

If You Had Been Cornelius

John Isaac Edwards

A good way to study the Bible is for us to put ourselves in the place of its people. We do this with a military man named Cornelius (Acts 10-11). If you had been Cornelius...

1) **Would You Have Been Devout?** Cornelius is introduced to us as, “A devout man...” (Acts 10:2). He was pious and dutiful towards God. To be devout is to be dedicated, committed, loyal, and faithful. Verse 7 mentions “...a devout soldier of them that waited on him continually.” Some may be devout soldiers, devout workers, devout family men, devout Muslims, devout Catholics, and the list goes on. Are you a devout Christian? Can what was said of first Christians be said of you, “And they continued stedfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers” (Acts 2:42)?

2) **Would You Have Feared God with All Your House?** Cornelius is described as “...one that feared God with all his

house...” (Acts 10:2). It is “the whole duty of man” to “Fear God, and keep his commandments” (Eccl. 12:13). To fear God is to reverence God. “God is greatly to be feared in the assembly of the saints, and to be had in reverence of all them that are about him” (Ps. 89:7). The fact that Cornelius feared God *with all his house*, shows the great influence he had upon his family. How about us today?

3) **Would You Have Given Much Alms?** Cornelius was a very benevolent and charitable man as he “...gave much alms to the people...” (Acts 10:2). Would you have done that, or would you have been selfish and tight-fisted with the blessings of God? The Lord taught about “your alms” in Matthew 6:1-4. By giving alms, you “provide bags which wax not old, a treasure in the heavens that faileth not...” (Lk. 12:33).

4) **Would You Have Prayed to God Always?** Cornelius was a praying man. The Bible says he “...prayed to God always” (Acts 10:2).

Can that be said of you? The Lord spoke a parable to this end, “...that men ought always to pray...” (Lk. 18:1). Paul taught, “Pray with ceasing” (1 Th. 5:17).

5) **Would You Have Sent for Peter?** At 3:00 in the afternoon, Cornelius saw a vision in which an angel of God instructed him, “And now send men to Joppa, and call for one Simon, whose surname is Peter...he shall tell thee what thou oughtest to do” (Acts 10:3-6). Acts 11:14 says, “Who shall tell thee words, whereby thou and all thy house shall be saved.” Acts 10:7-8 finds Cornelius sending for Peter. Would you have sent for Peter, or would you have thought, “Why send for Peter?” Don’t you know who I am, I’m a centurion, the commander of 100 men. I don’t need to be saved, I’m already saved. After all, I’m devout, God-fearing, alms-giving, and always-praying. The fact that he had to send for Peter shows that moral goodness alone does not save, not saved by seeing a vision, or an angel of God coming to you. It takes words!

6) **Would You Have Been of Good Report?** Notice the reputation Cornelius had. The men sent unto Peter from Cornelius told Peter, “Cornelius the centurion, a just man, and one that feareth God, and of good report among all the nation of the Jews...” (Acts 10:22). If you had been Cornelius, would they have been able to say that about you? Would you have had the report he did? One of the qualifications of elders is, “... he must have a good report of them which are without...” (1 Tim. 3:7).

7) **Would You Have Called Together Your Kinsmen and Near Friends?** Acts 10:24 records, “....And Cornelius waited for them, and had called together his kinsmen and near friends.” When Peter arrived, he “... found many that were come together” (Acts 10:27). Many call together their kinsmen and near friends for social occasions. How about calling them together to hear words whereby they can be saved?

The fact that many came shows the respect they had for him as a just man. How about setting a time for a gospel preacher to come to your house to tell saving words and invite your family and friends to come?

8) **What Would You Have Learned When Peter Said, “Stand up...”?** “...as Peter was coming in, Cornelius fell down at his feet, and worshipped him. But Peter took him up, saying, Stand up; I myself also am a man” (Acts 10:25-26). Would you have learned Peter was not the first Pope and men are not the object of worship — God is (Jn. 4:24)?

9) **Would You Have Fasted?** Cornelius said, “Four days ago I was fasting...” (Acts 10:30). Here’s a man that wasn’t even a Christian who was fasting. Would you have been fasting? Jesus taught about fasting in Matthew 6:16-18.

10) **Would You Have**

Been Present to Hear All Things Commanded of God? What a great attitude expressed by Cornelius when he said, “Now therefore are we all here present before God, to hear all things that are commanded thee of God” (Acts 10:33).

11) **Would You Have Understood the Purpose of the Holy Spirit Falling upon You?** Acts 10:44 says, “...the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word.” This falling took place as Peter began to speak (Acts 11:15). The purpose was not to save or to purify his heart (Acts 15:9), but to convince the Jews, “Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life” (Acts 11:18).

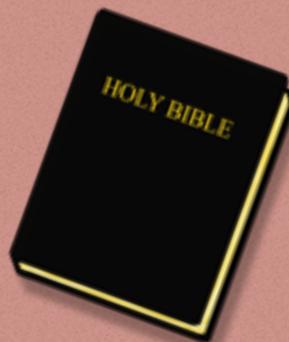
12) **Would You Have Been Baptized?** Peter “... commanded them to be baptized...” (Acts 10:48). Would you have objected saying, “How will this affect my status in the Roman army, or I already fear God and pray!”?

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