

Bible Story 5: ANANIAS LIES TO GOD

SCRIPTURE: Acts 4:32-36; 5:1-11

MEMORY VERSE: Leviticus 19:11, Acts 5:4 or Colossians 3:9-10

BIBLE STORY:

The believers were in harmony with one another. They even shared their belongings with those in need. In fact, at different times some believers sold their houses or land. Then they gave the money to the apostles to give to needy people.

A man named Joseph was from the island of Cyprus. He was a Levite, a religious man who helped the priests. Joseph was a believer in Jesus. The apostles called him **Barnabas**, which means son of encouragement. Barnabas sold some land and gave the money to the apostles.

Also, there was a couple named Ananias and Sapphira who sold a piece of property.

The husband Ananias decided he would tell the apostles that he sold the piece of property and was giving all the money to them. However, he was secretly going to keep part of that money for himself. His wife Sapphira knew about his plan.

So Ananias went to the apostles and said, *"I am giving you all the money that I received from selling a piece of my property."*

Peter said, *"You have lied to the Holy Spirit of God. You could have kept the money for yourself. You have not only lied to us but to God."*

After hearing this, Ananias fell down and died. Men took him out and buried him.

About three hours later, the wife Sapphira arrived.

Peter asked her, *"Did your husband Ananias and you receive this amount for the property?"*

Sapphira replied, *"Yes."*

Peter said, *"How could you agree with your husband to lie to God?"*

After hearing this, she fell down and died." Men took her out and buried her.

Great fear was felt by everyone who was present and by everyone who heard about what happened.

Barnabas (Joseph) means "son of encouragement."

Later Barnabas:

- Encouraged and was a mentor to Paul (Acts 11:25-30).
- Went on the first missionary journey with Paul (Acts 12:25; 13:1-3).
- Helped and took John Mark, his cousin, on a missionary trip (Acts 15:37-40; Colossians 4:10).

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

(Ask questions appropriate for your group of listeners.)

PERSONAL QUESTIONS:

1. What did you learn from this story?
2. How can you apply this story to your life?

GENERIC QUESTIONS:

1. What do you like about the story?
2. What is there in the story that you do not understand?
3. Who are the main people in the story?
4. What problems did the people face? What happened?
5. What does the story tell about God?

SPECIFIC QUESTIONS:

1. What did Ananias do with the money he received from selling his property?
2. What did Peter tell Ananias when he gave him the money?
3. What is a lie?
4. Is it alright to lie to someone? Why?
4. Can someone lie to God and get away with it? Why not?
4. Whenever you lie, what are the consequences to you? To others? To God?
5. What did Ananias' wife tell Paul about the money?
6. Should you agree with someone else's lie? Why?
7. Share an experience when someone lied to you or about you to others. What results happened because of the lie? How did you feel about what happened?

LIFE LESSONS: (Choose Life Lessons appropriate for your group of listeners.)

1. Each person should help the needy.

Barnabas and other believers sold their property and gave the money to help the needy. We should find ways to help needy people in the church, community, nation and worldwide.

2. Every person should always tell the truth, especially to God.

Ananias lied to Peter and to God about how much money he received for selling his property. We should always tell the truth to one another and especially to God.

3. Consequences result from telling lies.

After lying to Peter and to God, both Ananias and his wife died. We will receive consequences to the lies we tell, as well as those involved.

PARTICIPATION ACTIVITIES: (Choose an activity or activities appropriate for your group of listeners.)

ROLE-PLAYING DRAMAS:

After the story, present three role-playing dramas.

Drama 1: Invite one individual to role-play Barnabas.

■ *Barnabas will explain why he sold his piece of property to give to the church to help the needy.*

Drama 2: Invite a man and a woman to role-play the couple Ananias and Sapphira.

■ *Ananias will explain to his wife why they are going to keep part of the money from the sale of the property, but will tell Peter that they are giving all the money they received to the church to help the needy. Sapphira will explain why she will go along with his plan.*

Drama 3: Invite one individual to role-play Peter.

■ *Peter explains what happened when Ananias came to give money to the church for the needy. Also, what happened when Sapphira came later and spoke to him.*

HELP THE NEEDY:

As a group, decide on a project to help someone in need. Examples:

Project 1: Make a dessert or a meal for someone who is sick, elderly or homebound. Be sure to take food that they can eat (such as sugar free food for a diabetic).

Project 2: Take clothes, shoes, coats, etc. to those in need in your church and community.

Project 3: Sit with a person who is elderly, sick or bedridden so their care giver can go do some errands or have some free time to relax.

Project 4: Write letters, do errands, clean up the house and/or yard for someone who is sick, elderly, homebound or disabled.

Project 5: Give snacks and items to a person to take to the hospital and for family members as they wait at the hospital with their loved one. (Remember their dietary needs.)

Project 6: Do something special for children of someone who is sick. Also, do something special for siblings (a child and/or youth) of a brother/sister who is sick.