

Ananías And Sapphíra

Acts 5:1-11

MEMORY VERSE

ACTS 5:12

And through the hands of the apostles many signs and wonders were done among the people. And they were all with one accord in Solomon's Porch.

WHAT YOU WILL NEED:

Construction paper, string, scissors, markers or crayons, and feathers, yarn, beads or sequins.

As many sheets of white paper as the number of children in your class and crayons or markers.

ATTENTION GRABBER!

Masks

Have your class make masks out of construction paper and string. The masks can be decorated with markers or crayons and feathers, yarn, beads or sequins attached with glue.

Allow your class to wear their masks; you could even do a mask "fashion" show.

When your class is finished, explain that masks can be fun. Sometimes we use masks to pretend to be someone or something other than who we are. Today we're going to learn about some people who pretended to be something they were not so they could impress others, and it didn't go very well for them.

LESSON TIME!

In today's lesson we will learn how important it is to tell the truth. The story of Ananias and Sapphira will give us an example of how people are sometimes hypocrites and also what happens when people become more concerned with their reputation than their character. **God knows what is in our hearts.**

ACTS 5:1

But a certain man named Ananias, with Sapphira his wife, sold a possession.

The first verse of our lesson begins with the word "But." This means that the story does not begin here, "but" continues from this point. So let's get up to speed with the first part of this story. Ananias and Sapphira were a part of the early church in Jerusalem. The church had become "of one heart and of one soul." The love God had given them for each other was so great that they were sharing all their possessions with each other. The church would help out anyone who had a need.

What would the world be like if everyone shared his or her possessions? One day, when Jesus comes to rule the Earth and we reign with Him, we will see what this world could have been like. There will be peace for 1,000 years. No one will have need. Everyone will have plenty.

People who owned land or houses or other kinds of property would sell a house or farm or whatever was needed and bring the money and lay it at the apostles' feet. A man named Barnabas sold his land and laid the money from the sale of it at the apostles' feet. Everyone was giving and sharing and caring for each other. In John 13:34-35 Jesus gave a new commandment to His disciples to love one another; this is how all men would know they were disciples. Do people know you are a disciple of Jesus Christ?

Now we begin the second half of the story at verse one in chapter five:

ACTS 5:1-2

But a certain man named Ananias, with Sapphira his wife, sold a possession.

And he kept back part of the proceeds, his wife also being aware of it, and brought a certain part and laid it at the apostles' feet.

Things were going along so well, but now Ananias and his wife wanted to do as so many others were doing. They wanted to give to the church. The problem was that they wanted to act like they were giving all of the money but in reality they kept some back for themselves. They wanted everyone to think they had given all of the money from the sale of their property, but really they were planning to lie to the apostles. **God knows what is in our hearts.**

Have you ever made a promise and found it hard to keep? It seems as though Ananias and Sapphira had told others in the church that they were going to sell their property and help people in the church. But in their hearts this really wasn't what was happening. They wanted to be heroes and thought well of at church and still keep some of the money for themselves.

ACTS 5:3-4

But Peter said, "Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit and keep back part of the price of the land for yourself?"

"While it remained, was it not your own? And after it was sold, was it not in your own control? Why have you conceived this thing in your heart? You have not lied to men but to God."

God told the apostle Peter that Ananias was telling a lie. Peter confronted Ananias with his sin. He told him that he allowed Satan to fill his heart with this lie. Did you know that when we allow Satan to persuade us to do wrong, it affects our hearts? Our hearts become hard. Ananias was a hypocrite. Hypocrisy is saying one thing but doing another.

Hypocrisy is trying to make people think we are more spiritual than we really are; it's deliberate deception. Both Ananias and Sapphira had allowed Satan to fill their hearts with this lie, but **God knows what is in our hearts.** Now Ananias had been caught in his lie. Have you ever been caught telling a lie? How did it feel?

Ananias did not only lie to Peter and the apostles, but he lied to the Holy Spirit. God knows everything! So why would someone try to lie to God? They would get caught every time. **God knows what is in our hearts.**

How does a boy or girl get caught stealing cookies out of the cookie jar? Their mom might ask if they did it but they could say "No." But, what that boy or girl doesn't know is that they have crumbs and chocolate chips smeared around the sides of their mouths. Moms always seem to know when their children are not telling the truth; but even if you can fool mom, you can never fool God. **God knows what is in our hearts.**

ACTS 5:5-6

Then Ananias, hearing these words, fell down and breathed his last. So great fear came upon all those who heard these things.

And the young men arose and wrapped him up, carried him out, and buried him.

Ananias heard Peter speak those words of rebuke to him and then fell down and died. This seems to be a strong punishment for a lie. Why did God deal so strongly with Ananias? Why would God do this? Because God was giving a strong warning to the early church and also to us today. God is a Holy God and He does not take sin lightly.

This was not the first time God had judged sin severely at the beginning of a new period for His followers. Just after the tabernacle was erected, God killed Nadab and Abihu for attempting to present false fire to the Lord (Leviticus 10). He also allowed Achan to be stoned to death with his whole family for disobeying His orders just after entering the Promised Land (Joshua 7). God is the God of grace and love, but He could not allow the prideful lie of the false disciple Ananias to go unpunished. God knew the church was still young and was protecting His flock from false sheep, like Ananias and Saphira. It also probably made the church check their hearts and make sure they were truly following Jesus.

ACTS 5:7-10

Now it was about three hours later when his wife came in, not knowing what had happened.

And Peter answered her, "Tell me whether you sold the land for so much?" And she said, "Yes, for so much."

Then Peter said to her, "How is it that you have agreed together to test the Spirit of the Lord? Look, the feet of those who have buried your husband are at the door, and they will carry you out."

Then immediately she fell down at his feet and breathed her last. And the young men came in and found her dead, and carrying her out, buried her by her husband.

Three hours later Sapphira came in and did the same thing that her husband did. Both lied to the Holy Spirit, and both died on the spot. Peter tells us they had agreed together to "test the Spirit of the Lord." This is the same thing Satan tried to do to Jesus when He was in the wilderness (Matthew 4:7). They were more concerned with their reputation than with their character. They thought more about what people thought of them than what God thought of them, but **God knows what is in our hearts.** It's been said that character is doing what is right when no one is looking, but the truth is that God is always looking.

Why is our character more important than our reputation? No matter what other people think, we should always try to do what is right and what is good before the Lord. **God knows what is in our hearts.**

Ananias and Sapphira

Have your class re-enact the story of Ananias and Sapphira. Allow different children to play the various parts. When they have finished, recast the story so as many as would like get a chance to participate.

ACTS 5:11

So great fear came upon all the church and upon all who heard these things.

There was great fear in the Church. Who were they afraid of? God! It is good to fear God. Psalm 111:10a tells us "the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom"; Proverbs 3:7b says "...fear the Lord and depart from evil." What does fear mean here in this story? It means they revered and respected God; they were in awe of His greatness. I think we should be too. **God knows what is in our hearts.**

Free Draw

Let your class have a “free draw” time. Tell them that they must draw either the thing they most remember from the story or a modern illustration of the consequences of hypocrisy.

PRAYER

Lead the children in a prayer of commitment to honor the Lord with our thoughts and motives, even the deepest parts of our hearts. If there are any children who have not yet responded to the gospel, give them an opportunity to do so.