

# ALL IN 18

## GOD'S GRACE TOWARDS RACE

Focused Living Ministries



*"God has granted to the Gentiles also the repentance that leads to life."* Acts 11:18

Have you ever tried to explain something to men who just don't get it? A high school football coach once tried to impress upon his athletes the evils of alcohol. He set before them two clear bowls, one filled with sparkling water and the other with 200 proof alcohol. He put a worm in the water and all could see that the critter loved it doing the backstroke and having a great ol' time. He then put the worm in the alcohol where it sputtered, shriveled, sank to the bottom and disintegrated. "Men, what does this demonstration teach you?" One concussion prone missing link lineman shouted, "Well Coach, it teaches me that if you drink alcohol you won't get worms!" This dude just didn't **'get it'** and according to Acts 10-11, neither did Peter! Just like us, the early church just didn't get that God loves all men and that all were created with equal value deserving dignity from one another. So they struggled with deep seated racism, prejudice, favoritism, partiality and bigotry. Where do you see these in our culture? The Church? Your life? What lies and attitudes are at the core of racism and prejudice?

In Matthew 16:18-23 Jesus promised Peter the "keys of the Kingdom of heaven" so that God could use this ALL IN man to open four locked "doors" (Acts 1:8) in order that others could experience His amazing grace through Christ. Thus far the "doors" to the Jews in **Jerusalem** and **Judea** (Acts 2:1-41) had been opened with thousands becoming Christ followers. The Holy Spirit then used His ALL IN men to unlock the deeply prejudicial doors of **Samaria** who were despised half breeds (Acts 8:3-8, 12-13). But there was one door yet to be unlocked so that the Gospel could be spread to the **uttermost parts of the world** and that door was to the Gentiles. In Acts 10-11 the Lord went to extraordinary lengths to challenge their deep racism and prejudice in order to reach the Gentiles (us) with His grace. The Lord had to help them to *'get it'* that the Gospel was for ALL people and that they needed to learn to reach out to and love all men regardless of color, socio-economics, background or religion. Why is Christ the only true and lasting 'cure' for all racism, bigotry and prejudice?

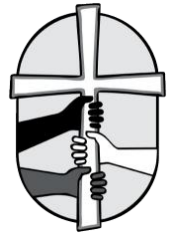


**Acts 10:1-8** What Gentile did God chose to start the process of breaking the racism in Peter's heart? Why did He start with him? What was his character?

**Acts 10:9-16** What prejudice (racism, partiality, favoritism) were in Peter's life (vs 14)? Are these in our life? How patient was God with Peter until he 'got it'? Are you saying to 'no' to God with your lips, life, attitude?

**Acts 10:17-34** How did Peter finally 'get it'? The core issue of all racism is learning to VALUE people who are different than us. God has established the value of all men by **Birth** ("image" Gen 1:26-27) and by being **Bought** (1 Peter 1:18-19). How is God changing your heart regarding racism/prejudice to treat others different from you with grace, value and dignity?

**Acts 10:34-48** Why does Peter attribute his heart change to the Gospel of Christ dying on the cross for his sins and raising from the dead? How does the Gospel soften a man's heart to rid him from all partiality and bigotry? If the Holy Spirit so convicts your heart, is there someone from another race or socio-economic class to which you need to make the first move and ask forgiveness for your prejudice, attitude, unfair treatment, partiality, favoritism, discrimination, neglect, unloving behavior or jokes?



**Acts 11:1-18** How did God use Peter to speak up boldly in order to challenge his church buddies' racism? What did he say? Asian/Black/Hispanic/ White guys, what do you want each other to hear/feel from your heart so they *'get it'* amidst all the racial tension and division in our culture?

**ASSIGNMENT** What truths from the following passages can help you deal with any racism/prejudice in your heart? Be prepared to discuss these next week.  
Gal 3:26-28; Rev 5:9

Phil 2:1-11

Eph 2:11-18

Eph 4:1-16

Col 3:1-16

James 2:1-13

Matt 5:43-48; Luke 6:27-28



**TAG TEAM DISCUSSION** Peter finally 'got it' when he understood that he was "standing in God's way" because of his prejudice. How might you be standing in God's way keeping others from checking out the claims of Christ because of your attitude, mouth or lifestyle? How can you adjust your life to make room for, value and include people who are not like you?