

COMPANION GUIDE  
TO THE VIDEO

# Stephen's Test of Faith

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## *Stephen's Test of Faith Video Study Guide*

**A Christian Martyr is one who:** Chooses to suffer death rather than to deny Christ, or His work. . . Sacrifices something very important to further the Kingdom of God. . . Endures great suffering for Christian witness. [*American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language*]

A martyr is one who is loyal, faithful, and true to that which or to whom he is committed, even faithful unto death.

1. How much is a soul worth? How much inconvenience or discomfort am I willing to experience in order to bring others to know Christ?
2. What makes the shedding of the martyr's blood so powerful? Does the blood of Jesus continue to call out through the spilled blood of the martyrs? Read I Corinthians 3:16, I John 5:8, II Corinthians 6:16, Hebrews 11:4.
  1. In John 12:25-26 Jesus tells us that if we love our lives we will lose them, but those who hate their lives in this world will keep them unto eternal life. Is this not about counting the cost? What could it mean to "hate" our life in this world. . .Our family world? Our school world? Our work world?
  4. Revelation 6:9 says, "I saw under the altar the souls of those who had been slain for the word of God and for the testimony which they held." If God is keeping not only the souls of those who were slain at the altar, but also their testimonies, what great purposes in His Kingdom might they be serving?
  5. We in our lifetime may not be called upon to be a martyr in the truest sense of shedding physical blood. But we are all called to participate with them. Can we afford to be silent concerning those who are daily experiencing the fellowship of His suffering any more than we can be silent about Christ and the work that was done through the shedding of His blood? Are we wasting their testimony through our silence? Read Philippians 1:29; Philippians 3:10; I Peter 4:13.
  6. Have we been overlooking the precious gift of the martyrs that God has given His Church? Should we not be humbly thanking God for them every day and for the kingdom work they are fulfilling? Where would the Church be without them? Where would be we? Why does Hebrews 11:38 call them "worthy"?
  7. Many times Scripture speaks of Jesus being raised and now seated at the right hand of the Father. In Acts 7:55-56 Scripture tells us Stephen, the first Christian martyr, looked up and saw Jesus standing at the right hand of God. Could Jesus have been rising to honor and receive Stephen's spirit?
  8. One of the many throwing stones at Stephen was named Saul. Even though Saul was religious he was full of anger and hate. He wanted to kill Christians. He stopped killing Christians when he received Jesus. The way to defeat your enemy is to make him your

friend. Jesus can change peoples' hearts. How can we send the love of Jesus to people in other nations who hate him?

9. Stephen prayed for those who accused and stoned him (Acts 7:60). He asked God not to hold this sin against them. Was Saul's life saved for eternity because of that prayer? If Stephen had not trusted in God's keeping power, during his unjust execution, what kind of witness would he have been to Saul? Read I Peter 3:19-22.

10. Did the knowledge of the Scriptures make Stephen, the martyr, stronger and more courageous during his time of trial? Read Acts 6:8-8:1.

11. Does eternal life or living forever with God begin when you die or does living forever begin when Jesus comes into your heart? Were the Christians in this video giving up their lives or were they leaving the world to continue living with God? What was more important to them, their body or their soul? Why does the Bible verse in Matthew 10:28 say, ". . . and do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. But rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell"?

12. There are many promises in the New Testament of joy and an "abundant" life for the Christian. Christians in many nations today, like those in the video, lose everything they have when they accept Jesus. What then is their "abundant" or rich life? Such Christians are mentioned in 2 Corinthians 6. Also read Hebrews 10:34.

13. How did persecution affect the spread of the gospel? Read Acts 8:1-8

14. Was it easier for Christians to be persecuted and martyred during early Church history than it is today? Read 2 Corinthians 4:17.

15. Read verses 3-12 in Matthew 5, which talk about those who are (or will be) blessed with wonderful things. How many of those verses mention persecution? With what will those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake and for Christ's sake be blessed?

16. Revelation 12:11 says, "And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony; and they did not love their lives to the death." Read Revelation 12:7-12. Who were these martyrs able to overcome?

**The following questions may be more applicable for younger ages.**

17. Is it wrong to feel afraid when people harass or mistreat you? Can you share the love of God with your mouth and heart even when you feel afraid? The Bible names Jesus as the Prince of Peace. What people in the video had the peace of Jesus in their hearts even when their lives were in danger? Can you ask God to give you His peace?

18. Did you ever feel like throwing a rock at someone or want to hurt them? Did someone ever want to hurt you? God's love and forgiveness can help us in these times. In some countries, Christians are hurt or persecuted by bad people for doing good things. (Why were peo-

ple throwing rocks at Stephen in the Bible?) Read Acts 6-7.

19. William Tyndale died praying for the King of England, who authorized his execution. Jesus and Stephen died asking forgiveness for their persecutors. (Luke 23:34, Acts 7:60) Can you pray for someone whom you feel has hurt you in some way?

20. First John 4:16 says, "God is love," and verse 18 says, "Perfect love casts out fear." How could this verse help a boy like Stephen have more boldness? Find and memorize two more Bible verses that would help you or someone else declare their Christian faith boldly.

21. Luke 16:10 says, "He who is faithful in what is least is faithful also in much." Read about Stephen in the Bible (Acts 6:1-6). Do you think his faithfulness in serving the widows strengthened him for his later boldness? What is God calling you to do in your life now that seems like a "little task"?

22. Nehemiah stood firm when others made fun of him and he rebuilt Jerusalem's wall in a matter of days. Daniel purposed in his heart to live according to God's will for his life no matter what happened, and his story remains as an example to us today. Esther saved the Jews even when faced with possible death. Some people think the Bible is only a book of history. Why did God preserve these Bible stories for us today? How would these stories help the boy in the video, or help you?

23. William Tyndale, the first person to translate the Bible into English (from Latin) was inspired by Martin Luther. Luther finished translating the Bible into his language in 1521. Look in reference books and find three facts about the life of Martin Luther, including into what languages he translated the Bible. What are three things about William Tyndale you learned from the video?

24. Once William Tyndale lost all of his copies of Deuteronomy in a shipwreck and had to retranslate it. As a reward for his translation efforts, he was executed. Read the book of Acts to find the story of a disciple who suffered persecution, shipwreck, imprisonment, and was later executed. Who was this faithful disciple?

25. It is said that during the year and a half that William Tyndale was in prison for translating the Bible into English, the jailer and his household were converted as a result of his witness. Read Acts 16 to find a story in the Bible in which the jailer and his household became Christians. [Source of story: The New Foxe's Book of Martyrs, Bridge-Logos Publishers]

26. The boy in the video was strengthened by the stories of a "great cloud of witnesses" (Hebrews 12:1). Make a list of people in the body of Christ whose lives can strengthen and embolden you when you have the opportunity to speak about your faith. Include people in the Bible, people in your family or church, missionaries and others you have read or heard about.

27. The "faithful" of Hebrews 11 continue to witness to us today. What happened to them?

Read about heaven in Revelation 21. What kind of place must heaven be if everyone can forget the bad things that happened to them and be happy?

28. In the video the boy, Stephen, met a family of Christians who were in a room under a coliseum in Rome, Italy. Many of these Christians in the first years after Jesus walked on the earth gave their lives for Him and are having a wonderful time in Heaven. Do you know of any countries today where Christians are giving up their lives? Discuss (See bibliography for a free map and country guide.)

29. Why was it so important that young Stephen share his faith? Does it matter that a twelve-year-old stands true to the faith?

30. How was Stephen's life different after the dream?

31. How will you be different after viewing this film and understanding what has happened to Christians throughout the ages and even today?

*Photocopies of "Stephen's Test of Faith Study Guide" may be made for use in study groups.*

### **Bibliography – Resources available at The Voice of the Martyrs**

The Voice of the Martyrs Global prayer Map with country flags and information, Bartlesville, OK (1-800-747-0085) FREE

John Foxe, *The New Foxe's Book of Martyrs*, Bridge-Logos Publishers, New Brunswick, NJ, 1997. \$10.00

Rev. Richard Wurmbrand, *Tortured for Christ*, Living Sacrifice Book Company, Bartlesville, OK, 1998. \$6.00

Patrick Johnstone, *Operation World*, Zondervan Publishing House, 1993. \$10.00

Tom White, *Between Two Tigers*, Living Sacrifice Book Company, Bartlesville, OK, 1996. \$8.00

James & Marti Hefley, *By Their Blood*, Baker Books, Grand Rapids, MI, 1979. \$23.00

\* Please add \$3.00 for shipping.

### **For these materials or a free monthly newsletter contact:**

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