

Week Five: *Surrendering Control*

Acts 5:1-11

Spend FIFTEEN – Day One

1. Is there something in your life, a misstep, a life-altering decision, a career move, that you wish you could change? What's the best way to deal with regret?
2. Read Acts 5:1-11. What was the mistake (sin) that Ananias and Sapphira were guilty of committing?
3. Was it required that they bring all the proceeds from selling their land as a contribution to the Lord's work?
4. What is the accusation made against Ananias and Sapphira in Acts 5:3 compared to verse 4? How can lying to the Holy Spirit be equated with lying to God?
5. What should Ananias and Sapphira have done differently?
6. Do you think the judgment incurred by Ananias and Sapphira was excessive?
7. As you finish your FIFTEEN in prayer, pray for the ability to always demonstrate integrity in matters of faith.

Spend FIFTEEN – Day Two

8. Why do you think the issue of Christian giving is so difficult for most Christians?
9. Read a few passages on the subject of giving: Malachi 3:8-12, Luke 6:38, Matthew 23:23, 2 Corinthians 9:6-15. What are five truths about this Christian value that you can derive from these verses?
10. Someone has said that the tither makes a decision about an appropriate level of support only once each year, while non-tithers end up making 52 decisions. Do you agree?
11. An older Christian once said, "The tithe belongs to God. It is really not ours to give. We really only start making voluntary gifts after the tithe." What do you think?
12. It has been statistically proven that people actually contributed a higher percentage of their income to the Lord during the worst economic times, compared to the prosperous times most experience today. Why do you think that is true?

13. It is also statistically proven that poor people contribute a greater percentage of their income to the Lord's work than more affluent Christians. What is there about human nature that causes that outcome?
14. End your FIFTEEN by praying for a right spirit in making Christian offerings and for a less judgmental spirit toward others.

Spend FIFTEEN – Day Three

15. Some contend that the struggle of Ananias and Sapphira was really not so much an issue of greed as it was a lack of trust in the Lord to provide. Do you agree or disagree with that assessment?
16. Do you have confidence in the Lord to provide for your basic daily needs? What part does your own work ethic play in the picture? Read Matthew 6:19-24 and Matthew 6:31-34.
17. What is your greatest worry when it comes to possessions and having enough to provide for your daily needs?
18. In Acts 5:9, Peter asked Sapphira why she and her husband had agreed together to put the Lord to a test? What did Peter mean by that statement?
19. What lesson so you think God is trying to teach Christians through the example of Ananias and Sapphira?
20. The closing verse says that "great fear" came upon the church when they heard of this event. What do you think that means?
21. As you conclude your FIFTEEN in prayer, pray that all your decisions about life's priorities would be motivated by God's love and provision and not for fear of judgment.

Spend FIFTEEN – Day Four

22. The Lord is not against good planning and accepting personal responsibility for your life. Read Proverbs 6:6-11 and Proverbs 30:7-9. How would you describe the balance between trusting in God and self-provision?
23. Has there been a time in your life when you were less financially secure than you are today? Did attention and concern about financial issues occupy more of your attention then or now? Explain.
24. Read Ecclesiastes 5:10-15. What life lessons is God attempting to teach in this Scripture?

25. What is your greatest fear in life? Issues of health, finances, relationships, or something else? Why do you think that is your greatest concern? Read Matthew 6:33-34. Is the answer given there too simplistic? Explain what that response means relative to your concerns?
26. Why do you think lying and deception were such a concern to Peter in the story of Ananias and Sapphira?
27. Why do you think people are so susceptible to the temptation of making a good impression and caring so much with what other people think?
28. Finish your FIFTEEN in prayer. Pray for a new attitude that would be more concerned with God's perception of our values and decisions than others'.

Spend FIFTEEN – Day Five

29. The Bible says that it is in giving that we receive. I once heard a Christian say, "You can't do good for someone else without doing something good for yourself." Do you agree? Why do you think is God's primary purpose in urging us to do good and be generous?
30. The same person also said, "You can't do something harmful to another person without doing harm to yourself." Has that been your observation, as well, or do you think some people thrive on hurting others?
31. Read a description of the early church in Acts 2:42-47. In what ways are the values shown there still found in the church today? How is it different today?
32. What is the single most important take-away you have from the story of Ananias and Sapphira?
33. Is it possible to be misguided in a matter as basic as trusting God to provide, and still be saved? Is it possible that although Ananias and Sapphira suffered judgment for their sin, they could still have been saved and entered eternal life?
34. What does this scripture teach us about God's omniscience? If people really believed God knows everything, do you think it would influence their behavior and values? If not, why?
35. Conclude your FIFTEEN in prayer. Pray that your behavior in secret would be the same as your behavior in public.