

“Accountable” - Acts 4:36-5:11

Ask - “Have you ever sold a piece of property (land)? What was it that you sold?”

Background - In the early days of the New Testament church, members of the congregation regarded their personal belongings as common property, and freely shared their proceeds with one another and the church.

“Barnabas” - Acts 4:36-37

(v36) What was Barnabas’ actual name and background? What does the name Barnabas mean and who called him that? Why would they call him Barnabas?

(v37) According to this verse, what did Barnabas do? Read verses 32-35 for further context.

BARNABAS SOLD A PIECE OF PROPERTY AND GAVE THE MONEY HE’D MADE TO THE APOSTLES TO BE USED BY THE CHURCH.

“Ananias” - Acts 5:1-6

(v1-2) According to these verses, what did Ananias and Sapphira do? What was their sin?

(v3-4) What questions did Peter ask of Ananias to highlight his lie? Who did Ananias ultimately lie to? Discuss.

(v5-6) What happened to Ananias? How quickly did it occur? How did the congregation react? What was done with his body?

ANANIAS, WITH HIS WIFE’S FULL KNOWLEDGE, ALSO SOLD A PIECE OF PROPERTY. HE ACTED AS THOUGH HE’D GIVEN ALL OF THE PROFIT TO THE CHURCH, BUT HE HAD SECRETLY WITHHELD SOME. FOR HIS LIE, HE FELL DOWN DEAD.

“Sapphira” - Acts 5:7-11

(v7) Did Sapphira immediately know what had happened to her husband? How much later was it when she came to speak to Peter?

(v8-9a) How did Peter test her to see if she had also participated in this lie? How did he know that she was guilty as well?

(v9b-10) What happened to Sapphira? What was done with her body?

(v11) What was the reaction within and even outside of the church?

WHEN QUESTIONED, SAPPHIRA INADVERTENTLY REVEALED THAT SHE HAD ALSO PARTICIPATED IN THIS DECEPTION. AS A RESULT, SHE DIED ALSO. GREAT FEAR CAME UPON THE CHURCH.

Application - The sin of Ananias and Sapphira was not withholding a portion of their profit from the sale of their land. The Bible doesn't require people to give everything they earn or make. In fact, it doesn't require any specific monetary amount. Rather, we should give cheerfully as we are able, keeping in mind that the Old Testament precedent was 10%. Their sin was that they lied about it, acting as if they had selflessly given all of the proceeds when in fact they had not. But God knew, and somehow it was revealed to Peter also. The Lord held them accountable for their self-righteous deception. Do some people in the church still pretend to be more selfless and virtuous than they really are?