



## Lesson 6 – A Warning Against Hypocrisy

Based on Acts 4:32 – 5:11

- 1) What did the Church look like in the earliest days after Christ ascended to Heaven?  
**Acts 4:32** And the multitude of them that believed were of one \_\_\_\_\_ and of one \_\_\_\_\_: neither said any of them that ought of the things which he possessed was his own; but they had all things \_\_\_\_\_.
- 2) What did Luke add to that?  
**Acts 4:34** Neither was there any among them that \_\_\_\_\_: for as many as were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought the prices of the things that were sold,

One common interest controlled them, the success of the mission entrusted to them; and covetousness had no place in their lives. Their love for their brethren and the cause they had espoused was greater than their love of money and possessions. Their works testified that they accounted the souls of men of higher value than earthly wealth.

Thus, it was in the early church; and when in the church of today it is seen that by the power of the Spirit the members have taken their affections from the things of the world, and that they are willing to make sacrifices in order that their fellow men may hear the gospel, the truths proclaimed will have a powerful influence upon the hearers.

- 3) What had happened to everyone earlier that marked their lives?  
**Acts 4:31** And when they had \_\_\_\_\_, the place was shaken where they were assembled together; and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spake the word of God with boldness.
- 4) What were God's people doing at the feet of the Disciples?  
**Acts 4:34-35** Neither was there any among them that lacked: for as many as were possessors of lands or houses \_\_\_\_\_ them, and brought the prices of the things that were sold, And laid them down at the apostles' feet: and \_\_\_\_\_ was made unto every man according as he had need.
- 5) What did a couple named Ananias and Sapphira do?  
**Acts 5:1** But a certain man named Ananias, with Sapphira his wife, \_\_\_\_\_ a \_\_\_\_\_,

Ananias and Sapphira grieved the Holy Spirit by yielding to feelings of covetousness. They began to regret their promise and soon lost the sweet influence of the blessing that had warmed their hearts with a desire to do large things in behalf of the cause of Christ. They thought they had been too hasty, that they ought to reconsider their decision. They talked the matter over and decided not to fulfill their pledge.

- 6) What did they do?  
**Acts 5:2** And kept back part of the price, his wife also being privy to it, and brought a \_\_\_\_\_, and laid it at the apostles' feet.

They saw that those who parted with their possessions to supply the needs of their poorer brethren, were held in high esteem among the believers; and ashamed to have their brethren know that their selfish souls grudged that which they had solemnly dedicated to God,



they deliberately decided to sell their property and pretend to give all the proceeds into the general fund, but really to keep a large share for themselves. Thus, they would secure their living from the common store and at the same time gain the high esteem of their brethren.

7) Did they get away with their plan?

**Acts 5:3** But Peter said, Ananias, why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost, and to keep back part of the price of the land?

God hates hypocrisy and falsehood. Ananias and Sapphira practiced fraud in their dealing with God; they lied to the Holy Spirit.

8) What did Peter ask Ananias?

**Acts 5:4** Whiles it remained, was it not thine own? and after it was sold, was it not in \_\_\_\_\_ power? why hast thou conceived this thing in thine heart? thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God.

No undue influence had been brought to bear upon Ananias to compel him to sacrifice his possessions to the general good. He had acted from choice. But in attempting to deceive the disciples, he had lied to the Almighty.

9) What happened to Ananias?

**Acts 5:5-6** And Ananias hearing these words fell down, and gave up the \_\_\_\_\_: and great \_\_\_\_\_ came on all them that heard these things. And the young men arose, wound him up, and carried him out, and buried him.

10) What followed?

**Acts 5:7-8** And it was about the space of three hours after, when his \_\_\_\_\_, not knowing what was \_\_\_\_\_, came in. And Peter answered unto her, Tell me whether ye sold the land for so much? And she said, Yea, for so much.

11) Did Peter believe her lie?

**Acts 5:9** Then Peter said unto her, How is it that ye have agreed together to tempt the Spirit of the Lord? behold, the feet of them which have \_\_\_\_\_ thy husband are at the door, and shall carry thee out.

12) What happened to her?

**Acts 5:10** Then fell she down straightway at his feet, and yielded up the \_\_\_\_\_: and the young men came in, and found her dead, and, carrying her forth, buried her by her husband.

Infinite Wisdom saw that this signal manifestation of the wrath of God was necessary to guard the young church from becoming demoralized. Their numbers were rapidly increasing. The church would have been endangered if, in the rapid increase of converts, men and women had been added who, while professing to serve God, were worshiping mammon. This judgment testified that men cannot deceive God, that He detects the hidden sin of the heart, and that He will not be mocked. It was designed as a warning to the church, to lead them to avoid pretense and hypocrisy, and to beware of robbing God.

13) How did the church react when they heard what happened?

**Acts 5:11** And great fear came upon \_\_\_\_\_ the \_\_\_\_\_, and upon as many as heard these things.



Not to the early church only, but to all future generations, this example of God's hatred of covetousness, fraud, and hypocrisy, was given as a danger-signal. It was covetousness that Ananias and Sapphira had first cherished. The desire to retain for themselves a part of that which they had promised to the Lord, led them into fraud and hypocrisy.

**14) What had Jesus told us about giving our word?**

**Matthew 5:37** But let your communication be, Yea, yea; Nay, nay: for whatsoever is more than these cometh of \_\_\_\_\_.

**15) What had they all been instructed since their childhood?**

**Deuteronomy 23:23** That which is gone out of thy lips thou shalt \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_; even a freewill offering, according as thou hast vowed unto the LORD thy God, which thou hast promised with thy mouth.

**16) What did Solomon tell us?**

**Ecclesiastes 5:4** When thou vowest a vow unto God, defer not to pay it; for he hath no pleasure in \_\_\_\_\_: pay that which thou hast vowed.

When the heart is stirred by the influence of the Holy Spirit, and a vow is made to give a certain amount, the one who vows has no longer any right to the consecrated portion. Promises of this kind made to men would be looked upon as binding; are those not more binding that are made to God? Are promises tried in the court of conscience less binding than written agreements of men?

**17) What did Paul counsel us?**

**Romans 13:7-8** Render therefore to all their \_\_\_\_\_: tribute to whom tribute is due; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honour to whom honour. \_\_\_\_\_ no man any thing, but to love one another: for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law.

When divine light is shining into the heart with unusual clearness and power, habitual selfishness relaxes its grasp and there is a disposition to give to the cause of God. But none need think that they will be allowed to fulfill the promises then made, without a protest on the part of Satan. He is not pleased to see the Redeemer's kingdom on earth built up. He suggests that the pledge made was too much, that it may cripple them in their efforts to acquire property or gratify the desires of their families.

**18) Who will be in Heaven?**

**Revelation 21:27** And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a \_\_\_\_\_: but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life.

**19) What is part of the Armor of God?**

**Ephesians 6:14** Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with \_\_\_\_\_...

He who utters untruths sells his soul in a cheap market. His falsehoods may seem to serve in emergencies; he may thus seem to make business advancement that he could not gain by fair dealing; but he finally reaches the place where he can trust no one. Himself a falsifier, he has no confidence in the word of others.



From the stern punishment meted out to those perjurers, God would have us learn also how deep is His hatred and contempt for all hypocrisy and deception. In pretending that they had given all, Ananias and Sapphira lied to the Holy Spirit, and, as a result, they lost this life and the life that is to come.

**Can you see you can't lie to God?**

**Do you want to be genuine?**

**When is the time to let God lead?**

And when they had  
**PRAYED,**  
the place where they  
had gathered together  
was **SHAKEN,**  
and they were all  
**FILLED**  
with the Holy Spirit  
and began to speak  
the **WORD** of **GOD**  
with  
**BOLDNESS.**  
-ACTS 4:31