

ATTITUDES OF CORNELIUS

A. **When** we mention Cornelius our thoughts are usually drawn to two main ideas.

1. The first Gentile convert to Christ.
2. A devout, prayerful, generous man who feared God but yet he was still in his sins.

B. **In** this lesson about Cornelius we will consider his attitudes (his disposition toward God & his fellow man).

1. One's attitude is a powerful force, which God has granted to each one of us (free moral agency).
2. If the attitude is what it ought to be, then the word of God will do what it ought to do.

[**But** God has the power even to change attitudes.]

I. GOD MAY CHANGE ATTITUDES

A. **God** changed the attitude of Cornelius (10:3-6).

1. The vision given to Cornelius convinced him that he was lacking in some way.
2. He was told to send for Simon Peter, who would tell him what he “must” do. {discuss}
3. Peter was told to bring Cornelius “words” by which he & his family could be saved (11:13-14).
 - a. All this strongly implies that their souls were NOT in a saved condition!
4. It is a very serious state of affairs when people think they are saved when they are truly not.
 - a. Sadly, a vision will not be given to them, nor will an angel knock at the door.
 - b. The gospel is the only means by which anyone's attitude can be changed.

B. God changed Peter's attitude (10:9-16).

1. It wasn't until he went to Cornelius that Peter understood the vision (10:34-35).

C. God changed the attitudes of the six Jewish Christians who accompanied Peter (11:12; 10:44-48).

1. They, along with other Jewish Christians, expressed their change of attitude.

Acts 11:18 – When they [apostles & brethren in Judea] heard these things they became silent; & *they glorified God, saying*, “Then God has also granted to the Gentiles repentance to life.”

[**God** has the power to change attitudes if He so chooses. **But** in the case of Cornelius, his attitude was already very close to what it ought to have been (Jn 3:18-21).]

II. ATTITUDE TOWARD GOD'S MESSENGER

Acts 10:25-26 – As Peter was coming in, *Cornelius met him & fell down at his feet & worshiped him*. 26 But Peter lifted him up, saying, “Stand up; I myself am also a man.”

A. **Cornelius** carried it too far, but he was simply showing respect for God's messenger.

1. We're not told that Cornelius knew Peter to be an apostle, which would impress us.
2. But he had greater respect for Peter, the simple fisherman evangelist, than the Jews ever had for their prophets (Jer 38:6).
3. And he certainly had greater respect for Peter than the Jews had for the gospel preachers who would come their way (Matt 23:32-36).

[**Cornelius** came to understand that Peter was to be respected NOT for his position, BUT for his willingness to fulfill his commission as an apostle (10:34-43).]

III. ATTITUDE TOWARD GOD'S WORD

Acts 10:32-33 (Cornelius's explanation to Peter) – Send therefore to Joppa & call Simon here, whose surname is Peter. He is lodging in the house of Simon, a tanner, by the sea. When he comes, he will speak to you.' 33 So I sent to you immediately, & you have done well to come. Now therefore, ***we are all present before God, to hear all the things commanded you by God.***

A. **Cornelius** was anxious to hear the commandments of God given to Peter.

1. In fact, he “sent” for this information; he sought it out, he went looking for it.
2. Then he carefully listened intending to obey, & to make what changes were necessary.
3. He received Peter's words as the very word of God (**1 Thess 2:13**).
4. And when Peter said what he did (**10:34-35**), Cornelius understood that God would judge everyone on the basis of Peter's message (**10:35; Jn 12:48; Rev 20:12**).

B. **This** is how the event played out.

1. The household of Cornelius believed the message preached by Peter.
2. The Spirit gave them power to magnify God.
3. Peter, now fully convinced of God's purpose, commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord (**10:48**).
4. They obeyed, because they understood that their actions were necessary in order to have the forgiveness of sins (**10:43; 2:38**).

[**One's** salvation is heavily dependent upon his or her attitude toward hearing the gospel, which includes the commandments of God.]

IV. ATTITUDE TOWARD FRIENDS & RELATIVES

Acts 10:24 – And the following day they [Peter & the others] entered Caesarea. Now **Cornelius** was waiting for them, & **had called together his relatives & close friends**.

Acts 10:27 – ...*many*...had come together.

Acts 10:33 [Cornelius made the opening remarks: “the announcements”] – Now, ... **we are all present before God**, to hear all the things commanded you by God.

A. Here is evidence that Cornelius was a very influential & highly respected man.

1. Who among us could call & make such an invitation with this result?
2. When he called people responded willingly.
3. He didn't use his influence for his own benefit; he had the well being of others at heart.
4. And that's the reason he had so much influence & respect with others.

Luke 14:23 (Parable: Great Supper) – Then the master said to the servant, “**Go out into the highways & hedges, & compel them to come in, that my house may be filled.**”

[Are there people who might respond to your call, your invitation to hear the gospel? It doesn't have to be heard at the building, it can be taught in their home or in yours (1 Pet 3:15; 2 Tim 2:2; Prov 11:30).]

CLOSING

Illustration: Two shoe salesmen in Africa had two very different attitudes about their work. One said, “I can't do any good here, no one wears shoes. The other said, “The opportunities are limitless, everyone needs shoes.”

Everyone needs salvation; everyone needs the opportunity to make his life right with God – and that was the attitude Cornelius had about the gospel & men's souls.

- He allowed God to change his attitude
- He had the proper attitude toward...
 - God's messenger
 - God's word
 - The souls of men