

News Story Summary

The owners of a vegan restaurant in Northern California have received death threats, and demonstrators have boycotted the restaurant after patrons learned the owners had incorporated meat into their personal diets.

Matthew and Terces Engelhart were vegetarians for nearly 40 years, but decided to return to eating meat after leaving San Francisco and starting a farm about 55 miles away in Vacaville. They started with eggs and cheese from the farm's chickens and cows. Then, after one old cow had to be put down, they decided it made sense to incorporate meat into their diets as well.

In a blog post, Terces Engelhart wrote the transition was a "necessary and important part of our own growth as well as the sustainability of our farm."

The entry was posted in February 2015 but went largely unnoticed until a few weeks ago, when it was shared and went viral on vegan and animal rights websites. The couple is now being inundated with messages on social media forums criticizing them as "flesh eaters" and calling them hypocrites for owning vegan restaurants but eating meat at home.

While the restaurants are vegan, the company has never promoted a "meat is murder" viewpoint.

(For more on this story, enter the phrase "Couple's Return to Meat Sparks Vegan Uproar" in your search engine.)

Focus Attention

As your group session begins, ask, "Have you ever changed your opinion on an issue you felt strongly about?" Invite group members to share their responses. Share the news story about the California restaurant owners and their decision to eat meat. Explain that in today's Scripture passage, we will encounter a man who was given permission by God to change his diet. However, the issue was about far more than diet. God meant for Peter to learn an important lesson about acceptance.

Challenge

Refer back to the news story. Point out that when the restaurant owners decided that it was acceptable for them to eat meat, many people were not accepting of their choice. In a similar way, there were people in Peter's day that didn't believe the gospel should be shared with Gentiles. But God used a rooftop vision to teach Peter that the gospel was for everyone. Challenge your group to think of individuals or groups in your community with whom they can share the gospel.