

Lesson 6 — THE PRAYER OF THE FIRST MARTYR — Acts 7:54-60

1. Stephen is first mentioned in Acts 6:1-15. (a) Write down all the character qualities of Stephen that are mentioned. (b) What happened as a result of his faith? See verses 9-15.

2. Read Stephen's masterful sermon in Acts 7. (a) What does he say that provokes unbelievers to hate him? (b) Why are his words so inflammatory? (c) What did these hard words cost Stephen? See Acts 7:54-60. (d) Are you willing to say hard things, when needed, to unbelievers or believers? Why or why not?

3. (a) How would you describe the prayer of the first martyr in Acts 7:59-60? (b) What can you pray on behalf of those who persecute you? (c) What encouragement can you take from Matthew 5:10-12 and 5:43-48 regarding persecution?

4. (a) What happened as a result of Stephen's death? See Acts 8:1-4 and Acts 11:19-26. (b) How does this relate to what Paul says in Romans 8:28? (c) How does this encourage you in times of persecution and when you stand up for the truth of God's Word?

5. (a) Looking back over question 1, how would Stephen's character qualities incite hatred from unbelievers? (b) What did Jesus say would happen to us in John 15:18-27? (c) If one is not receiving persecution from the world, what might it indicate according to these verses?

6. (a) Do you fear persecution? Why or why not? (b) How are you preparing yourself and your children to suffer righteously amidst persecution?

7. Are you suffering because of your faith? Come with a prayer request for your persecutors. If you are not currently suffering, then come with a request for yourself to be strong when that day comes.