

empowered

----- ORDINARY PEOPLE. EXTRAORDINARY GOD. -----

Small Group Study #5

PARTNERING WITH GOD

Pray and ask God to speak to your group during today's study. Read Acts 10:1-48

1. In Acts 10 we see the Holy Spirit continuing His mission to gather together God's new people. To accomplish this, there would need to be a breaking of the dividing walls between people of different cultures. Cornelius was not only a Gentile, but also a powerful centurion working within the epitome of earthly power – the Roman Empire! Read verses 1-4 again; what do you think God saw when he looked at Cornelius? How is that different from the labels that the world might have given him? What does this say about God's inclusive vision for mission?

2. As Peter acknowledges in verse 28, a Jew entering the household of a Gentile could threaten their own personal cleanness or purity. Despite this, Peter knows that God is up to something bigger than he could understand in his own strength. When the Spirit comes upon Cornelius' household in verse 47 it is a confirmation of God's blessing. Sometimes as Christians we are called to enter into uncomfortable and unknown territory. Faith and discernment are required for the journey. What are some of the dividing walls in our world today – both within the church and within our society? Which conversations, people or places might we avoid because we think they will affect our "cleanness"? What does this story tell us about thoughtful engagement?

Read Acts 16:6-15

1. In Acts 16:6-15 we find a story that illustrates well the "divine dance" of cooperation between God and humanity in mission. Paul and his team were going to share the Good News about Jesus in the province of Asia, yet we see in verses 6-10 how God changed their plans. Sometimes, as Followers of Jesus, we can be doing good things for the Kingdom and then find God intervening and leading us down a different road. Have you ever seen this play out in your own life? Has God ever moved your life in a direction you did not originally intend or imagine? How did you see Him at work or hear His voice in the process?

2. Upon arriving at their new destination in Macedonia, Paul shared the Good News with Lydia and "the Lord opened her heart to respond to Paul's message" (v. 14).

- How do the divine and human elements work together in our salvation?
- How does God's sovereignty in salvation comfort you? What questions does it raise?
- What light does this passage shed on our efforts at sharing the Good News with others?

Pray together as a group asking God to bless you with eyes to see His vision for all people and to break the barriers that we put up. Thank God for the "divine dance" of cooperation we can have with the Holy Spirit in leading people to a knowledge of Him.

Empowered 9 — All Things to All People

Song Ideas

- May The Peoples Praise You — <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7BrfkjHdKVI>
- Build Your Kingdom Here — <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YcSWpVKKMcs>

Reading / Prayer

Grant us, Lord God, the vision of your kingdom, forgiveness and new life, and the stirring of your Spirit, so that we may share your vision, proclaim your love, and change this world in the name of Christ. Amen.

Empowered 10 — The Divine Dance

Song Ideas

- Holy Spirit — <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8nbMfLQd2P4>
- For The Cause — <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PHuLOdZdqs8>

Reading / Prayer

Almighty God, our heavenly Father, the privilege is ours to be called to share in the loving, healing, and reconciling mission of your Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord, in this age and wherever we are.

Since without you we can do no good thing,

May your Spirit make us wise;

May your Spirit guide us;

May your Spirit renew us;

May your Spirit strengthen us

so that we will be strong in faith;

discerning in proclamation;

courageous in witness;

persistent in good deeds.

This we ask through the same Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

