

3

No Partiality

Acts 10

Think of the typical Sunday school picture of Jesus. In classical European art, he is portrayed as a white man with blue eyes and a trimmed beard. What does this kind of portrayal of Jesus communicate to us about God?

GROUP DISCUSSION. Gather pictures of Jesus that are used in your church or Sunday school classes. Look at pictures on a website or get a book from the library showing different images of Jesus. Discuss these images and the effect that they might have on how we view God.

PERSONAL REFLECTION. Think of some things you have been taught from childhood to avoid. What feelings and fears would you have if one day God told you these things were no longer to be avoided?

Images are very powerful. In this passage a dream is used to expand Peter's image of God. Peter needed to see God as the God of all people, not just Jews. *Read Acts 10.*

1. What kind of man was Cornelius (vv. 1-2, 22)?

How and why did God speak to him (vv. 3-6)?

2. Why do you think God used a vision of “unclean” animals (see Leviticus 11:4; 22:8) to speak to Peter (vv. 9-16)?

3. How did the vision prepare Peter for the visit of the men from Joppa?

4. What kinds of feelings do you imagine Peter had as he went to see Cornelius (vv. 23-29)?

5. Have you ever had similar feelings? Explain.

6. What does Peter’s response that he should not call anyone impure or unclean (v. 28) show about Peter?

7. Cornelius invited Peter to tell them everything God had commanded him to say (v. 33). How did Peter begin his teaching, and why (vv. 34-35)?

8. What criteria does God use to judge whether people are acceptable (v. 35)?

Is this possible for all people? Why or why not?

9. What images of God do we fix in our minds in a way that excludes others (or ourselves)?

10. How should the way God sees people affect the way we see people?

Confess the ways that your biases about God have affected the way you see others.

Now or Later

Use what you have learned in this study to create depictions of Jesus that are representative of how you now see him. If you don't draw or paint, consider creating a collage from other art or creating a representational image.