



Grace Assembly Of God

CHAPTER-BY-CHAPTER BIBLE READING DEVOTIONAL

Scripture:	Acts 7	Title:	Sharing Our Faith With Conviction
Author	Sis Samantha Lim		
Summary of Chapter	In this chapter, Stephen was accused of blaspheming against God and speaking against the temple and the Law. Despite his defense, his listeners were infuriated and stoned him to death. There are several lessons we can learn from Stephen.		

Key Verse(s) How does it speak to me?

<p><i>59 As they stoned him, Stephen prayed, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." 60 He fell to his knees, shouting, "Lord, don't charge them with this sin!" And with that, he died.</i></p>	<p>Stephen knew the Word well. He must have spent considerable time in the Scriptures in order to so readily recite the events of Israel's biblical history. He had a solid theological understanding of how God moved in Israel's history, which was why he was able to speak cogently and with such conviction. Contrary to what he was being accused of (blasphemy), all Stephen wanted to do was point to Christ. Yet, his accusers refused to listen. They responded in fury, eventually even murdering him. In the face of the chaos, Acts 7 tells us that Stephen remained calm. He was "full of the Holy Spirit". He kept his gaze heavenward. Even while he was dying at the hands of his persecutors, he entrusted his life into God's hands. With his dying breath, Stephen even prayed for the very ones who were stoning him to death!</p> <p>A few years ago, I was reaching out to some friends who were not Christians. They liked having intellectual debates with me about Christianity. I often got frustrated with them because of the tense gridlocks we would get into. I was impatient for them to move past our numerous debates and to take a step of faith! Often, it was my lack of knowledge that contributed to a frustrating debate. I was not equipped well to defend the faith. From those experiences, I realized how much more I needed to study and equip myself to share my faith convincingly. Like Stephen who relied on the Holy Spirit who empowered him to have deep understanding of the Scriptures, and even to speak to his accusers with conviction, I too desire to share with power and conviction. What does it take for us to live and die for Christ like Stephen did? I believe we can when we fix our gaze heavenward, entrust our lives to the Lord, keep in step with the Spirit, and build ourselves up in the truth that is God's Word.</p>
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APPLICATION REFLECTIONS

Adult:	What do you think it would take for you to defend your faith in Jesus Christ, even to the point of death? Commit prayerfully to an action step today.
Youth:	Are you familiar with topics in apologetics? What topics can you begin to study and equip yourself more so that you can share your faith convincingly and readily with others?
Child:	Has anyone been mean to you recently? Say a short prayer to ask God to help you forgive and bless the person.

PRAYER

Praying Scripture:	Father, thank You for the Lord Jesus who is the way, the truth and the life. Grant us wisdom and understanding of Your Word through the Holy Spirit. Empower us and strengthen us so that we can stand firm in the face of opposition. Give us a bold faith that does not waver.
Thanksgiving Prayer:	I/We thank you for _____ (e.g. delicious food we ate, places we went, prayer that was answered, etc)
Intercessory Prayer:	I/We want to pray for _____ (e.g. healing of sickness, family members, work or study, leaders, nation, etc)
Salvation Prayer:	I/We pray for the salvation of my/our unsaved loved ones _____ (add one name per day). In Jesus' Name I/we pray. Amen.