

A person's legs in blue jeans and various sneakers are visible, standing on a stone ledge overlooking a forest. The sneakers include a black Converse, a white sneaker, a dark sneaker with a red stripe, and a white sneaker with a black stripe. The background is a dense green forest.

WEEK 7 | *ACTS 9:32-11:18*

# INCLUSIVE CHURCH

This week Peter has some unexpected experiences. And they are all designed to answer the question: how far does the rule of King Jesus extend? Because if Jesus' kingdom starts to include undesirables, church could get awkward...

As a Christian, do you ever find yourself surprised by the kind of people you get to mix with?





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## LOOKING BACK...

4. Imagine you're a Gentile in the early church, reading this "Book of Acts" for the first time. Your Jewish friends at church grew up with the Old Testament, and know it backwards and still live Jewish-ly. They only eat kosher food and consider your food unclean. Imagine some of the pressures you might feel, and what arguments and bad feelings could arise.
  
5. Why would you want your Jewish fellow believers to read this section of Acts. How should they respond?

**Read Acts 11:1-18** and step back in your minds to the start of this idea of radical inclusion.

6. It's notoriously difficult to change the prejudices of our human hearts. What do you think of the response of the Jewish believers in Jerusalem?
  
7. Think about the people at OUR church, and your personal response to them. Are there people that you might give less attention to? Or even subconsciously avoid? If so, why is that the case? (The answers might be quite understandable, even if we want to change.)

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## GOSPEL VISION

Remember, *“Our vision is to be a vibrant and growing gathering of **all kinds of people**, united by God’s Spirit in our common commitment to living under the gracious and loving lordship of Jesus Christ.”* As a result, we want to work to be *“a welcoming and open church where everyone is valued and included”*.

8. What do you need to change to make this part of our vision a reality?

Statements like this are a picture of a desired destination, not a claim that we’ve made it already. Identify one or two ways your group could help make these parts of our vision a reality. Pray for God’s help in putting those things into action.