



ACTS

Of All the Apostles

You Will Be My Witnesses:

Running the Race

Lesson 11



Ananias and Sapphira

Acts 5:1-16

Supplemental Scripture

Genesis 4:7
Numbers 32:23
Ephesians 4
Romans 12
Hebrews 12:1-2
Psalm 119:1-16
Proverbs 4:20-24
Psalm 139:1-4, 23-24
Psalm 51

Memory Verse

And he did evil, because he did not prepare his heart to seek the LORD.
2 Chronicles 12:14 (NKJV)

Lesson Goals

Understand that Ananias and Sapphira conspired together to deceive the apostles

Understand that Ananias and Sapphira lied

Understand that sin has consequences

NOTE: Familiarize yourself with this story. Study the supplemental Scripture and make notes on, but do NOT read from, these pages. To reinforce that these ideas are not your own, hold your Bible as you tell the story.

Have you ever heard the word “integrity?” Webster’s Dictionary defines it as, “honesty; freedom from corrupting influence or motive.” It can be described as doing and saying the same thing, having your words and your actions match up. A person of integrity doesn’t make decisions based on money or influence. A person of integrity make decisions based on what is right and wrong. You may be thinking, “so, what does that have to do with running the race, living a life devoted to Christ?” Great question! It has everything to do with running the race well. Let’s see.

What do you remember about the early believers? What were they known for? They were known for their generosity. There was no one needy among them because they shared. Some even sold houses and lands to provide for the needy. Barnabas was one of these. He was an encourager and wanted to help other believers.

Our story of the early church continues with a married couple, Ananias and Sapphira. They, too, sold some land. As with other early believers, as well as Barnabas, they voluntarily decided to sell their property as well as bring the money to the apostles. But they decided to do something the other believers had not. Ananias and Sapphira decided to deceive the apostles. They wanted to appear to have given all of the money generously, but they had no intention of giving it all!

Ananias went to see the apostles. He gave the apostles some of the money, pretending to give it all. But the Holy Spirit revealed to Peter that Ananias was not being truthful and he confronted him, “Ananias, why did you let Satan fill your heart? He made you lie to the Holy Spirit. You have kept some of the money you received for the land.” (Acts 5:3 NIV) Peter explained to Ananias that the money had been his to use as he wished, but that his lie was a lie to God. “When Ananias heard this, he fell down and died.” (Acts 5:5 NIV) Some young men carried Ananias’ body away and buried him. The people who heard this were terrified.

Application

What do you think made Ananias and Sapphira do what they did? Our memory verse says of an Old Testament king, “And he did evil, because he did not prepare his heart to seek the LORD. (2 Chron. 12:14 NKJV)

Have you ever thought about that? Many times, we prefer to blame someone else when we sin. It really is our choice, though. The Bible is clear about sin. In Genesis 4:7 it is described as “waiting at the door to grab you.”

So, what do we do? We know that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. He made a way for us to be free from the slavery of sin. If you haven't accepted His gift, let's talk in just a moment.

If you do follow Jesus, have you been able to live a perfect life? Me neither. To begin with, we must guard our hearts (Prov 4:23). But when we have sinned, we must throw off the sin that holds on to us (Hebrews 12:1). We must rule over it (Genesis 4:7). We can do all of that when we prepare our hearts to seek God. Will you commit to that today?

“About three hours later, [Sapphira] the wife of Ananias came in.” (Acts 5:7 NIV) She had no idea what had happened, but Peter asked her about the money. He wanted to see if she would deceive them as well. Sapphira lied and said that they had given all of the money. Peter confronted her about her sin, too, and “at that very moment she fell down at his feet and died.” (Acts 5:10 NIV)

Everyone who heard about these things was afraid, but people still looked up to these early believers. Even though there were some who were cautious about joining them, more and more men and women were believing in the Lord.

We began by talking about integrity. What does that have to do with the story of Ananias and Sapphira and the early believers? As believers, we represent God to the people around us. What do you think it says about God when we are deceptive and tell lies? It makes people think that is what God is like. Is that true? No! God is true. He cannot tell a lie. In order to represent Him well, we should tell the truth. The early church had problems, but the witness and integrity of the other believers was so strong that many continued to believe. Unfortunately, some were cautious about trusting God because of what Ananias and Sapphira had done. Wouldn't you rather your life draw people to Christ instead of turn them away?

Review

1. How were Ananias and Sapphira like the early believers? (They sold property and wanted to give money to the apostles.)
2. What was different about their gift? (They didn't give all.)
3. What did they do that was wrong? (They told the apostles that they gave all of the money from the sale of their property.)
4. What happened to Ananias and Sapphira? (They both died.)
5. In lying to the apostles, who had they really lied to? (God.)

Next Week
Arrest and Rescue
Acts 5:17-32

Preschool Lesson

What do you remember about the early believers? What were they known for? They were known for sharing with others. There was no one needy among them because they shared. Some even sold houses and lands to give to the needy. Barnabas was one of these. He was an encourager and wanted to help other believers.

Our story of the early church continues with a married couple, Ananias and Sapphira. They sold some land, too. But they decided to deceive the apostles. That means they decided to tell a lie. They wanted to look good to everyone else, but they didn't want to give all that they had!

Ananias went to see the apostles. He gave the apostles some of the money, pretending to give it all. The Holy Spirit showed Peter that Ananias was not being truthful. Peter said, "Ananias, why did you let Satan fill your heart? He made you lie to the Holy Spirit. You have kept some of the money you received for the land." (Acts 5:3 NIV) Peter explained to Ananias that when he lied, he was really lying to God.

"About three hours later, [Sapphira] the wife of Ananias came in." (Acts 5:7 NIV) She had no idea what had happened, but Peter asked her about the money. He wanted to see if she would lie to them as well. Sapphira lied, too, and said that they had given all of the money!

In our story from the Bible today, both Ananias and Sapphira died because they lied to God and tried to deceive their friends. How many of you have ever told a lie? (Raise your hand as well.) We didn't die when we lied, but bad things happen when we lie. Our friends don't know if they can believe us any more. Our parents lose trust in us. If we lie a lot, people learn that they cannot believe a word we say. That is a bad thing. If we love God, then our lies make God look bad. When people know that you go to church and learn memory verses, they expect more from you. They expect you to be different. Our friends and family should see what God is like when they see us. How are you doing?

Activities

Memory Verse Activity - Practice the verse by playing a memory game. Write each word of the verse on an index card. A match is made when two consecutive words from the verse are chosen. Continue until all cards have been chosen and arranged in order to form the verse. Then, talk about the positive side of this verse. For example: “I can do good because I . . .”

Bring play money. Distribute money to some of your students. Practice generosity the way the early believers did by encouraging each student that desires to, to give all that they have to an appointed “leader.” Have that leader then share with those who have none. Share with your students that “God loves a cheerful giver.”

Play an honesty game. Create a life sized game board on the floor or ground of your meeting area. Use construction paper spaces. Every few spaces insert a fictitious situation of integrity or deception, with consequences. For example: “Helped your sister get ready for church. Move forward two spaces.” or “Kept offering money to buy candy. Move back a space.”

Review the supplemental Scriptures and discuss the progression of sin. Finish with Psalm 139 leading into Psalm 51. Discuss the repentance that needs to take place when we choose to sin.

Talk about the decision Ananias and Sapphira made. In verse 2, the phrase “kept part of the money for himself” literally means that he wrongfully appropriated or embezzled this money. Those terms seem very harsh, but they reveal the significance of Ananias’ and Sapphira’s sin. And because that sin was actually against God, in reality they were embezzling money from God.

Look at Ephesians 4 and Romans 12. Talk about the change that should be evident in us as believers. Discuss the impact if we fail to represent Christ well.



And he did evil,
because he did not
prepare his heart
to seek the LORD.

2 Chronicles 12:14



Racing Riddles

Explain the word “Integrity” with an acrostic. Think of a word that begins with each letter of “Integrity” that helps you understand what integrity is.

I
N
T
E
G
R
I
T
Y

Word Search

s o l s s p o r i p d t h s
p h a o e n w o d l l e f o
e r a l g a p o s t l e i l
s o l d l a n d f h l m n d
e t s h a r e d i a s e d n
e v i e c e d s a i n a n a
s o n u e b a r n a b r s l
l l a s y m g t o t s i b l
n u g e g d e o d u e h s l
w n n s o g d l a e t p p e
a t c y r e t s e r e p o s
g a e i o s a d e t i a u t
e r t i l e b r e d e s n e
v y t s u n i r a s o n e n

Ananias

Sapphira

Peter

sell land

integrity

deceive

voluntary

fell down

died

Word Search

s o l s s p o r i p d t h s
p h a o e n w o d l l e f o
e r a l g a p o s t l e i l
s o l d l a n d f h l m n d
e t s h a r e d i a s e d n
e v i e c e d s a i n a n a
s o n u e b a r n a b r s l
l l a s y m g t o t s i b l
n u g e g d e o d u e h s l
w n n s o g d l a e t p p e
a t c y r e t s e r e p o s
g a e i o s a d e t i a u t
e r t i l e b r e d e s n e
v y t s u n i r a s o n e n

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