

10.16 Pants Up

the big idea: Stephen's Martyrdom



After watching a documentary about millennial youth, Jared refused to believe the projected odds against him and his peers. He believed that youth born in the late '90s would be as successful as any generation before them.

Jared approached Ms. Jenkins, his social studies teacher, to let her know he didn't like the video.

"What are you going to do about it?" she challenged him.

While Jared watched quite a few of his male classmates file out of the classroom with their pants so low he could see their underwear, he had an idea.

"I'm going to change things," he responded.

Jared sent an email to Principal Adams about the video. He stated that he wanted to make a difference. He asked for permission to start an anti-sagging campaign he wanted to call "Pants Up." The principal gave his full support and asked Jared to speak at the next morning assembly.

That day, Jared took a deep breath before he started his speech. "They think they have us figured out. They say we're spoiled, entitled, and don't know how to conduct ourselves professionally. They say we're not prepared for the future. And, according to them, the only good things about us are that we're tech-savvy, resourceful, and have the ability to multi-task. While they need us, they're leery to hire us. I'm hoping we can change this. And, I figure one way to do this is to change the way we dress. I hope you'll help me show the world that we are employable, marketable, and ready to do more than what's already been done. We'll do this by participating in an educational campaign. We will meet every day before or after school, and create study labs to get a school-wide average 3.5 G.P.A."

Instead of cheers, he heard, the auditorium fill with laughter. Some people started throwing things at the podium. Jared was so disappointed.

from your Bible

Acts 7:51–8:1a, NIV—“You stiff-necked people! Your hearts and ears are still uncircumcised. You are just like your ancestors: You always resist the Holy Spirit! ⁵² Was there ever a prophet your ancestors did not persecute? They even killed those who predicted the coming of the Righteous One. And now you have betrayed and murdered him— ⁵³ you who have received the law that was given through angels but have not obeyed it.” ⁵⁴ When the members of the Sanhedrin heard this, they were furious and gnashed their teeth at him. ⁵⁵ But Stephen, full of the

Holy Spirit, looked up to heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God. ⁵⁶ “Look,” he said, “I see heaven open and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God.” ⁵⁷ At this they covered their ears and, yelling at the top of their voices, they all rushed at him, ⁵⁸ dragged him out of the city and began to stone him. Meanwhile, the witnesses laid their coats at the feet of a young man named Saul. ⁵⁹ **While they were stoning him, Stephen prayed, “Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.”** ⁶⁰ Then he fell on his knees and cried out, “Lord, do not hold this sin against them.” When he had said this, he fell asleep.

Acts 8:1a And Saul approved of their killing him.

Scripture discussion

While Stephen was full of the Holy Spirit, those who opposed him were full of hatred. They refused to hear Stephen’s witness and his call to repentance. Instead of accepting the message, they chose to get rid of the messenger.

They considered Stephen’s word blasphemous and that was punishable by stoning. Ironically, as they prepared to kill him, Stephen saw the very thing he’d been preaching—Jesus at the right hand of God. Unfortunately, the eyes and ears of the others were too closed to see and hear. Like Jared, Stephen hoped for more from his audience.

make it real



check it

1. Why didn’t Jared like the video his teacher showed?
2. How did he respond?
3. Who supported Jared’s campaign?
4. How did Jared’s peers receive his idea? Why do you think they responded that way?



think it

1. How had the people received the Law? (Acts 7:53)?
2. Who did Stephen see when he looked up? (v. 55)
3. What did the crowd do to Stephen? (Vv. 57–58)
4. Who approved Stephen’s death? (Acts 8:1a)



do it

Think of ways that you can take a stand for Christ in your school or community. Would you be willing to face persecution and ridicule for proclaiming the Gospel? Can you create or join a Christian club on your campus or in your neighborhood?



keep it

“While they were stoning him, Stephen prayed, ‘Lord Jesus, receive my spirit’” (Acts 7:59, NIV).

10.23 Watch Out!

the big idea: Simon Wants to Buy Power



Kevin waited until the last minute to make his request. His mother had fulfilled the others with no less than a knock-down fight. He convinced her to buy an expensive name-brand hoodie that none of his peers had, update his phone to a newer model, and give him money for a \$100 pair of jeans. This time, he wanted an expensive watch. He knew her first answer would be no. It always was.

"No, Kev. I'm not taking you to the mall. You can't fool me again, son."

"But Mom, I just want us to go look around."

"The last time we looked around, I ended up spending \$100!"

When his mom walked away, Kevin tried to think of a different approach. He *had* to have this watch. It would set his swag to a new level. He handed his mother a photo.

"Okay Mom, the truth is, I want this watch. With this baby, everybody will know my name."

"Here I was thinking you had good taste. Now you're telling me I was purchasing your way to the top of the school's popularity list?"

"You don't understand. I'm a freshman. I get no respect... until I walk down the halls wearing stuff nobody else has. I hear the girls talking about me, and the guys nod in approval. It feels good."

Kevin's mother smiled and told him similar stories about her own high school rise and fall.

"So you see, son, if your name is purchasable then it's refundable. The same people who put you on the top are the same ones who'll drag you to the bottom. Think about it."

from your Bible

Acts 8:9–24, NIV—Now for some time a man named Simon had practiced sorcery in the city and amazed all the people of Samaria. He boasted that he was someone great,¹⁰ and all the people, both high and low, gave him their attention and exclaimed, "This man is rightly called the Great Power of God."¹¹ They followed him because he

had amazed them for a long time with his sorcery.¹² But when they believed Philip as he proclaimed the good news of the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women.¹³ Simon himself believed and was baptized. And he followed Philip everywhere, astonished by the great signs and miracles he saw.¹⁴ When the apostles in Jerusalem heard that Samaria had accepted the word of God, they sent Peter and

John to Samaria.¹⁵ When they arrived, they prayed for the new believers there that they might receive the Holy Spirit,¹⁶ because the Holy Spirit had not yet come on any of them; they had simply been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.¹⁷ Then Peter and John placed their hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit.¹⁸ **When Simon saw that the Spirit was given at the laying on of the apostles' hands, he offered them money**¹⁹ and said, "Give me also this ability so that everyone on whom I lay my hands may receive the Holy Spirit."²⁰ Peter answered:

"May your money perish with you, because you thought you could buy the gift of God with money!²¹ You have no part or share in this ministry, because your heart is not right before God.²² Repent of this wickedness and pray to the Lord in the hope that he may forgive you for having such a thought in your heart.²³ For I see that you are full of bitterness and captive to sin."²⁴ Then Simon answered, "Pray to the Lord for me so that nothing you have said may happen to me."

Scripture discussion

Today's passage illustrates mankind's quest for power and fame. Simon, a newly converted sorcerer, witnessed the power of the Holy Spirit when it fell on the Samaritans. This must have reminded him of his past and the same desire arose within him: the desire to be known as a powerful sorcerer. When Simon tried to buy the

power of the Holy Spirit, Peter laid out the fatal consequences for those who think the Spirit can be bought or sold. When Philip showed up preaching the Gospel, the people began to believe and were baptized. Simon believed too, but when he saw Peter and John lay hands on the people, he also wanted the ability to transfer the power of the Holy Spirit. Unfortunately, he thought it could be purchased. When Peter rebuked him, Simon asked him to pray for him.

make it real



check it

1. What did Kevin want to ask his mother?
2. Why did he hesitate?
3. For what reason did he want the item?
4. What advice did his mother share?



think it

1. What did Simon practice? (Acts 8:9)?
2. Why did the people follow Philip? (v. 11)
3. Why were Peter and John sent? (v. 14)
4. What did Simon want to buy? (Vv. 18–19)
5. What did Peter tell Simon to do? (v. 22)



do it

Think of ways you can take a stand for Christ in your school or community. Would you be willing to face persecution and ridicule for proclaiming the Gospel? Can you create or join a Christian club on your campus or in your neighborhood?



keep it

"When Simon saw that the Spirit was given at the laying on of the apostles' hands, he offered them money" (Acts 8:18, NIV).

10.30 A Hand of Friendship

the big idea:
Philip and the
Ethiopian Eunuch



Don sat in Algebra 2 wondering why Mrs. Jenkins always gave them open book tests. If it were a history course or even a science class, he could see the point; the answers to the questions were always somewhere in the book.

The answers to the math questions were never in the book. Sure the formulas for solving the problems were there, and on occasion some math problems in the book closely resembled the problems on the test. But it wasn't helpful. He had trouble solving the problems in the book; how in the world was he supposed to pass the test?

He looked up in time to see the principal walk into the room with a rather ner-

vous-looking student. The kid was dressed in clothes that could be described as very unstylish. He watched as the principal motioned the kid to the front of the room, but the kid only walked a few feet inside the door and never took his eyes off the floor. After a brief conversation with Mrs. Jenkins, the principal walked her over to the new kid and went through the motions of introducing them to each another. Mrs. Jenkins extended her hand, but the kid never looked up, didn't take her hand, and refused to speak. The adults shared a look before the principal left.

Don didn't know anything about that kid or his situation, but he determined right then and there to make sure the new kid felt at home.

from your Bible

Acts 8:26–39, NIV—Now an angel of the Lord said to Philip, “Go south to the road—the desert road—that goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza.”²⁷ So he started out, and on his way he met an Ethiopian eunuch, an important

official in charge of all the treasury of the Kandake (which means “queen of the Ethiopians”). This man had gone to Jerusalem to worship,²⁸ and on his way home was sitting in his chariot reading the Book of Isaiah the prophet.²⁹ The Spirit told Philip, “Go to that chariot and stay near it.”³⁰ Then Philip ran up to the chariot and heard the man

reading Isaiah the prophet. "Do you understand what you are reading?" Philip asked. ³¹"How can I," he said, "unless someone explains it to me?" So he invited Philip to come up and sit with him. ³²This is the passage of Scripture the eunuch was reading: "He was led like a sheep to the slaughter, and as a lamb before its shearer is silent, so he did not open his mouth." ³³In his humiliation he was deprived of justice. Who can speak of his descendants? For his life was taken from the earth." ³⁴The eunuch asked Philip, "Tell me, please, who is the prophet talking about, himself or someone else?" ³⁵Then Philip began with that very passage of Scripture and told him the good news

about Jesus. ³⁶**As they traveled along the road, they came to some water and the eunuch said, "Look, here is water. What can stand in the way of my being baptized?"** ³⁷Philip said, "If you believe with all your heart, you may." The eunuch answered, "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God." ³⁸And he gave orders to stop the chariot. Then both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water and Philip baptized him. ³⁹When they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord suddenly took Philip away, and the eunuch did not see him again, but went on his way rejoicing.

Scripture discussion

This passage of Scripture is the perfect example of a divine appointment. Philip was not just in the right place at the right time, but he was obedient to the Holy Spirit's direction. His obedience allowed him to have the opportunity to share the plan of salvation an Ethiopian eunuch. The eunuch traveled to Jerusalem to worship the Jewish God. As he returned home,

Philip encountered him reading a part of the Isaiah scroll. It is crucial that God's people follow Philip's example and learn to listen and respond when God gives clear instructions and tells us what to do. Philip's sharing of the Good News about Jesus and the baptism of the Ethiopian demonstrates the universal availability of the Gospel message to all people groups. We should make an effort to extend a hand of friendship to those who are different because we give them a glimpse of Jesus.

make it real



check it

1. Why was Don irritated about the open book test?
2. List possible reasons why the new student refused to look adults in the eye or shake the teacher's hand.
3. Explain why you believe Don made the decision to befriend the new student.



think it

1. How did Philip end up going south on the desert road? (Acts 8:26)?
2. Why is the office of the eunuch an important point to note in this account? (vv. 27–28)
3. What was the eunuch's response to the gospel? (v. 37)



do it

After researching the 10/40 window, how can you become involved with evangelism?



keep it

"As they traveled along the road, they came to some water and the eunuch said, 'Look, here is water. What can stand in the way of my being baptized?'" (Acts 8:36, NIV).