

Discussion Questions

INTRODUCTION

People who have made great sacrifices for a noble cause inspire and embolden us. Let's look at a follower from the early church who boldly made the ultimate sacrifice because of his faith in Jesus.

GETTING STARTED

1. What historical figure inspires you when you consider the sacrifices they made?
2. Who do you know personally whose self-sacrifice inspires you?

BIBLE IDEA

3. Willy said "*true followers are always called to lay down their lives for Christ!*"
 - See Luke 9:23-24. What do you think it means to lay down your life? What are the implications of taking up your cross daily?
 - Read Acts 6:1-15. What are your observations about Stephen from these scriptures? What are the 2 key attributes that describe Stephen? Do you think there is a connection between Stephen's willingness to lay his life down and being "full" of these 2 attributes? Why or why not?
4. In Acts 6:8-9, we see Stephen doing amazing things in the power of the Spirit and yet, in spite of the good he is doing—he faces opposition. Have you ever faced opposition when you are taking steps of faith and are trying to follow God's will? How did you deal with this opposition? Should opposition surprise us? Why or why not?
5. See Luke 12:11-12 and Acts 6:10. Have you experienced the Holy Spirit giving you the right words at just the right time when you didn't know what you were going to say? Describe.
6. Acts 4:13 and Acts 6:15 tells us that onlookers could observe Peter, John and Stephen's lives and tell that these men had been with Jesus. How does your time with Jesus and your willingness to lay down your life, impact how you reflect Christ to the world? What does it cost you? What do you have to say "no" to?
7. In Acts 7:51-58, we see that Stephen's uncompromising message cost him his life. *When* have you spoken the truth to someone and experienced rejection as a result? Read 2 Timothy 4:1-4. What is the result of being a people pleaser?
8. Read Acts 7:59-60. Why didn't Stephen view his killers as his enemies? How was he able to forgive? See Ephesians 6:12

NEXT STEPS

9. How were you challenged by the story and example of Stephen?
10. If you are struggling with compromise or double-mindedness, what is God asking you to surrender to be able to lay down your life for Christ?

The Mark of a True Follower

The Followers #4

Acts 6: 1-5, 8-9. In those days when the number of disciples was increasing, the Hellenistic Jews among them complained against the Hebraic Jews because their widows were being overlooked in the daily distribution of food. **2** So the Twelve gathered all the disciples together and said, "It would not be right for us to neglect the ministry of the word of God in order to wait on tables. **3** Brothers and sisters, choose seven men from among you who are known to be full of the Spirit and wisdom. We will turn this responsibility over to them **4** and will give our attention to prayer and the ministry of the word." **5** This proposal pleased the whole group. They chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit; **8** Now Stephen, a man full of God's grace and power, performed great wonders and signs among the people. **9** Opposition arose, however, from members of the Synagogue of the Freedmen (as it was called)—Jews of Cyrene and Alexandria as well as the provinces of Cilicia and Asia—who began to argue with Stephen.

Main Point: True followers are always called to _____ their lives for Christ!

Luke 9:23-24

A. True followers will eventually be _____!

Acts 6:9

B. True followers allow the _____ to _____ through them!

Acts 6:10; Luke 12:11-12

C. True followers become a _____ of Christ!

Acts 6:15; Acts 4:13

D. True followers are not _____!

Acts 7:51-53; 2 Timothy 4:1-4

E. True followers never see people as the _____!

Acts 7:59-60; Ephesians 6:12