



# **Acts**

*Study Pack 07*

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## Acts Chapter 6

We saw a pretty dramatic form of church discipline, if you will, in the last chapter with Ananias and Sapphira, and we also saw the generosity of believers and them coming together, and we saw the trial that Peter and others were facing for the Sanhedrin. We saw the church growing, and that's what you see all through the book of Acts. It's just exploding with growth, and God is doing amazing things. People are living a life that is saying "Whatever it takes to serve with an \_\_\_\_\_..."

So with any organization, just like a church, growth brings a new set of challenges. I remember talking to one of our sister churches as they were getting ready to build their first building, and this was up in Waukesha, and they were a growing church, and they were doing great, and I was talking with some of the people that were going to build this building themselves. Building buildings is really hard. It's really difficult, and it's a lot of work, and it's a lot of hassle, but you want to do it because you want the ministry to grow.

You want the gospel to continue to grow, and I remember telling one of the assistant pastors at that church, I waited until the building project was almost done. I told him, "Listen, now that it's almost done, great job. Can't wait to see how God's going to use this building, and by the way, the building project was the easy part."

He looked at me like I was crazy.

I said, "Yeah, because once you start to fill this new building with people, you get lots of \_\_\_\_\_, and it's a wonderful thing."

They're good challenges. It's good exhaustion, but it's a whole new challenge that you're going to face, and so that's what we see in the book of Acts. Again, a reminder: it provides a \_\_\_\_\_ record of the church.

It's about the first \_\_\_\_\_ years of the new church's existence. That's about the time frame of what the book of Acts is looking at. So by chapter four, we saw that there were a number of converts had swelled to over 5,000 men, not including women and children. Now who knows what that number is.

This type of growth continues as the gospel goes out, and then eventually into the Gentile world, so chapter six is going to detail some of those challenges, and it provides also some critical \_\_\_\_\_ that we can use within the local church. It lays the groundwork for what I would call local church structure.

### Acts 6:1

*And in those days, when the number of the disciples was multiplied, there arose a murmuring of the Grecians against the Hebrews, because their widows were neglected in the daily ministration.*

Now, the Grecians were \_\_\_\_\_-speaking Jews or Hellenistic Jews, so they're \_\_\_\_\_ people. They're not Greeks, but they are Jewish people who spoke Greek.

That word 'ministration', if you dig into the Greek, it's actually kind of the word 'servant' or 'an official task'. Which also will look very similar to the word 'deacon', kind of an interesting thing.

They're saying, "Hey, our widows are not being taken care of within the church."

Something caused them to feel that way. I don't think it was anything on purpose. It doesn't look like there was any malice involved.

To be honest, what was happening here, and I've seen it happen within churches, there's way too much \_\_\_\_\_ to do, and not enough \_\_\_\_\_, not enough people organized in a way to do this. They were stretched thin.

This is a good thing in ministry when you're growing, but I want to just take a quick step aside here: moments like this come up in local churches where there are problems. There are challenges, and whenever you have a group of people gathering together, trying to, in a concerted effort, accomplish something for Christ you're going to have \_\_\_\_\_.

You're going to have problems, but it's moments like these where there are opportunities for the leaders in the church to not just fix the problem or solve the problem or make it go away, but to use this \_\_\_\_\_ for the church to \_\_\_\_\_. Problems within the church in and of themselves are not just problems. You have to see it for more than that.

One is this. Problems are the best \_\_\_\_\_ into the real \_\_\_\_\_ of a church. When things arise, there's usually a circumstance or a symptom of what maybe is kind of going on, and it's an opportunity to really see what is the health of our church. How is the functioning of our church really going? It's a good opportunity.

Another opportunity that problems present is not necessarily an opportunity, but they don't always mean that there is \_\_\_\_\_ involved. Sometimes there is and sometimes there isn't. You don't want to approach every problem with the idea that it's just sin and we're going to crush it and it is inconvenience.

We have to be careful.

Problems cannot be \_\_\_\_\_. They won't go away. And that goes with any area of life or business. If you just ignore problems, it's only going to get \_\_\_\_\_.

Here's the main thing I want you to know: How you handle problems, especially within a church, how you handle problems will directly \_\_\_\_\_ the further \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ of the church.

### **Acts 6:2**

*<sup>2</sup> Then the twelve called the multitude of the disciples unto them, and said, It is not reason that we should leave the word of God, and serve tables.*

They've pulled themselves aside, they're talking amongst the leaders, and they're recognizing that it's a \_\_\_\_\_ need that needs to be taken care of. But they're also saying, "Wait a minute, it's not right for us who are supposed to be laboring in the Word of God—"

And remember, when we think of laboring in the Word of God, we think of sitting down at our laptop with our Bible and all of our commentaries and we're studying the Word of God, so then go teach it.

They don't have the written Word of God other than the \_\_\_\_\_. So they're laboring in the Word of God and how we're going to teach this and how is this church going to work and what are these doctrines. This is a very, very different thing.

But even if they did have laptops and they did have commentaries and they did have the internet, there are still leaders within the church that cannot be tied down by certain projects or activities or responsibilities because it will \_\_\_\_\_ them \_\_\_\_\_ from what they're supposed to be doing. Super important principle here.

And by the way, the way they're handling this, Dr. Scudder used to always say this within church's leadership styles. He said, "There are peace \_\_\_\_\_ and there are peace \_\_\_\_\_."

Peace keepers take the problem, lift up the rug, shove it under, put the rug down and hope it goes away. Peace makers that are leaders that say, "Let's stop what we're doing, let's talk about what's going on, let's figure it out and let us solve it." And that's what these guys did.

Now, the important role of the pastor or the important role of these key leaders was \_\_\_\_\_. It needed to be protected and they didn't let this need override what they knew their responsibility was.

There's never a shortage of church members who will try and impose their priorities on the pastor. It never ends. There's an endless line of people within the church that think that the pastor should do this and should do that and please help with this and please help with that and I need your time on this and I need your time on that.

And the pastor is a servant, but as a church grows or in this case, exponentially grows, you cannot override what the main role of the pastor is by putting stuff on him that shouldn't be there. So this is well established here. This is something that we draw from the book of Acts to use in our local churches today. Very important principle.

And by the way, what did we say in the last one? We were talking about Ananias and Sapphira. The devil always attacks from within.

Sometimes the attack of the devil can be something like this. Something very nominal, something very \_\_\_\_\_. It's just, "Hey, you know what? If I can distract the pastor, if I can get the pastor from doing what he should be doing..." he's going to get victory. He's going to gain a foothold.

And he knows that if he can neutralize the pastor, if the devil can neutralize the leaders, the church is going to \_\_\_\_\_. It's not going to be effective.

So the apostles wisely recognized the need to handle this issue without jeopardizing the main part of the ministry. However, had they just ignored it, had they just said, "Hey, look: Valid need; I'm too busy. Figure it out." That wouldn't have worked either. They would soon have no ministry at all.

### **Acts 6:3**

<sup>3</sup> *Wherefore, brethren, look ye out among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business.*

This is the solution.

And look at the requirement of this. The solution to the problem at hand is actually revealed when you look at the qualifications that are required. Remember the filling? What is the filling due to? Due to the \_\_\_\_\_.

The filling is not due to the \_\_\_\_\_ of the Holy Spirit. That's when you get saved.

You will never, ever, even though you're saved, you will never, ever be filled with the Holy Spirit, living a life that is controlled by the Holy Spirit, unless you determine to \_\_\_\_\_ yourselves to yielding to the Holy Spirit. You see the qualification of these seven men that they just chose?

Pretty important to appoint over this business. Again, we're going to talk about that more a little bit later.

But these are essentially, even though they're not called this right here, the first \_\_\_\_\_ of the church. And Paul would later establish what those qualifications for deacons would have to be. But I just, I can't pass this off.

I want you to notice they didn't just grab anyone. And remember, what was the task? What was the task? What was the need? Help the widows.

The apostles were actually serving the tables. I don't know exactly what that meant, if that was a generic term for feeding someone, providing a meal for them. I don't know. We learn later on, though, that their responsibilities probably were even handling the funds.

People were bringing in money. They're selling their property. They're selling their possessions to help those in need.

Well, how does that distribution of those funds go to help the people in need? Someone's got to buy the food, or someone's got to cook the food, or someone's got to deliver the food, someone's got to deliver the money. Who's doing these things? That's what these guys are doing. But this is such a great example of finding a \_\_\_\_\_ to a church issue.

You see the model? And that's something that we can use. This is not something that's just a part of the transitional period of time in the church. This is something we can use in our churches.

And so had the apostles not been doing their job in \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_, had they not been doing what they said, "Hey, we can't leave the study of God's Word to go serve tables." had they not been doing that up to this point, you wouldn't have been able to find seven godly men filled with the Holy Spirit.

Because the leaders wouldn't have been leading. The teachers wouldn't have been teaching. They wouldn't have been discipling.

They wouldn't have been educating these people and teaching them in the ways of God. But we will give ourselves continually to prayer and to the ministry of the Word.

#### **Acts 6:4**

*<sup>4</sup> But we will give ourselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the word.*

So they said, we're not going to set aside this. We're going to choose these men. We're going to stay to what God has called us to do in the ministry of the Word.

#### **Acts 6:5**

*<sup>5</sup> And the saying pleased the whole multitude: and they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Ghost, and Philip, and Prochorus, and Nicanor, and Timon, and Parmenas, and Nicolas a proselyte of Antioch:*

A proselyte is just one that \_\_\_\_\_ to Judaism. So it was a Gentile that converted to Judaism.

**Acts 6:6**

*<sup>6</sup> Whom they set before the apostles: and when they had prayed, they laid their hands on them.*

And based on the names of looking through this, basically they chose \_\_\_\_\_ people.

Obviously there was one that was a proselyte, who was a converted Gentile. But all of these are what would be considered Hellenistic Jews. So they were of the same people who were saying, "Hey, our widows aren't being taken care of, these Grecians are not being taken care of."

They used, and it doesn't say that they specifically did that on purpose. The qualification wasn't, "Well, are you a Hellenistic Jew? Are you a Grecian young man?" No, it was, "Are you godly?" And so that's who they choose, and that's who they commission to do this work.

And by the way, they lay hands on them. There's no \_\_\_\_\_ in laying on of hands. It's a picture, it's a symbol of one passing to another. So these leaders are saying, "My support, my desire for you to carry out this mission is going from me to you."

When we ordain a young minister to go and preach, we lay hands on them. Is there some kind of power in me laying hands on a person being ordained? Not at all. It is a \_\_\_\_\_ of the mission that I carry; I am \_\_\_\_\_ on for him to carry as well.

What was the result? Oh, it's wonderful.

**Acts 6:7**

*<sup>7</sup> And the word of God increased; and the number of the disciples multiplied in Jerusalem greatly; and a great company of the priests were obedient to the faith.*

The \_\_\_\_\_ were getting saved. And it says a great number of them were getting saved. See, when you make a godly decision, a biblical approach to solving a problem within a church, it results in \_\_\_\_\_.

It results in God honoring that decision. And sometimes when you make the right decision, the godly decision, a biblical decision, to handle a problem in a church, it actually causes things to be more \_\_\_\_\_.

It's not a guarantee that, you know, more people are going to get saved every time, but it will mean that God will be honored and that the right thing will be done. That's what is important.

And by the way, it's estimated that the number of priests serving within the temple system at that time could have been as many as \_\_\_\_\_ people. When it says that a great company of priests were obedient to the faith, there were a lot of priests. There were a lot of people that came to Christ. Praise God for those who are responding to the gospel.

So they took care of their people in need, but it was done in a way that was so important.

And I want you to understand this process and here's where I want to dig into it a little bit: How did Jesus \_\_\_\_\_ the apostles? He went about caring for people, loving people, and sharing the

gospel. He set the \_\_\_\_\_. He showed them how to do it. That model for training has continued.

I want you to understand that this model is a \_\_\_\_\_ model of training. As a matter of fact, here at Dayspring. Dayspring is a local church ministry, meaning the training is coming from within the local church.

Why does that matter? Could you go to any Bible college and learn the book of Acts? If they have good solid teaching, of course you can, but there is a component to local church Bible college training. What is that? There are people that are instructing you both in class and in a \_\_\_\_\_ within a local church.

The local church is the ordained vehicle of God's ministry on planet earth. You know that. We see that unfolding in front of us in Acts.

So what is that model? Well, Jesus exemplified it.

D.L. Moody said this: "Better to put 10 men to work than to try to do the work of 10 men."

So we know, "Why not get more people involved in this?" It just makes sense.

But what I want you to understand is this is much more than just a mathematical solution or an exercise in efficient management. It's much, much more than that. There is a need that a \_\_\_\_\_ couldn't meet, so we get \_\_\_\_\_ to help meet the need.

That's the mathematical part. Makes sense? It's wise? Great. But the biblical part of this, the biblical model of training of part of this, is who they chose and what were the \_\_\_\_\_.

Let's go back a second and think. What was the job? What was the need at hand? Serving widows. It just almost seems like: "Was it that critical to get people with these kind of qualifications? Why did they do that? Why did they do it that way? Why was it so important?"

All right, I'm going to give you several key reasons for this principle.

Number one: Godly people are the best \_\_\_\_\_ and bring much more than food to the table. They minister to people, and because of their integrity, they don't create \_\_\_\_\_.

Why would you choose godly people to serve widows food or to take care of these types of ministry? Why wouldn't you just say, "Just grab somebody? Who cares?" And sometimes, by the way, especially in smaller churches, you have no choice. You just got to grab somebody.

Get somebody to sing something at some time and call it good? It's not to say that this is a letter of the law thing. This is, "How do you train up the next generation? How do you train up the next pastors? How do you train up the next young ladies to do some of these things?"

The second thing: Spirit-filled servants work in \_\_\_\_\_ with their leaders because it's not about \_\_\_\_\_. It's about the cause.

That's why you choose godly people to do these tasks, because they will look at it and say, "It's not about me. It's about what we're trying to do for Christ." What does this accomplish? This extends the \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ of the leaders.

Is it about the leaders? No, it's not any more about the \_\_\_\_\_ than it is about the \_\_\_\_\_. It's not anything more about the assistants than it is about the assistant to the assistant. It's about Christ.

It's about His work. So, this extends the influence of the leader and it does not subvert or distract from the overall direction. There is nothing worse than giving a young person responsibility within the whole ministry and that young person decides, "Man, I'm going to make this something that I want to make it and now it becomes this side distraction to the main focus." That's why you pick godly people to even do mundane tasks.

So, the third thing, the \_\_\_\_\_ and the ministry of the leaders gains \_\_\_\_\_ when those who serve under them carry the same banner with sincerity and joy and willingness.

Which by the way, is it their teaching? No, it's the Word of God, but their teaching of the Word of God gains credibility when those under it carry the same banner with the same joy and the same sincerity and the same willingness.

Living by faith creates \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ in ministry is huge. I cannot say that more emphatically. More people living by faith creates that momentum.

The fourth thing: God uses every \_\_\_\_\_ and every \_\_\_\_\_, no matter what level, to prepare His next set of leaders. Serve \_\_\_\_\_ and let God \_\_\_\_\_.

Now, the last thing I want to give you is more of a secondary training that happens through the \_\_\_\_\_ of those in \_\_\_\_\_.

So let's go back in our minds and think about these seven guys that were chosen to do this. While they're in training, there's a secondary training that's happening. They're \_\_\_\_\_ to those who are not yet serving in an official capacity, it serves as an encouragement and a real life picture of what a heart of ministry looks like.

Why does this matter? Because everyone expects Pastor Paul to live a certain way. Everybody that comes into a church, if they see a pastor before your name, they expect you to do all the right things and live by faith. That's expected.

But if the seven guys that Pastor Paul or some other leader or Pastor Scudder says, "We're going to assign these seven guys to this particular task, and the people that are maybe a little bit newer saved or a little bit newer in Christ, they see those seven guys giving it all they got, now you've got something happening in your church.

But it never even will start, that \_\_\_\_\_ will never even start, that secondary training will never even start if those seven guys don't \_\_\_\_\_ at some point. I am going to serve at the pleasure of whatever the leaders are asking me to do.

Do you see the reason why those seven guys had to be godly? And this is the absolute essence of what local church training should be. This is something that honestly, you don't find in a lot of churches today.

And it's something that our founder, Dr. Scudder, saw in the scripture, saw the reason to do that, something he would tell us young people all the time as we were coming through the years and working on staff, he would tell us this. He would say, "Paul, \_\_\_\_\_ yourself out of your \_\_\_\_\_."

Because there will always be something else more that you need to do— that something else needs to be done. And if someone comes up behind you and you can train them to do what you're doing, you'll get something else that needs to be done. You train that someone, it just keeps expanding.

But that's not a model of Dr. Scudder. That's not a model of Quentin Road. It's modeled here; it's done here at Dayspring. It's a model of the \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_. It's a model of what we're supposed to be doing.

Because book knowledge is important. You understanding these truths of God's word and being able to pass tests, that's important. But can I tell you something? If you can't live a life that is filled with the spirit and have a servant's attitude to just say "Whatever is needed to be done." You will never be a good leader.

You'll never be a good pastor or pastor's wife or ministry worker. You'll be whatever. The ceiling will be low. Why? Because this is where the training starts.

Are you filled with the Spirit? In other words, are you putting God above everything else, which means "\_\_\_\_\_ needs to be \_\_\_\_\_." That's the men they chose for this job. It's just, it's an amazing, amazing picture.

So can I say to you today, young men, young women, be \_\_\_\_\_ and just say God, "Whatever you want, I'm there to do." And then you let God go take it from there.

### **Acts 6:8**

<sup>8</sup> *And Stephen, full of faith and power, did great wonders and miracles among the people.*

I thought this was the guy that was chosen to deliver the food or serve food or take care of the widows. Well, what happened? This is the \_\_\_\_\_ process.

And by the way, be careful. Don't sign up to volunteer or serve to help the widows with the idea that, "Well, yeah, this is my starting point, but this is where I'm going to be. I'm going to be doing wonders and miracles, so I just got to start here and I'm going to get there."

It does not work that way. I promise you. When Stephen said, "I'm willing." and they chose him to do the widows, you have to approach that with the idea is, "I will serve widows the rest of my life if that's what's needed."

It doesn't matter. That \_\_\_\_\_ can't \_\_\_\_\_. It's not a jump-off point. It's not a starting point. It's not a springboard for my career in Christ. There's no such thing. We serve at the pleasure of the Master. He is our Director. He is our Career. He is our Life.

Whatever He chooses to do with me in my life or how I can serve Him, that's \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_. And that's why you will see at Quentin Road— and I think many other godly churches that teach a servant's heart— people serve. People get involved.

It doesn't matter what their education is. It doesn't matter what their background is. It doesn't matter what their bank account amount is. Serve, clean, wash things, vacuum, set up chairs, serve food, teach, whatever's needed. Why? Because it's all about the \_\_\_\_\_ that we're called to do to reach the world for Christ.

And by the way, Stephen is not an \_\_\_\_\_. He's just a faithful young man in the church, verse nine.

By the way, you're going to see this pattern. Every time someone does something amazing for God and people respond to the gospel, it's going to stir up a \_\_\_\_\_.

### **Acts 6:9**

<sup>9</sup> *Then there arose certain of the synagogue, which is called the synagogue of the Libertines, and Cyrenians, and Alexandrians, and of them of Cilicia and of Asia, disputing with Stephen.*

Now, I've got a picture of a synagogue.

This particular one is of that right timeframe, but this particular one is in Italy. But I wanted you to just kind of see the structure. And those of you that have been to Israel, you probably saw the synagogue that was by Caesarea, by the Sea of Galilee there.

That's a really well-maintained, or all the stones and stuff. You really get a good feel of what that synagogue looked like. So these are all over Jerusalem and beyond, all over the place, wherever the Jews were.

The Libertines, which actually that word means '\_\_\_\_\_ men'; they would have most likely been the Roman Jews who were children of Jewish slaves. So they were set free, and their parents would have been slaves to the Romans, most likely.

### **Acts 6:10**

<sup>10</sup> *And they were not able to resist the wisdom and the spirit by which he spake.*

Now let me just go back for one second, because we do this, especially in the world we live in today.

We associate success or intelligence with: "Where did you go to school? How smart are you?"

If you were to just read this verse and not have read the previous verses, in our terminology, it would have been like, "Oh, he must have gone, Ivy League."

I mean, nobody could answer this guy. Nobody could debate with this guy. We associate things that are not on a \_\_\_\_\_ realm.

And we have to be very careful with that, because I'm not saying that school isn't important. I'm not saying that the education isn't important. And I'm also not saying that you don't respect somebody who has a high education. I'm not suggesting that.

What where we go wrong is: we attach \_\_\_\_\_ to those things that doesn't \_\_\_\_\_. So in this case, they literally cannot have any form of advancement in this discussion with Stephen. And yet when we go back and we look at his training, what was it? \_\_\_\_\_ in a local church, willing to be \_\_\_\_\_ with the Holy Spirit, and just \_\_\_\_\_ to God.

I'm just telling you something. God can do amazing things in your life if you just let Him— if you're just faithful. Be in His word? Absolutely.

Know His word? Absolutely. Study it, love it, know it, live by it, die by it. But be careful not to get caught up in, is this particular thing accredited? Or does this particular thing have this particular academia and all these kinds of things?

Listen, God is not limited by someone's \_\_\_\_\_ on their wall. The moment you start to think that a piece of paper on the wall gives you some kind of credibility or power within the work of Christ, you will fall flat on your face.

Because you go back and you look at how this man was used. He didn't pick some perfect career. He didn't pick some perfect class. He didn't pick some perfect training module.

What did he do? \_\_\_\_\_ to the Lord, \_\_\_\_\_ with his spirit, which means he's yielding to the Spirit, and God does this great thing, That'll be my last statement on that training, but it's a big part of the culture that we live in today where we put way too much value on some of these things that just don't matter.

And especially when we're talking about ministry, especially when we're talking about doing the work of the Lord, these things just don't, they don't compute,

#### **Acts 6:11**

*<sup>11</sup> Then they suborned men, which said, We have heard him speak blasphemous words against Moses, and against God.*

So it's like: “Hey, how much will we have to pay you guys to get involved in this? We need help.”

They go hire some liars. Some witnesses to say, “We've heard these guys blaspheme against God.”

#### **Acts 6:12–13**

*<sup>12</sup> And they stirred up the people, and the elders, and the scribes, and came upon him, and caught him, and brought him to the council, <sup>13</sup> And set up false witnesses, which said, This man ceaseth not to speak blasphemous words against this holy place, and the law:*

These accusers were not \_\_\_\_\_. They heard the truth multiple times. They were not just randomly making things up. They knew exactly what was being said. These are \_\_\_\_\_ of the gospel. These are enemies of the cause of Christ. And they were determined to shut it down by their lies.

Now remember, the gospel message directly \_\_\_\_\_ the foundational beliefs of the religious establishment. They did not believe in resurrection, in miracles, in the things that Stephen was doing. For them to be wrong, for the established system to be wrong would mean a complete loss of control and influence in that city and in that place and amongst those people. So they resort to recruiting false witnesses to lie for them.

#### **Acts 6:14**

*<sup>14</sup> For we have heard him say, that this Jesus of Nazareth shall destroy this place, and shall change the customs which Moses delivered us.*

Now remember, they're in the Temple or somewhere in Jerusalem.

The people that they're talking with are from all these different synagogues that are around Jerusalem and maybe some from outside. So they're saying, "Well, we heard him say that Jesus of Nazareth is going to destroy this place."

Now, what did Jesus say? Well, He was speaking about His \_\_\_\_\_, not the physical Temple.

Although the Temple did get destroyed in 70 AD, that was coming. What they're referring to was that Stephen did say something about Jesus referring to Himself being destroyed for \_\_\_\_\_: The Lamb of God. But they also say that Stephen claimed that 'He shall change the customs which Moses delivered unto us'.

Stephen's brought before the Sanhedrin and here are the charges: \_\_\_\_\_ words against Moses and God, that's what they claim. Second, he said words against the Holy Place, the Temple, and also claiming that Jesus would destroy the \_\_\_\_\_ Temple. Their claims, of course, were \_\_\_\_\_, but were there some things or parts or pieces of it that had truth? Yes.

Why? Because Stephen is saying the Law of Moses, the sacrificial system in the Temple, all these things, that is being done away with.

Stephen's accusers sought to terrify this young man, to intimidate him with their threats. And I want you to see in verse 15, what is his demeanor? What is his reaction? This is, again, just these special moments that we see in Acts that you just don't see anywhere else.

### **Acts 6:15**

*<sup>15</sup> And all that sat in the council, looking stedfastly on him, saw his face as it had been the face of an angel.*

What's happening here? Clearly, the \_\_\_\_\_ of God to these people who are accusing him of making these false accusations...

I don't know exactly what that looked like, and I don't know exactly how to define that. But if you're in that room and you're hearing these truths, and some of them even knew that what he was saying, they were totally making up these lies, and then they see this guy's face turn to the face of an angel and you still don't believe? Man.

So, what was the face of the angel like? I don't know, but I do know this: A servant of God that is willing to serve Him and be filled with the Holy Spirit can be confident as a messenger because of the \_\_\_\_\_ sent the message.

When you give the message of God, your confidence is not in you as the \_\_\_\_\_; your confidence is in the \_\_\_\_\_ and the One Who gave you the message to deliver.

I know that also Stephen would know that he was secure in Christ. He was \_\_\_\_\_ by the lies and the insults. He doesn't have to answer or debate those things, and he does go into it later, but he doesn't have to worry, "Oh my goodness, how could you say that about me?" Because he's secure in Christ.

He's completely \_\_\_\_\_ to the will of God. That, for sure, would be what a messenger of God or an angel would be.

His face would not have been panicked. It would have been at \_\_\_\_\_. Why? Because he knows that nothing can happen that will surprise God. Nothing. What a sight this must have been.

God supernaturally knows. God supernaturally shows His \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ on Stephen before these council members, and they still ignore the truth.

What's amazing to me is that, and we see this all around us, and I think we're going to see it more and more as the world grows more and more wicked, especially in the United States. We're going to see what the Bible talks about where evil is called good, and good is called evil.

Because the wickedness of men's heart, what does the Bible say? Men love darkness rather than light. That is the sinful nature of man. And so, when we look back at this and we see he just preached these powerful truths, he just performed these amazing miracles, his face now is the face of an angel... And most of you know the story of how this ends.

We're going to get into that in chapter seven. We're going to see Stephen's defense. We're also going to see him \_\_\_\_\_. We're going to see him killed. The face of an angel. How brazen, how closed, how stubborn, how stiff-necked you have to be to reject God's working in that way.

And we see that around us. But it does not stop us— should not slow us down. We know that those kind of people are out there, but there are also people that want truth, that are searching for truth, that are open to truth.

So, in chapter seven that we're going to go to next, we're going to see Stephen's defense. It's an amazing message, a sermon that he gives. And unfortunately, this young faithful man preached \_\_\_\_\_.

That was his only message. But boy, it was a message. We'll look at that next.

So, young men and women, I want to say this one more time. Give your lives to the Lord. Give your lives to the Lord.

Churches are going to have needs. Churches are going to have staffing needs, or volunteer needs, and things like that. And it is an amazing, amazing thing that you will experience if you will just say, "God, here's my life. Whatever You want, it's up to You."

And you will see Him work. Again, I want to caution you, don't do that with, "Yeah, and I have this whole agenda, Lord, lined up. So, now that I do this step one, and I get that checked off, this is happening."

No, you throw all that out the window. Even if you've got dreams and ideas, there's nothing wrong with that. When you say, "Lord, all those dreams and ideas and plans and possibilities, they're in Your hands. And you do what you want, and you lead."

Let Him do that.

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