

BIOGRAPHICAL STUDY FORM

1. NAME Stephen

2. SCRIPTURE REFERENCES

Acts 6:3–8:2

Acts 11:19

Acts 22:20

3. FIRST IMPRESSIONS AND OBSERVATIONS

Stephen was an early Christian who had a tremendous testimony in the church, was a powerful preacher and witness, and was willing to die for his faith.

4. OUTLINE OF HIS OR HER LIFE

- A. Chosen by the early church as a leader—
 - 1. to help resolve a conflict (Acts 6:5)
 - 2. on the basis of certain godly characteristics (Acts 6:3, 5, 8)
- B. He had a wide ministry—
 - 1. waited on tables (Acts 6:2, 5)
 - 2. performed miracles (Acts 6:8)
 - 3. preached and taught powerfully (Acts 6:10)
- C. He was persecuted—
 - 1. opposed by Jews from “overseas” (Acts 6:9)
 - 2. falsely accused (Acts 6:11)
 - 3. arrested and brought before the Sanhedrin (Acts 6:12–14)
 - a. false witnesses testified against him.
 - b. defended himself with a masterful review of O.T. Scripture (Acts 7:2–53)
 - c. testified to Jesus (Acts 7:55–56)
 - d. lynched by an angry mob (Acts 7:57–60)
- D. He had a ministry after his death—persecution caused the church to spread (Acts 8:2–4; 11:19)

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5. GENERAL INSIGHTS (Answers to Questions)

- A. Why was he chosen to be a leader? Because —
- He was full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom (Acts 6:3).
 - He was full of faith and the Spirit (Acts 6:5).
 - He was full of God's grace and power (Acts 6:8).
 - He knew the Scriptures (Acts 7:2–53).
- B. What was his response to false accusations? He “kept his cool,” remained silent, and only answered when he was directed to speak by the high priest.
- C. Are there any parallels with Jesus? Yes, he was falsely accused, demonstrated love and concern for his accusers, and died an “undeserved” death.
- D. What was his attitude toward his executioners? He was forgiving, even to the point of praying that God would forgive them for their sin of murder.
- E. What were the long-term results of his life, ministry, and death?
- They forwarded the plan of God.
 - His death caused the disciples to scatter and take the Gospel to other parts of Judea, Samaria, and regions beyond Palestine in fulfillment of Acts 1:8.
 - His death also helped bring Paul to the Lord.

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6. CHARACTER QUALITIES IDENTIFIED The Book of Acts

- Spirit-filled (6:3, 5, 10)
- Wise (6:3, 10)
- Faithful (6:5)
- Available to God (6:8)
- Persistent (6:10)
- Holy (6:15)
- Knowledgeable (chap. 7)
- Bold (7:51–53)
- Brave (7:51–53)
- Forgiving (7:60)
- Respected by others (8:2)
- A witness to Jesus (22:20)

7. BIBLE TRUTHS ILLUSTRATED IN HIS OR HER LIFE

- The presence and comfort of the Holy Spirit in the trials of life (Acts 7:54–55; Hebrews 13:5–6).
- False accusations and persecution will come into our lives (Acts 6:11ff).
- God's grace is sufficient when we walk with him (Acts 6:10; 1 Cor. 1:27–31; 2 Cor. 12:9).

8. SUMMARY OF LESSONS LEARNED FROM HIS OR HER LIFE

The outstanding characteristic of Stephen was his commitment to the Lord and his willingness to do anything for him, including giving up his life.

This commitment is seen in the fact that he was a man who walked with God (he was “full of the Spirit and wisdom ... faith ... God's grace and power”). He had a great testimony before others in the church. He witnessed to people both in life and in death.

He was, furthermore, a man of the Word. He really knew his Bible—the Old Testament. He must have spent hours studying the scrolls and the parchments.

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9. PERSONAL APPLICATION

I need to become a person like Stephen—a person of the Word who knows Jesus Christ intimately and who is able to answer others with Scripture when they ask questions. As a result of this study, I will commit myself to having a daily quiet time for at least 15 minutes to get to know Christ better. I will also commit myself to memorizing two Scripture verses each week so that I can answer people who ask me questions.

10. TRANSFERABLE CONCEPTS (Ways I can share this with others)

The concepts in this study that are transferable:

- A. The necessity of a personal walk with Jesus Christ. The only way we can become men and women of faith and wisdom like Stephen is to have a daily quiet time with the Lord. Stephen had a dynamic walk with Jesus Christ.
- B. The necessity of being in the Word of God on a regular basis—Bible study and Scripture memory. If I am to know my Bible as Stephen did, I need to spend quality time in it and be able to teach others how to do so as well. This book is one means to help me do so. I need to share these methods with others.
- C. The necessity of courage in times of adversity and persecution. I need to pray that God will give me boldness with others.

11. SOMEONE WITH WHOM I INTEND TO SHARE THIS STUDY

Pat Conner and Tommy Pauter (by email)