



NEW TESTAMENT • LESSON 48

## ANANIAS AND SAPPHIRA

*The Spirit of God is poured out in grace, discipline and power.*



**MONDAY**

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### **THE STORY: ACTS 4:32-37**

The Spirit of God is poured out in heart-changing power. It is amazing to read about the early Christians and how the Spirit of God worked grace into their lives. We can forget that the descriptions are of brand-new believers, not people who had been Christians for years and years.

The first believers were so affected by the gospel and the infilling of the Spirit that they were glad to sell their possessions and share with those in need. Joseph sold a field and brought the money to the apostles so that those who were in need could be cared for.

### **TALK ABOUT IT:**

How were the lives of the early believers changed by the gospel and the power of the Spirit? (They began to share their possessions to care for one another. We assume this is new behavior for them. Before believing the gospel and receiving the Spirit, they would likely have been quite the opposite. When the Spirit of God brings new life, the grace of God frees us from the bondage of sin and the love of our possessions.)

Do all Christians automatically live such unselfish lives? (No. This kind of sacrifice is not automatic for all new believers. It is also not automatic for us. In the power of the Spirit, we can do as they did. With His heart-changing power at work within us, we, too, can overcome selfishness, greed, and coveting. We can help those who are in need and share what we have.)

Who do you know that is in need? How can you help them? (Parents, take this question seriously and take the opportunity to bless those who are in need.)

**PRAY:**

Ask God to pour out His Spirit upon the lives of each member of your family so that you might increasingly desire to glorify God by sharing what you have with those who are in need.




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**TUESDAY**

**THE STORY: ACTS 5:1-6**

The Spirit of God is poured out in discernment. Acts 5:1-6 starts out, “But a man...” Luke is contrasting the generosity of Joseph with the deception of Ananias and Sapphira. Perhaps Joseph was praised or esteemed for selling his field and giving the money to those in need. Ananias did not have to sell his field. Nor did he need to give all the money from its sale. But Ananias sinned. He sold the field and pretended to give all the money while keeping some for himself. This was treated by God as a very serious matter. The Holy Spirit brought severe discipline for the good of all.

Peter confronted Ananias for lying. His words help all of us to remember that when we sin against each other, our greater sin is against God. Immediately, Ananias fell down dead, and a great fear of sin came upon those who saw. The Holy Spirit was working to keep the church pure.

**TALK ABOUT IT:**

To whom did Ananias lie? (Peter tells us in verse 3 that he lied to the Holy Spirit, and then, in the next verse, he says Ananias lied not to men, but to God.)

Why does it say Ananias lied to God? (All of our sin, even those sins we commit against one another, are sins against God.)

When we sin against our brothers, sisters, or parents, should we also confess to God when we repent? (Yes. You should always confess your sin to God.)

**PRAY:**

Take time for each person to confess the sin of their past week to the Lord. (Parents, help your children by your example and by helping them to remember this past week.)



**WEDNESDAY**  
**WHERE IS THE GOSPEL?**

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**THE STORY: ACTS 5:7-11**

The Holy Spirit was poured out on the early church with great power. There was a mighty outpouring of grace in the lives of the new Christians. This move of the Spirit of God helped launch the advance of the gospel.

Ananias and Sapphira threatened to discredit the gospel and the work of God as the church was becoming established. They sold their property, but they wanted praise for giving everything. So they decided to keep some of the money secretly for themselves. God would not tolerate this lying selfish ambition. With the credibility of the gospel on the line, the Spirit of God killed them both. Thus, a holy fear fell upon all the people, and the integrity of the gospel was protected.

**TALK ABOUT IT:**

How could the lying of Ananias and Sapphira discredit the gospel? (Others may have followed their example. Probably many more would have drifted carelessly into other kinds of selfish ambition and falsehood had God not brought this discipline. The gospel is all about a change that takes place in a person's heart. By faking generosity and keeping back some of the money, Ananias and Sapphira looked good on the outside, but their hearts were full of sin. When God disciplines one, everyone searches their hearts and is more careful to not sin.)

What does the sin of hypocrisy look like in the lives of people today? (We are guilty of hypocrisy any time we pretend to be holy to look good but hide sin. If we live ungodly lives Monday through Saturday, but pretend to be good Christians on Sunday, we would be guilty of the same compromise we read about in Ananias and Sapphira's lives.)

**PRAY:**

Ask God to genuinely touch the lives of each member of your family so that the good you display flows from heart-transforming grace and not your own proud efforts to look good in front of others.

**THURSDAY****THE STORY: ACTS 5:12-16**

The Spirit of God is poured out in power. Many people were healed in the early church as the power of God was poured out for healing. Verse 14 tells us that more than ever, believers were added. We need to remember that three thousand were converted after Peter's explanation of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. That means that thousands were being converted here as well. When people understood the gospel and saw the power of God, many put their faith in Jesus.

The compromise of Ananias and Sapphira had the potential to hinder this move of God. That is why the Lord judged them so severely. This swift judgment served to

warn the early believers of the dangers of sin and of the fearful holiness of God.

**TALK ABOUT IT:**

How did the people demonstrate faith? (They brought out the sick and hoped that even the shadow of Peter would touch them.)

What was the result of their faith? (God had compassion on them, and they were all healed.)

How can reading stories like this encourage our faith? (God is the same today as He was then. God is able to heal the sick! We need to pray in faith and trust the Lord when we pray for those who are sick. Reading about what God did in the early church can help build our faith for what God can do today.)

**PRAY:**

Lift up in prayer those around you who are sick, asking God to heal them.



**FRIDAY**  
**ON THE ROAD TO EMMAUS**

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**THE STORY: ISAIAH 56:7**

In Matthew 21:13 Jesus quotes this verse as He rebukes the money-changers and those who are turning the temple into a marketplace. Jesus was zealous that the house of God not be defiled by sin.

Similarly, in this week's passage in Acts, Ananias and Sapphira are judged swiftly for bringing sinful behavior into the house of God, the church.

**TALK ABOUT IT:**

Why does God judge sin? (God is holy and has no sin. Sin by definition is disobedience toward God. Just as light must cause darkness to disappear, so must God judge sin for the sake of His holiness.)

Why did Jesus drive out the money-changers from the temple? (The focus of the temple was to be worship of God. These men were not at the temple to worship God. Rather they were there to make money.)

**PRAY:**

Ask God to help you never forget the important place true worship is meant to play in our lives.