

## Acts 10

### Growth Guides

#### For Individual Use Only

Read Acts 10:1-44 and reflect on the story. I wish witnessing and church growth were this easy!

1. Looking at all the detrimental effects religion has had on the world. You can see why people would be turned off by religion, including Christianity because most people do view it as a religion, which is a mistake.

From your experience do people view Christianity as a religion or a relationship with God? How do you view Christianity? What’s the difference between the two?

Pastor Richard mentioned five differences. What changes do you need to make in your faith and life so you treat Christianity as a relationship with God and not merely one of many religious options?

2. Why do you believe in Jesus? What if someone did find the bones of Jesus would that make any difference to your faith?
3. Read this post from # poemsfortheresistance. It’s written by a person in their 20s who has a following of people, mainly GenZers.

I just want to remind you that god made people called them good and then drowned them in a flood, that your god made mistakes, hardened hearts, gambled with Satan, killed his son, struck down followers, and made rules for slavery and yet you say his judgment is sound. (Another person in the same age range responded: I guess his ways are higher than our ways.)

How do you drink Jesus’s blood and spill your neighbor’s? How do you baptize repentant and drown naysayers? When did whiplash get holy? When did abuse get trendy? I’ve never been good at memorizing things but I don’t remember that beatitude: Blessed are the warmongers for they shall find prayers and thoughts. And blessed are the pro-lifers for they shall find kettles and pots. And blessed are the Christians who wave flags and throw stones for they will find heaven underneath others’ bones.

And I’m pretty sure the god of floods and horsemen loves imitation so don’t worry too much you’re in fine company. But if you decide one day to try for decency remember this: god may send floods but you can build boats, and dismantle pews and use the wood for something that will actually save lives.

How would you respond to this person? What objections do you have concerning your faith? What is her real beef, is it with Christianity or with followers of Christianity who have corrupted the faith with politics, nationalism, and moralism?

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5. What in our faith needs to be "lost?" What needs to be lost in your faith so that your life is more consistent with real Christianity?
6. Have you ever found or belonged to a church that shared all these qualities:
  - The Gospel was preached.
  - The Church was alive and God was actively moving in it, changing lives.
  - New believers were patiently disciplined.
  - The Church was diverse and people's differences didn't seem to matter at all.
  - The Church brought people together rather than dividing them.

What can you do to strengthen each of these qualities in your church?

7. Do you have a present relationship with God or is it a past tense relationship? Do you tend to speak of God's work in your life in the past tense or the present tense? What is God doing in your life right now? Has God spoken to you recently and if so how did he speak to you and what did God say? If it's not a present relationship, what changes can you make so it becomes current?
8. Read this passage: *"Or do you not know that wrongdoers will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: Neither the sexually immoral nor idolaters nor adulterers nor men who have sex with men nor thieves nor the greedy nor drunkards nor slanderers nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God. And that is what some of you were. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God."* 1 Corinthians 6:9-11

Do you believe the Church today is reaching the LBGTQ+ community with the Gospel like Paul was able to? If not, what would it take?

Is the problem the Church and what the Bible teaches on sexual mores or is the problem society which teaches the LBGTQ+ doesn't need Jesus because they don't need to change? Christianity is the one that needs to change!

9. Should the Church change the teachings of the Bible or perhaps tone down certain teachings, or perhaps avoid them altogether in order to reach the current culture or do you think the Church needs to remain steadfast and faithful to our beliefs despite what the culture says?
10. What can you do to be more inclusive and less divisive? Peter and Cornelius were very different and yet Christ enabled both to overcome their differences and find fellowship and unity in Him!
11. If you could build your own church, what would it look like?