

My Witnesses - A Study of Acts Discussion Guide: Week 17 - Acts 6:8-15

Summary of this week's teaching: This week we continued to look at the account of Stephen who began ministry as one of the seven men who were appointed to oversee the distribution of food to widows. This week's text shows us that the Lord had greater plans for Stephen, such as doing great signs and wonders for the people and proclaiming the Gospel powerfully and with wisdom. What began as a simple and practical ministry expanded into all sorts of God-glorifying service. The passage is quick to point out that this was not due to Stephen's power but through the Spirit. When we step up and serve the Lord we never know where He is going to take us. However, we can be sure that it will be for our good and for His glory!

Connect: Relational questions to get conversations started.

1. Where was the first place you ever served in a church (i.e. greeting, kid's ministry, ushering)? What was your experience like?

Seed: The Bible, God's inspired Word, is very much like a seed - it contains everything we need to experience life. Please read the following passages of scripture as a group: (perhaps in two different translations) Acts 6:8-15 and Galatians 5:16-26.

1. How many ways is Stephen described in Acts 6?
2. Do you recognize any of the fruit of the Spirit in his life? If so, which ones?
3. What about Stephen's opponents - what desires of the flesh do they exhibit?

Roots: Like subterranean tree roots which extend in all directions searching out water, each believer needs to grow and develop spiritual roots that allow us to make personal connections with our God.

1. How have you experienced the Holy Spirit this week? Were there times when you noticed His fruit in your life?
2. Were there times this week when you gave in to the desires of the flesh? If so, how? Finally, is there anything you need to do to make amends for this behavior?

Trunk: Without trunks, plants may be large, useful, and beautiful, but they are not trees. The same is true for our faith - without it we are not saved and cannot please God. These questions will help us grow our faith in Him.

1. Please reread Acts 6:12. Can you identify any areas in your life where you have been "stirred up" into indignation and fury in ungodly ways? How can we protect ourselves against such deceptions?

Crown: Crowns are the glory of a tree; the culmination of the roots and trunk working in harmony and can be seen for miles around. The crown of a tree represents the visible portion of our faithlife. These questions will encourage us to apply these principles into our everyday lives.

1. How can you avoid fulfilling the desires of the flesh this week? Conversely, what steps can you take to walk in the Spirit more consistently this next week?

