

# Marks of Discipleship

Daily Prayer ■ Weekly Worship ■ Bible Reading  
Giving Time, Talents & Resources ■ Spiritual  
Friendships ■ Service In & Beyond the Church

May 21, 2023

## Day 1: Acts 11:1-3

***The apostles and the brothers throughout Judea heard that the Gentiles also had received the word of God. So when Peter went up to Jerusalem, the circumcised believers criticized him and said, "You went into the house of uncircumcised men and ate with them."***

News of the conversion of Cornelius' household and people from surrounding areas must have traveled fast. As news spread to Jerusalem, the brethren in Jerusalem reacted badly. They should not have reacted until they heard firsthand what had taken place. The group in Judea did not react to the whole story but most likely only to a highly abbreviated version of the story; they just heard about Peter eating with Gentiles. It is a sad commentary on us that we are willing to react with anger and criticism instead of with patience.

**Question:** Why do you think Peter was criticized?

**Challenge:** Find out what the word "Gentile" means.

**Scripture:** Romans 9:1-30

## Day 2: Acts 11:4

***Peter began and explained everything to them precisely as it had happened.***

Peter, having learned that God truly moves in mysterious ways, is ready to patiently explain what had happened. He does not try to justify what he did or make excuses but to simply tell the truth. Peter knew he was doing God's will and he was confident that God would help give him the words he needed.

**Question:** Do you like explaining yourself?

**Challenge:** Watch a TV program this week and try to explain it to someone else.

**Scripture:** Mark 4:1-20

## Day 3: Acts 11:15

***"As I began to speak, the Holy Spirit came on them as he had come on us at the beginning.***

The proof that the Gentiles were truly connected to God just as vitally as the followers in Judea was that the Spirit of God was seen in them. Peter then told the group that it was just like Pentecost. The Gentiles were blessed by God and commissioned to spread the Good News. When people of a different culture than ours become believers they will worship and express the faith differently than we do. This is how God helps us to see the fullness of the Gospel – through other eyes.

**Question:** What was the result of the Holy Spirit coming on the Disciples? (Acts 2)

**Challenge:** Think about why the Jewish Christians did not think the Holy Spirit could come to Gentiles.

**Scripture:** Romans 2:1-16

## Day 4: Acts 11:16

***Then I remembered what the Lord had said: 'John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.'***

In John 14:26 Jesus tells the Twelve that the Holy Spirit will bring to their minds all He taught them. Peter is having one of those moments of recalling what Jesus had said. Jesus told His disciples in a number of places that they would see and do things that would amaze them (John 1:51). Whether it is with water or the Holy Spirit, Baptism is a complete washing. It is a washing that prepares us for Holy (devoted to God) work.

**Question:** Would you rather take a bath or a shower and why?

**Challenge:** Write down as many things from Jesus' life that you can recall.

**Scripture:** Romans 6

## Day 5: Acts 11:17

***So if God gave them the same gift as he gave us, who believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I to think that I could oppose God?"***

God is working with Peter and the whole Church's attitude about what it takes to be a Christian. There is much discussion as to what is the minimum one needs to believe to be a Christian. At the same time there is much discussion as to how a Christian should act. From Acts it seems that when the person confesses that "Jesus is Lord and that He was raised from the dead," this is what one needs to believe to be a Christian. Evidence of the Holy Spirit seems to come as the person's life gives life to others around them.

**Question:** Have you ever felt that you were "opposing" God?

**Challenge:** If someone asked you to tell them the benefits of being a Christian what would you say?

**Scripture:** Romans 10:9-13

## Day 6: Acts 11:18

***When they heard this, they had no further objections and praised God, saying, "So then, God has granted even the Gentiles repentance unto life."***

John Wesley used four lights to shine on a problem to help come to a conclusion as to how to proceed. One was Scripture. Peter recalled what Jesus had said, that all were able to come to God through Him. Two is Tradition. Peter knew that the Jews were to be a light to the Gentiles (the rest of the world). Three was Reason. Peter showed that the Gentiles were Christians by showing that the same Spirit that came to them came also to the disciples at Pentecost. Four is experience. Peter experienced the Spirit filling each one in the room.

**Question:** What do you think the phrase "repentance unto life" means?

**Challenge:** Take John Wesley's approach to problem solving and try it on the next or spiritual problem you have.

**Scripture:** Ephesians 4:2-16