



**Community Bible Experience: New Testament**  
**A Fearless Confrontationist: Stephen (Acts 6:1 – 8:3)**  
 By Pastor David Hillis, 29 January 2017

**BIG IDEA: Conflicts are inevitable, and you can't change what you can't confront in love.**

In many ways, Stephen is a great example of a Godly person whose life we might seek to model ours after. He was respected for his strong faith, his reliability and his commitment to serving others. He was a man on a close walk with God, whom God used in miraculous ways. Stephen was smart and had a way with words, so he could debate well and convince others of things; he was courageous, willing to share his faith boldly rather than pulling back in fear in order to be "accepted."

**Confronting In A Biblical Way**

**1. We check and rid ourselves of pride and impatience.**

(Psalm 139:23-24; Matthew 7:1-5; Philippians 2:3-4; 2 Timothy 2:23-25)  
 Philippians warns us to make sure we are not acting out of selfish or prideful motives. We must check our hearts and ask the hard questions of ourselves before we ask the hard questions of others, but we are not just looking for pride in our hearts, we are also looking for impatience.

**2. We are to be direct, yet gentle, in confrontation.**

(Proverbs 15:1; Galatians 6:1; 2 Timothy 2:24-26)  
 Proverbs and Galatians remind us that gentleness is what moves people forward, while harsh words stir up anger. As we confront others, we should carry their burdens with them, get in their shoes and walk it with them.

**3. In the heat of the moment, we must carefully listen and carefully choose our words.** (James 1:19; Proverbs 18:13, 17)

James 1:19 should be on our minds every time we are confronting someone or being confronted – "...be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry."

**4. We must be forgiving and gracious, to others and to ourselves.**

(Ephesians 4:32; Luke 17:3-4; Matthew 6:14-15; James 5:16)  
 Confrontation isn't just about pointing out what was wrong, but helping walk back together to what is right. It's about forgiveness and restoration, and it's in those moments of confrontation that our character really shines through.

**NEXT STEP:**

*Who do you need to confront today in love? Who do you need to go back to, who you confronted inappropriately in the past?*

**FOR MY PERSONAL TIME WITH GOD THIS WEEK:**

1. Reread the account of Stephen's life, Acts 6-7. In what ways does your life and experience match his? What can you take away and learn from his experience?
2. Read your third week's readings as part of the Community Bible Experience. As you read, find yourself in the story — how your life and experiences match what you are reading.
3. As you do your readings, consider these 5 questions (which will be the 5 questions everyone shares in their book clubs next week):
  1. What's something you noticed for the first time?
  2. What questions did you have?
  3. Was there anything that bothered you?
  4. What did you learn about loving God?
  5. What did you learn about loving others?