!

APPLY:

- **Question:** Why do you think we are sometimes tempted to see a certain biblical character as the main focus instead of God?

- **Question:** How do you think the centrality of God in the narrative of Acts works to enhance human significance rather than diminish it?

Week 12: Acts 10:17-33

Day 4: Gathering friends and family

READ: Acts 10:17-33

EXPLORE:

Most of us are familiar and have grown up with family reunions. They are a time to get together, see family you haven't seen in a while, and appreciate the family you have. Often at family reunions, important people will be honored, and important words will be shared. Peter's visit to Cornelius shares some of the same aspects of a family reunion. Peter is the important guest who is being honored and he has some very important words to share with the family and friends who Cornelius has gathered at his home.

Cornelius was an important man (a Roman centurion) who had invited another important man to come visit him. It is interesting because the angel didn't tell Cornelius why he needed to retrieve Peter and he didn't tell him to invite his family and friends. Cornelius took the initiative himself to invite his relatives and close friends. He knew that this man, Simon Peter, must have an important word for him, a word from God. Cornelius demonstrated his humility and evangelistic heart by wanting to share this word from God with others.

Cornelius was a great family member and a great friend. First, this is seen in that these people are willing to come. No doubt, they saw Cornelius as a man of dignity, great character, and faith. He was not someone from whom you turn down an invitation. By inviting his family and friends, Cornelius showed how much he cared for them. He was a hospitable man. He opened his home to this large gathering because people were important to him.

Most importantly, Cornelius was a man who cared about God. He was eager to hear this word from the Lord with his family and friends. I love how he told Peter that "we are all here *in the presence of God* to hear all that you have been commanded by the Lord." Cornelius recognized that he wasn't receiving a message from Peter, but from God.

Do your family and friends know that you care most about God? Do they know how much you care about them? Would they consider you hospitable? Can they expect to hear the words of God from you? These are important questions we can examine ourselves with. There is no task more important or exciting than delivering the Word of God to our family and friends. May God be with us!

BIG IDEA: As Christians, we have a calling to deliver the Word of God to our friends and family.

APPLY:

- **Activity:** What friend or relative can you invite to your house to hear the Word of God? Maybe you can simply invite a friend or family member to accompany you to a LifeGroup meeting where God's Word will be heard.

- **Activity:** Pick a day this week and be hospitable to a relative, a friend, or both. You don't have to prepare a sermon, but you can pray over your meal. Before you pray you can ask your guests if they have any prayer requests. Ask the Lord to give you wisdom during conversation to seamlessly work in the Word of God.

Week 12: Acts 10:17-33

Day 5: Worship: Misdirected and Redirected

READ: Acts 10:25-26

EXPLORE:

It might seem silly to us to read about Cornelius falling down at the feet of Peter as he entered the centurion's residence. The Greek word used here is *proskyneō*, which means to bow down and offer homage, or reverence, to God, angels, or men. I (Josh) doubt that Cornelius was attempting to worship Peter as though he was God himself. But he certainly was attributing some level of supernatural distinction by the honor he was giving, which well surpassed Peter's simple calling as a servant of the Lord. His worship was misdirected toward Peter, so Peter rightly redirected it away from himself by saying, "Stand up; I too am a man." In other words, Peter said, "Don't bow down to me because I am just like you, a mere man."

This text today gives us good examples to ponder when it comes to misdirected worship.

Misdirected Worship

We shouldn't assume that this doesn't happen today. In fact, I think we often direct our praise and adoration toward the one who is using a gift from God rather than God Himself. For example, worship leaders often strive for excellence in their music. This very often leads worshipers to focus on the worship team rather than the one who truly should be worshipped. In these moments and others like them, we should assess what we are so impressed by and what our hearts are truly thankful for. We are all, in fact, given gifts by the Holy Spirit to be used in service to one another, so the Church might be built up and God would receive glory. We must be sure to glorify God because of the gifts He has given us. As we honor one another for using those gifts, there must be a constant recognition that we are all mere men and women, saved by the same grace of God and empowered by the same Spirit of God.

Redirecting Worship

We must be vigilant to recognize our own response to what might be misdirected worship toward us. When people come to us with compliments for how we used our gifts, we should remember that everything we have and everything we are is because God has made it so. No gift is better than another. Those who have more public gifts should be sure to fight the temptation to be prideful and must seek to glorify God when given honor. We should show humility by affirming that we are no different than any other person. Again, we're all mere men and women saved by the same grace of God and empowered by the same Spirit of God.

BIG IDEA: God gives gifts to each of us and we must be sure to direct worship away from ourselves and toward the Lord.

APPLY:

- **Question:** Search your own heart. Do you feel that you ever misdirect worship toward another person unintentionally? If so, what can you change about your response to ensure you give appropriate honor to others using their gifts?
- **Question:** There is an underlying assumption here that God's people are being used by God. How are you being used by God in the lives of others? If you aren't, why not and what can you do to change that situation?



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