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## WARM UP

What is one dish that you were told you would like to try, but when you finally got to eat it you were not as impressed?

## WORD

Read **Acts 10:9-33**

Peter goes atop a house to pray, and when he gets hungry, he stands, only to find himself in a trance, seeing a God-given vision of a blanket being lowered with reptiles, birds and other animals that were deemed by Jewish law as unclean.

## NOTES

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## 1 Rise and Eat

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<sup>12</sup>In it were all kinds of animals and reptiles and birds of the air. <sup>13</sup>And there came a voice to him: "Rise, Peter; kill and eat."<sup>14</sup>But Peter said, "By no means, Lord; for I have never eaten anything that is common or unclean."<sup>15</sup>And the voice came to him again a second time, "What God has made clean, do not call common."<sup>16</sup>This happened three times, and the thing was taken up at once to heaven.

**Acts 9:12-16** (ESV)

Peter is told by God to rise, kill and eat animals that traditional laws of the Jews considered unclean. Inevitably, God is showing more than just a dietary preference to Peter; he is showing that God is making people clean, people who might be considered as "common". Peter was being shown the cultural and racial barriers that existed in his heart, which would interfere with his ability to be used by God to reach Gentiles with the Gospel.

- What are some of the barriers you have or you see people deal with in moving the Gospel forward?
  - Are there biases or preferences that God is showing you that exist in your heart, that cause you to be hindered in following God or reaching all people?
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## 2 Rise and Go Down

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<sup>17</sup>Now while Peter was inwardly perplexed as to what the vision that he had seen might mean, behold, the men who were sent by Cornelius, having made inquiry for Simon's house, stood at the gate <sup>18</sup>and called out to ask whether Simon who was called Peter was lodging there. <sup>19</sup>And while Peter was pondering the vision, the Spirit said to him, "Behold, three men are looking for you. <sup>20</sup>Rise and go down and accompany them without hesitation, for I have sent them."<sup>21</sup>And Peter went down to the men and said, "I am the one you are looking for. What is the reason for your coming?"<sup>22</sup>And they said, "Cornelius, a centurion, an upright and God-fearing man, who is well spoken of by the

whole Jewish nation, was directed by a holy angel to send for you to come to his house and to hear what you have to say."<sup>23</sup>So he invited them in to be his guests.

**Acts 10:17-23** (ESV)

Peter immediately has to deal with the biases when he is encountered by Cornelius' men who were led by the Spirit to see him. God also speaks to him to "rise and go down" to the men. God wants us to know that whether we are like Peter who is the messenger, or Cornelius and his men who are the receivers of the message, that he sends people into our lives all the time. It's just a matter of whether we are ready to receive or ready to deliver what he has for us.

## 3 The Gospel is for Every Nation

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<sup>34</sup>So Peter opened his mouth and said: "Truly I understand that God shows no partiality, <sup>35</sup>but in every nation anyone who fears him and does what is right is acceptable to him.

**Acts 10:34-35** (ESV)

Peter is transformed by God and is now able to effectively minister to Gentiles as he is empowered by the Holy Spirit. It started with a change of mind and heart. Would you allow God to change your mind and heart?

### PRAYER

- Pray that God will mold our hearts to be more like his.
- Pray that God will reveal and shatter any barriers that cause us to not fully follow what he has for us.
- Pray to be willing to go beyond ourselves and our comfort to see others outside of our regular circles so they will come to know God's love.