

ACTS STUDY GUIDE

Chapter 5

Acts 4 ends by describing the early church as a “whole congregation of believers...united as one” and that “not a person among them was needy.” Early believers sold their property and “brought the price of the sale to the apostles” as an offering to the apostles, who, in turn, “distributed it according to each person’s need” (The Message). Acts 4 ends by describing the generosity of Barnabas, who sold a piece of land and gave the proceeds of the sale to the church. Acts 5 begins with the story of Ananias and Sapphira, who also a piece of land and gave proceeds of the sale to the church—but the outcome was different.

Read all of Acts 5

Acts 5:1-11

1. How does this passage make you feel?
2. How are the actions of Barnabas and Ananias and Sapphira similar?
How do they differ?
3. What did Ananias and Sapphira do wrong?
4. To whom does Peter attribute Ananias and Sapphira’s deception?

5. The church at this time has been described as a “Spirit-filled community” (Acts 5:3). What does this mean?

6. So, whom did Ananias and Sapphira really deceive? Why was their sin so grave?

7. Luke intends for us to understand the deaths of Ananias and Sapphira were divine actions. How do you respond to God’s judgment of Ananias and Sapphira?

8. Have you ever claimed to give more or do more for God than you actually did?

9. Do you think this type of sin is common among Christians? Why?

10. What can Christian communities learn from this passage?

Acts 5:12-41

1. “The apostles performed many miraculous signs” including healing the sick. The church grew. However, while the believers were “highly regarded by the people,” many did not join them. Why not?
2. How did the Chief Priest and the Sadducees respond to the growing church and its actions?
3. What happened next?
4. What do you make of the Chief Priest’s response to the miraculous events involving the apostles?
5. When brought back before the Chief Priest and High Council, Peter and the apostles spoke boldly, and the Council members were “furious and wanted to kill them on the spot.” Why?

6. Gamaliel, a Pharisee, had a different idea. What was it? What does this idea say about Gamaliel? Does this mean that any religion that succeeds is “pf God”?

7. Before releasing the apostles, the Council punished them. How did the apostles respond to this punishment? How could they respond that way?

LIFE APPLICATION

1. What do you learn from Acts 5 about obeying human authority versus obeying divine authority?

2. How do you discern the difference?

3. How do we protect ourselves from becoming another Ananias or Sapphira?