

Life-Link

Topic: How dare you call it unclean?

Life- Link Study #38

Introduction: Read: Acts 10:1-20

In the scripture above, Peter was restricted in his thinking. He did not understand fully the concept of Christianity until this vision, although he walked with Jesus. Peter was a Jew and a very religious one at that. The law (religion) forbade Jews to eat foods listed as unclean in Leviticus chapter 11. The law also extended to dissociating from non Jews: have nothing to do with them - discrimination. However Jesus did not come to play the religious card or discriminate. He came accepting everyone whether they be Jews or gentiles (anyone not considered a Jew) - John 1:12. It took Peter three back-to-back insistence from God before he thought about giving in to God's idea. This idea was strange to him, in fact it stood against everything he has always believed and lived by. This practice was to live up to God's standard, but God whose standard Peter sought to live up to had to try to convince him three times, and gave him an order the fourth time.

There is a saying, 'you cannot teach an old dog new tricks.' Deprogramming is a difficult thing when you have always done things in a particular way. That way may seem correct in your mind, in terms of your cultural influences and the people you have lived with, but things have changed. Acceptance is a difficult call if all you have known is focused in one direction. The inability to accept change, accept others, accept new ideas, become teachable is the condition known as, 'small mindedness.' This condition can be cured by becoming teachable, loving and accepting of others.

Q1: Discuss what acceptance means to you. Identify 3 reasons why acceptance may be difficult.

Q2: How does one move beyond trying to please God, to accepting His will.

Peter thought it was a trick question when he saw the sheet full of animals he considered unclean. At times the state of our belief works against our calling as Christians.

Q4: a. Discuss the type of people we would not feel comfortable coming around us?

(Tips: Based on looks, general perception, lifestyle, experiences).

b. How does unconditional love and acceptance change this condition.

Q4: What do we do today as Christians that push people away rather than attract them? How do we change the trend?

Personal acceptance test: Is it possible to accept everyone who came to church into your home or personal life?

Discrimination is a sneaky evil. It is difficult to identify discrimination until it is called out. It is the enemy of acceptance and it abhors love. It is judgemental and finds fault all time. It never sees beyond the skin to see the good in others. That is what religion is; it is friends with racism, war, anger, fear, bitterness, unforgiveness, pretending to please God, yet it has its own agenda.

Prayer

Lord, help me to love and accept others the way you love me. Help me to get past religion which restricts, so that I may know the God who liberates, living completely in your freedom, Amen.