

5 Day Devotional

Day 1: Seeing Beyond the Surface

Devotional

Have you ever met someone who seemed to have it all together? Maybe they were successful, kind to others, and appeared to live a moral life. Cornelius was exactly that kind of person - a Roman centurion who was devout, led his family well, and was generous to those in need. By all outward appearances, he was a good man. Yet God orchestrated an incredible encounter to show that even the most moral person still needs Jesus Christ.

In our world today, it's easy to categorize people. We see someone who appears to have their life together and assume they don't need God. Or we look at someone struggling with obvious issues and write them off entirely. But God's perspective is radically different. He sees the heart, and He knows that every single person - regardless of their outward appearance or moral standing - desperately needs salvation.

This truth should humble us and change how we interact with others. The successful businessman, the struggling addict, the political conservative, the liberal activist - they all share the same fundamental need for Jesus. When we begin to see people through God's eyes, we stop making assumptions about who needs grace and start recognizing that we're all in the same boat.

God is constantly working to bring people into His kingdom, often in ways that surprise us. He's not limited by our expectations or comfort zones. Today, ask Him to help you see the people around you - your coworkers, neighbors, family members - as He sees them: beloved souls in need of His saving grace.

Bible Verse

'There was a certain man in Caesarea called Cornelius, a centurion of what was called the Italian Regiment, a devout man and one who feared God with all his household, who gave alms generously to the people and prayed to God always.' - Acts 10:1-3

Reflection Question

Who in your life appears to 'have it all together' but might still need to hear about God's love and salvation?

Quote

The moral man and the immoral man needs Jesus Christ. The conservative, the liberal needs Jesus Christ. We all need him. We all need to be saved.

Prayer

Lord, help me see people as You see them - not through the lens of their outward appearance or circumstances, but as souls You love deeply. Give me wisdom to recognize that everyone, regardless of how put-together they seem, needs Your grace. Amen.

Day 2: Breaking Down Our 'Never' Walls

Devotional

Peter's response to God's vision was immediate and firm: 'Not so, Lord! For I have never eaten anything common or unclean.' How often do we respond to God's leading with our own version of 'I have never'? Maybe it's 'I've never talked to that type of person' or 'We've never done ministry that way before.'

God was preparing Peter for something revolutionary - to take the gospel to the Gentiles. But Peter's traditions and comfort zone were creating walls. His 'never' was actually a barrier to God's greater purpose. Sometimes our past experiences, cultural backgrounds, or church traditions can become limitations rather than foundations for growth.

Think about the 'nevers' in your own life. Perhaps there's someone you've never considered reaching out to because they're different from you. Maybe there's a ministry opportunity you've dismissed because it's outside your comfort zone. Or possibly there's a way of serving that seems unfamiliar or challenging.

God's ways are higher than ours, and He's not confined to our boxes or expectations. He wants to work in fresh, sometimes surprising ways. When He calls us to step beyond our 'nevers,' it's not to make us uncomfortable for no reason - it's because He has something beautiful planned that we can't yet see.

The same God who gave Peter a vision is still speaking today. He's still breaking down barriers and opening new doors. The question is: are we willing to let go of our 'nevers' and trust His leading, even when it takes us into unfamiliar territory?

Bible Verse

'But Peter said, "Not so, Lord! For I have never eaten anything common or unclean." And a voice spoke to him again the second time, "What God has cleansed you must not call common." This was done three times. And the object was taken up into heaven again. Now while Peter wondered within himself what this vision which he had seen meant...' - Acts 10:14-17

Reflection Question

What 'I have never' statements might be limiting God's work in and through your life?

Quote

Be careful of the I have never. I don't do that. When it comes to what God is telling you to do, even be careful as a church of saying, we've never done that before.

Prayer

Father, forgive me for the times I've limited Your work with my 'nevers.' Help me be open to new directions and opportunities to serve You, even when they challenge my comfort zone. Give me faith to trust Your leading. Amen.

Day 3: Grace-Colored Glasses

Devotional

Imagine putting on a pair of glasses that completely changed how you saw people. Instead of noticing their flaws, mistakes, or differences first, you saw them through the lens of God's love and grace. This is exactly what God was teaching Peter - to see people with grace and love rather than through rules and traditions.

Peter had been raised with clear distinctions between clean and unclean, acceptable and unacceptable. These weren't just dietary laws; they shaped how he viewed entire groups of people. But God was calling him to a radical shift in perspective. Instead of seeing Gentiles as outsiders to be avoided, he needed to see them as people God loved and wanted to save.

We all have our own 'rules and traditions' that can cloud our vision. Maybe it's political differences, lifestyle choices, or cultural backgrounds that make us quick to judge rather than love. But grace-colored glasses help us see what God sees: people created in His image, loved by Him, and in need of His salvation.

Grace doesn't mean we ignore sin or compromise truth. Rather, it means we approach others with the same love and patience God has shown us. It means saying, 'I may not understand everything about you, but I know God loves you, and so do I. Let's figure this out together.'

When we see people through grace and love, it changes everything - our conversations become more meaningful, our relationships deeper, and our witness more authentic. People can sense when they're being judged versus when they're being loved. Which lens are you using today?

Bible Verse

"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 10:34-35

Reflection Question

How might your relationships change if you consistently viewed others through grace and love rather than rules and expectations?

Quote

I must see people with grace and love and not through rules and traditions.

Prayer

Lord, help me put on grace-colored glasses today. When I'm tempted to judge or dismiss someone, remind me of Your love for them. Give me Your heart for people and help me see them as You do. Amen.

Day 4: Building Bridges, Not Walls

Devotional

When Peter walked into Cornelius's house, he was doing something revolutionary. He was crossing cultural, religious, and social boundaries that had existed for generations. He was choosing to build a bridge instead of maintaining a wall. This wasn't just a casual visit - it was a risk that could have cost him his reputation and standing in the Jewish community.

Building bridges requires courage. It means stepping out of our comfort zones and into spaces where we might not naturally belong. It means being willing to be misunderstood by some in order to reach others with God's love. Peter could have stayed safe in his familiar circles, but God was calling him to something greater.

In our divided world, we have countless opportunities to build bridges. Maybe it's reaching across political divides, racial barriers, or generational gaps. Perhaps it's connecting with someone whose lifestyle is different from yours or whose background seems foreign. These bridge-building moments often feel risky because they are - but they're also where God does some of His most beautiful work.

Remember, people aren't our enemies - they're captives of our enemy. When we see them this way, we stop shooting at them and start working to rescue them. We look for ways to connect, to understand, to love. We become bridge-builders in a world that desperately needs connection.

Every bridge you build creates a pathway for God's love to flow. Every wall you tear down makes room for His grace to work. Today, ask God to show you where He wants you to build bridges and give you the courage to take that first step across.

Bible Verse

'Then he called them in and lodged them. On the next day Peter went away with them, and some brethren from Joppa accompanied him. And the following day they entered Caesarea.' - Acts 10:23-24

Reflection Question

What specific bridge is God calling you to build in your relationships or community, and what's the first step you can take?

Quote

If I'm seeing people as God sees them, then I'm willing to take risks to connect with them. I'm looking to build bridges, not walls.

Prayer

God, give me courage to build bridges where You want me to connect with others. Help me see opportunities to reach across divides and show Your love. Make me a bridge-builder in this divided world. Amen.

Day 5: Embracing New Directions

Devotional

Peter's journey to Cornelius's house wasn't just a geographical trip - it was a complete transformation of his understanding of God's plan. What started as a confusing vision became a divine appointment that changed the course of Christianity forever. Sometimes God's new directions don't make sense until we're walking in them.

When God calls us in new directions, it can feel uncomfortable, even scary. We might not understand why He's leading us away from familiar territory into uncharted waters. But here's the beautiful truth: when we follow God's lead, we begin to see what He has in store for us through that obedience.

Peter discovered that God's love wasn't limited to one group of people - it was for everyone. Cornelius and his household received salvation, and the early church learned that the gospel was truly for all nations. What seemed like a radical departure from tradition was actually God's perfect plan unfolding.

Maybe God is calling you in a new direction right now. Perhaps it's a career change, a ministry opportunity, a relationship that needs attention, or a step of faith that feels overwhelming. Don't be afraid of these new directions. Embrace them with faith in the Lord and love for other people.

Remember, God's ways are higher than ours. He's not confined to our expectations or limited by our past experiences. When you don't understand what He's doing in your life, the best thing you can do is trust Him - He's not done working yet. Your willingness to follow His new directions might be exactly what someone else needs to encounter His love.

God is still orchestrating divine appointments and putting puzzle pieces together. Are you ready to say, 'Here I am, Lord. Use me'?

Bible Verse

'And he said to them, "You know how unlawful it is for a Jewish man to keep company with or go to one of another nation. But God has shown me that I should not call any man common or unclean.'" - Acts 10:28

Reflection Question

What new direction might God be calling you toward, and how can you take a step of faith today to follow His leading?

Quote

Don't be afraid of New Directions. Embrace them in faith in the Lord and with a love for other people to say, God, here I am. Use me.

Prayer

Lord, I surrender my need to understand everything and choose to trust Your leading. When You call me in new directions, give me faith to follow. Help me embrace the unknown with confidence in Your goodness and plan. Amen.