

Ananias & Sapphira

1 But there was a certain man named Ananias who, with his wife, Sapphira, sold some property. *2* He brought part of the money to the apostles, claiming it was the full amount. With his wife's consent, he kept the rest.

3 Then Peter said, "Ananias, why have you let Satan fill your heart? You lied to the Holy Spirit, and you kept some of the money for yourself. *4* The property was yours to sell or not sell, as you wished. And after selling it, the money was also yours to give away. How could you do a thing like this? You weren't lying to us but to God!"

5 As soon as Ananias heard these words, he fell to the floor and died. Everyone who heard about it was terrified. *6* Then some young men got up, wrapped him in a sheet, and took him out and buried him.

7 About three hours later his wife came in, not knowing what had happened. *8* Peter asked her, "Was this the price you and your husband received for your land?"

"Yes," she replied, "that was the price."

9 And Peter said, "How could the two of you even think of conspiring to test the Spirit of the Lord like this? The young men who buried your husband are just outside the door, and they will carry you out, too."

10 Instantly, she fell to the floor and died. When the young men came in and saw that she was dead, they carried her out and buried her beside her husband. *11* Great fear gripped the entire church and everyone else who heard what had happened.

Acts 5:1-11 (NLT)

* As discussed in Riverside's HGLT (Home Group Leader Training), these guides are to be starting points for home group leaders to develop their own guides and approaches to leading group discussions. This is a resource tool, not a rigid "go through this guide word-for-word."

Observation (what does the text say?) **Interpretation** (what does it mean?) **Application** (what does it mean to me/us?)

Discussion/Topic Starters (Ice Breakers)

- Growing up, do you remember doing religious practices just because everybody else was doing it?
- O: What things in the text strike you or jump out at you? Why?

v.1-11

- O: What is the surrounding context of this passage?
Why is the context important to properly understanding what is going on in it?
- O: Were Ananias and Sapphira required to sell the land, required to give all the money to the church?
What was their sin (What did Peter charge Ananias of doing in v. 3-4; Sapphira in v.9)?
Do you find it odd that they gave the church a lot of money, & it was considered sin? Discuss (also see 1 Cor. 13:3)
- I: What would Ananias and Sapphira gain by lying about the money they received (remember the passage's context prior)?
- I: Considering that we all do bad sinful things, why do you think God punished Ananias and Sapphira so severely?
How might great fear (v.5, 11) be useful to God's plan at this point?
Did this event hinder the church's growth?
- A: Discuss how Religion (as shown by Ananias and Sapphira) and faith (shown by Barnabas) are different.
- A: When have you been like Ananias and Sapphira and tried to fool God? What happened? What did you learn?
- A: When do you find yourself putting the praise of men (impression management) above following God (faith).
- A: As Christians today, how should we share our possessions or money?

These were discussions from a guide I found on the internet as well. Fairly good/helpful:

- Discuss: what are our motives whenever we engage in religious activities such as: public prayer, serving as a coworker, public worship, sharing in small group discussion, serving in church, attending church/fellowship, private prayer, etc.
To what extent are our motives pure, and to what extent are they worldly, or out of pride or selfish motives?
- What should our motives be like in serving? What should be our primary motivation(s), and why?
- Do you ever try to show off in serving? How? What happens as a result?
- What does it mean to deceive the Spirit? To grieve the Spirit? In what ways do our lives grieve the Holy Spirit?
- Discuss: What areas of your lives are most vulnerable to spiritual problems like those above? What aspects of our fellowship / church are most vulnerable?
- In what ways are you / we not fully honest with God? In what ways do you lack integrity or honesty before others?
- How would you define "cheating God"? Does it involve just serious sins like here in Acts 5? In what ways do we cheat God?

Recommended Follow-up:

- Read: Next week's sermon (11/18/12) will focus on Acts 5:12-42. Take time prior to next Sunday to read & study the passage, pray through the passage, meditate on the passage, etc.