

Life Group Study: The Stephen Standard

Series: Kingdom Velocity: the Book of Acts

Teaching Text: Acts 6:1–8:2

Connect

1. When you hear the phrase "hero of the faith," what traits usually come to mind?
 2. How often do you feel like an "average" Christian, and does that feel like a positive or negative description to you?
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Character

Ask someone to read Acts 6:1–8 and Acts 7:54–60 aloud.

1. What words or phrases are used to describe Stephen before he ever performs a miracle or preaches a sermon?
 2. In the moments leading up to his death, how does Stephen's behavior mirror the character of Jesus?
 3. What stands out to you about Jesus' posture in Stephen's vision compared to other descriptions of Him in heaven?
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Consider

Stephen is presented as the "bar" for normal discipleship, rather than an unreachable "special-tier" Christian. Though he began by filling the unappealing administrative role of food distribution, he was expected to be full of wisdom, faith, and the Holy Spirit.

- **Discussion:** Modern "consumer Christianity" often views total engagement as "overdoing it". How would your daily life change if you viewed being "full of power and grace" as the standard requirement for your current job or role?
- **Discussion:** Stephen was "just a guy in the crowd" who said "I'll do it" to a mundane task. Why do you think God often uses small acts of practical service as the launchpad for great spiritual impact?

Soaked in the Story Under intense pressure, Stephen delivered a sweeping re-telling of Israel's history. He didn't just know the Bible; he was so "soaked" in it that he could interpret his current trial through the lens of God's ongoing story.

- **Discussion:** How does being deeply rooted in Scripture create a "spiritual instinct" that helps you navigate modern "craziness" or conflict?
- **Discussion:** Stephen identified a pattern of people resisting God's "new things" out of fear. Where might fear be causing you to resist a "new thing" God is trying to do in your life right now?

Latent Courage and Jesus-Bias The Holy Spirit can trigger "latent courage"—a hidden potential for conviction and clarity—when a disciple faces hostility. This courage isn't aggressive or hateful, but stems from a strong "Jesus-bias" that instinctively wants to love and defend Him.

- **Discussion:** Unlike Peter, whose instinct was to deny Jesus when pressured, Stephen's instinct was to stand. What are some practical ways we can "practice" our Jesus-bias this week so it becomes our natural instinct?
- **Discussion:** Have you ever felt a "latent courage" rise up in you when your faith was challenged? What did that feel like?

The Unseen Legacy Stephen never saw the result of his obedience. However, his death triggered a wave of persecution that scattered the church, fulfilling the Great Commission to take the gospel to the "ends of the earth".

- **Discussion:** Stephen's life had a profound impact on a young man named Saul, who later became the Apostle Paul. How does the reality that "your obedience may bear fruit you never see" change how you view your current struggles?
- **Discussion:** If Jesus were to give you a "standing ovation" today, what specific act of obedience from this past week would He be celebrating?

Cover

1. **Confess:** Spend a moment in silence asking the Holy Spirit to reveal if you have been living as a "consumer" of the faith rather than a participant in the Kingdom.
2. **Intercede:** Pair up and pray for one another to have "latent courage" emerge in difficult workplaces, family dynamics, or social circles.
3. **Commit:** Pray for a heart so "soaked in the Word" that your natural response to pressure this week mirrors the grace and forgiveness of Jesus.