

# CALVARY CHAPEL COSTA MESA

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– COMMUNITY GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE –

## Studies in the Book of Acts

### “The Gospel Across all Boundaries” – Acts 10:1 - 11:18

#### FELLOWSHIP

Last month Trina and I were invited to share at the annual Couples Retreat for Calvary Chapel. I guess the impression is that we have been doing a pretty good job with raising our children, so we were asked to give a workshop on parenting. A request like this brings a quick dose of reality and feelings of inadequacy. Whatever the perception might be, anyone who has been a parent knows the journey is far from perfect. In light of this, I asked Trina the week prior to start thinking with me about all of the expectations we allow to be placed on us. Whether it's the temptation to make comparisons to other supposedly perfect families or in trying to meet the standards of the latest parenting book, these expectations can be daunting. As we began sharing at the workshop, my intention was to relieve the pressure by reminding us that our expectations should really be from the Lord, and that His grace is sufficient for us. But as we were sharing, I remembered that my wife's whole childhood had been a struggle with some very harsh expectations. In their community, she and her siblings were one of the few asian families. From elementary school, to jr. high, to high school, she was on the receiving end of hurtful name calling and gestures because she was different. In an impromptu moment, I asked Trina if she wouldn't mind sharing her testimony. She agreed and shared how Christ had met her in high school and satisfied her search for identity. Through Jesus the expectations of life were reset the right way. The Lord's acceptance of her was the only approval she'd ever need. The head nodding in the room was confirmation that her story was ministering to many. Jesus is the great equalizer. While the world struggles with trying to fix its differences through litigation, protest or conflict, the love of God is real power for reconciling humanity.

#### READ & DISCUSS

The story of Peter and Cornelius is so significant that it is recorded and then recounted again as a testimony. Time permitting, read out loud together the whole narrative of Acts 10:1 - 11:18 since it contains the Gospel message. If not, focus on 11:1-18 regarding the church's commission for reconciliation. Peter's own discovery in one apostolic fell swoop wiped out centuries of prejudice and reset humanity's expectations.

**Acts 10:34-35** *Then Peter opened his mouth and said: “In truth I perceive that God shows no partiality. But in every nation whoever fears Him and works righteousness is accepted by Him.”*

- **Acts 10:30-33** records the readiness of Cornelius to find God. Read **Deuteronomy 4:29**, **Proverbs 8:27** and **Acts 17:27**. *What do these passages reveal about the character of God? Read **Genesis 18:18** & **Exodus 19:5-6**. What is consistent in Scripture regarding God's mission? Why is Peter's experience a reset of the original purpose of God people?*
- Calvary Chapel flourished because it brought the Gospel to the hippies and young people of the day. *Why did this reflect Peter's declaration in **Acts 10:34-35**? Why would the dietary laws, rituals and circumcision in Judaism slow down the advancement of the Gospel to the Gentiles? Why were these necessary for the Mosaic Covenant, but not necessary for the New Covenant in Christ?*
- Read **James 2:1-9**. Racial and ethnic discrimination were not the only issues hindering the early church. As James pastored he saw prejudice in social class and financial positions. *How did Jesus address some of these issues with His audiences or disciples? National, state and local political views continue to grow in their volatility and segregation. What should Christians be careful to NOT attach to the simplicity of the Gospel? What religious views could possibly become prejudices?*

#### PRAYER & TESTIMONY



**Community Group Discussion Guide**

*Based on Pastor Brian Brodersen's message from February 28, 2018.*

*Watch: <https://cccm.com/teaching/the-spirit-the-church-and-the-world/video/the-gospel-across-all-boundaries/>*