

Acts Part 9 How To Die For Christ

Pastor John Carmichael

[Act 6:8-10 NASB95] 8 And Stephen, full of grace and power, was performing great wonders and signs among the people. 9 But some men from what was called the Synagogue of the Freedmen, [including] both Cyrenians and Alexandrians, and some from Cilicia and Asia, rose up and argued with Stephen. 10 But they were unable to cope with the wisdom and the Spirit with which he was speaking.

[Act 7:58-60 NASB95] 58 When they had driven him out of the city, they [began] stoning [him;] and the witnesses laid aside their robes at the feet of a young man named Saul. 59 They went on stoning Stephen as he called on [the Lord] and said, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit!" 60 Then falling on his knees, he cried out with a loud voice, "Lord, do not hold this sin against them!" Having said this, he fell asleep.

- **When we learn how to die for Christ, we learn how to live for Christ.**
- **Here is the story of the 2nd Christian martyr (Jesus being the 1st.)**
- **To summarize his story:**
 - Acts 6 – v8 full of grace and power, performing great wonders and signs; v10 his accusers could not cope with wisdom and the Spirit of Stephen; v15 face like the face of an angel.
 - Acts 7 – Stephen’s defense – v. 2-18 Abraham and covenant; v9-19 Joseph and forgiveness; v22-45 Moses God keeping promises even in disobedience; v46-50 David and Solomon finishing the temple so the people could meet with God; v51-53 Stephen rebukes the people.
 - Acts 7 – Stephen’s death – v54 they were full of rage; v55-56 Stephen was full of the Holy Spirit, looked up to heaven, saw Jesus STANDING at the right hand of God; v57-58 Stephen stoned; v59-60 Stephen prays, receive my spirit, do not hold this sin against them.
- **We, Christians, are called to die.**
 - [1Co 15:31 NASB95] 31 I affirm, brethren, by the boasting in you which I have in Christ Jesus our Lord, I die daily.
 - [Phl 1:21 NASB95] 21 For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain.
- **Note:**
 - **An average of 13 Christians killed every day. That’s nearly 400 Christians dying every month. Just because they follow Jesus.**
(<https://www.opendoorsusa.org/christian-persecution>) Although we are not talking about physical martyrdom today, it is really happening today.

Is there something we can learn about how Stephen dealt with martyrdom and how we can learn to “die daily.”

Here are seven lessons from Stephen’s death that we can apply to our Christian life.

- I. **To die, we need to stay full of the Holy Spirit.**
 - a. Acts 6:8,10; Acts 7:55
 - b. We will only be able fully die to ourselves and live for Christ by the power of the Holy Spirit.
 - c. Spirit empowered faith (i.e., Abraham.) Depend upon the power and wisdom of the Holy Spirit.
 - d. Spend time training your spirit (Bible, praying in tongues, worship.)
- II. **To die, we learn to help people.**

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- a. Acts 6:8
- b. [Phi 2:3-4 NASB95] 3 Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind regard one another as more important than yourselves; 4 do not [merely] look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others.
- c. Choose to live a life that helps others. Be practical. Be spiritual. Natural help. Supernatural help.
- d. Start with your family, then church, then others.

III. To die, we live a repented life.

- a. From the Moses defense. Acts 7:20-45.
- b. From Stephen's rebuke. Acts 7:51-53.
- c. [Luk 9:23 NASB95] 23 And He was saying to [them] all, "If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross daily and follow Me.
- d. [Rom 8:13 NASB95] 13 for if you are living according to the flesh, you must die; but if by the Spirit you are putting to death the deeds of the body, you will live.
- e. God has called us to kill the fleshly desires by the power of the Holy Spirit.

IV. To die, we speak the truth.

- a. Acts 7:2-53
- b. Christianity is advanced by convincing people not coercing people.
- c. Speak the truth of the Gospel though it will cost you. Christianity is not a popularity contest.

V. To die, we respond in love.

- a. Acts 6:10, 15
- b. Saul (The Apostle Paul) was watching. Acts 7:58 Maybe, Saul remembered how Stephen responded to the those who were stoning him.
- c. [Rom 12:14 NASB95] 14 Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse.

VI. To die, focus on eternity.

- a. Acts 7:55-56, 59
- b. [Rom 8:18 NASB95] 18 For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that is to be revealed to us.

VII. To die, we forgive.

- a. Acts 7:60
- b. From the Joseph defense. Acts 7:9-19
- c. We need to ask God to:
 - i. Heal us from the trauma (God might use others to help us too.)
 - ii. Help us to forgive. To release them into God's hands and bless them.

- **When you know how to die for Christ, you will know how to live for Christ.**