

Acts 11:1–18 **Accountability**

1. Accountability: The “Why?” Question 1–3

- a. Peter’s behaviour was contrary to the person they knew him to be.
- b. The other apostles and disciples had legitimate concern regarding Peter’s actions.
- c. They expressed their concern to Peter, expecting him to answer the “Why?” question.

Peter’s out of character actions concerned the other apostles and disciples, causing them to question Peter’s behaviour.

We all do things that seem out of character or ‘not quite right’ to others, which may cause them to question us.

Questions:

Have you ever had someone question your decisions or actions? How did they present those questions?

How did you feel?

Have you ever questioned someone’s decisions or actions?

Practice raising such concerns in a respectful, caring manner.

2. Accountability: The Answer 4–17

- a. Peter, understood their concern because he had the same concerns.
- b. Peter took the time explain to the Jerusalem disciples how God led him to bring the gospel to Cornelius’ household.
- c. Peter referenced a variety of ways that God led him, including:
 - i. Peter’s own experience of God
 - ii. The circumstances and events
 - iii. God’s word spoken through Jesus

Peter showed understanding and compassion as he took the time to thoroughly explain how God led him, focusing on his own experience with God, the circumstances and God’s word as evidence.

When faced with legitimate questions we need to respond with compassion as we provide explanations that focus on God’s word, the circumstances involved and our personal experiences with God.

Questions:

Reflecting on a time when someone questioned your decision/actions, were you able to respond as Peter did; citing the evidence of:

- a. Your personal interaction with God
- b. The circumstances and events surrounding situation
- c. Scriptural support of the decision/actions

Of the above list of evidence, which is essential and which is optional to support a decision?

Why do we sometimes become defensive or angry when faced with the “why?” question?

How can we be sure to respond with grace and patience?

3. Accountability: The Result 18

- a. The whole discussion became a learning opportunity
- b. The Jerusalem disciples learned a new aspect of God’s grace
- c. As a result, their unity grew and they celebrated together

Because of Peter’s patient and gracious answer to their legitimate question, the Jerusalem disciples grew in their understanding of God’s grace and celebrated together in deeper unity. When we answer legitimate questions and concerns with patience and grace it becomes an opportunity to help others grow in their faith, build unity in the church and celebrate God’s goodness together.

Questions:

Often, accountability questions create conflict instead of unity. Why?

How can viewing someone’s questions of your decisions/actions as an opportunity to teach them or help them grow in Christ impact our response?

The Benefits of Accountability

When our choices/actions elicit legitimate concern and questions, we have the opportunity to answer with grace; providing the scripture supported, personal and circumstantial evidence which will help others grow in discipleship, bring unity and create celebration.