

TRANSFORMERS

Gospel Metamorphosis in the Book of Acts

WEEK 2 | Stephen - Ready To Die

PRAYER

Lord, you can do all things; no one should refuse to obey you, or try to thrust you aside. For heaven is your throne and the earth your footstool. You have made all things. And yet our God we have sinned against you; help us not to resist your Spirit, but to be led by him. We are all too often like your stiff-necked people of years gone past; help us to be pliable under your hand.

And so we ask you today to pardon our many sins. Do so, we pray, for the sake of the truly Righteous One, who was betrayed and murdered because so we could have forgiveness and life. Do so, for the sake of the One who stands at your right hand. And when the day comes for us to die, receive our spirits into your presence, and forgive not only our sins, but those who have sinned against us. In the glorious name of Jesus we pray, AMEN.

Praying Through the Scriptures: Acts 7 - reformation21.com

OPENING QUESTION (OPTIONAL)

Who is someone who you respect that took a stand against injustice? Why have you chosen this person?



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WORD

54 Now when they heard these things they were enraged, and they ground their teeth at him. 55 But he, full of the Holy Spirit, gazed into heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God. 56 And he said, "Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God." 57 But they cried out with a loud voice and stopped their ears and rushed together at him. 58 Then they cast him out of the city and stoned him. And the witnesses laid down their garments at the feet of a young man named Saul. 59 And as they were stoning Stephen, he called out, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." 60 And falling to his knees he cried out with a loud voice, "Lord, do not hold this sin against them." And when he had said this, he fell asleep.

[Acts 7](#)

"And the extraordinary thing is that, even though the earliest Christians were all first-century Jews to whom that kind of response would have been normal and expected, none of them, going to their death, say anything like that at all. Stephen has just laid a pretty ferocious charge against the Jewish leaders in his speech. But when it come to his own death, he shouts out a prayer at the top of his voice, as rocks are flying at him and his body is being smashed and crushed, asking God not to hold this sin against them. That is every bit as remarkable as the vision of the open heaven and the son of man standing as counsel for the defence. It is the up-ending of a great and noble tradition. If we knew nothing about Christianity except the fact that its martyrs called down blessing and forgiveness, rather than cursing and judgment, on their torturers and executioners, we would have a central, though no doubt puzzling, insight into the whole business."

[Acts for Everyone - NT Wright \(p. 121-122\)](#)

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

((NUMBERED ACCORDING TO LEVEL OF DEPTH AND READINESS TO SHARE))

1. On a scale from 1 to 10 (1 being never and 10 being always), how would you rate your understanding of the Bible? Why would you rate yourself this way? What will you do to grow in this?
2. What would you say is your number one priority in your life and how is this reflected in the way you use your time, finances and passions/giftings?
3. How willing are you to lose your life for what you truly believe in? Why have you answered this way?
4. Stephen was surrounded by a community of faith (Acts 6) who recognised the anointing on his life to be a leader. Who do you have around you that can help recognise your areas that are strengths and weaknesses?
5. Do you choose today to trust Jesus as the Ruler and sole source of fulfilment of your life by accepting His call for you to enter into relationship with Him? Please take this moment to pray with your group. Will you enable him to have all authority as the one who calls the shots in your life? Would you like to enter into a saving relationship with God through Jesus? Ask your lifegroup leader to lead you in prayer to receive Christ. You can pray this prayer:

Dear Lord Jesus, I know that I am a sinner, and I ask for Your forgiveness. I believe You died for my sins and rose from the dead. I turn from my sins and invite You to be the master of my life. I want to trust and follow You as my Lord and Saviour. I declare that I am Yours, and You are mine, In Jesus name, AMEN.