

Ananias and Sapphira Lie to God

(Acts 4:32 – 5:14)

Pre-Session Warm Up

[Teacher, put on a mask and ask the children:] "*Why do people wear masks?*" (So they can pretend to be something or someone they aren't; or, to hide who or what they really are.) Is it possible to hide who we are or pretend to be someone else without wearing a mask? (Yes!)

The husband and wife in our lesson today tried to fool all their friends in their church group by pretending to be something they were not. Do you think they fooled God? Why not? (God is all-knowing!)

Opening Prayer

Father, You hate that which is false. It grieves Your heart when we are dishonest. There is no such thing as a little white lie. All falsehood is sin to you. I pray that this morning as we learn about horrible consequences to Ananias and Sapphira for telling lies, it will prick our hearts and cause us to strive to be honest in all we think, say, or do. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Memory Verse

The righteous hate what is false. (Proverbs 13:5)

And/or

Surely You desire truth in the inner parts. (Psalm 51:6)

Lesson

The last two weeks we've been learning about the early Christians. First, we learned how the Holy Spirit filled the believers and they began to speak in other languages so that everybody could know

about Jesus. Then, we learned about how the Holy Spirit gave Peter and John the power to heal the lame man. Today we're going to find out that even though the Holy Spirit had come and given the people special powers and gifts, they were not protected from Satan's temptations. And, Satan is still actively trying to make believers stumble.

Acts 4:32-35

All the believers were united in heart and mind. And they felt that what they owned was not their own, so they shared everything they had. (33) The apostles testified powerfully to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and God's great blessing was upon them all. (34) There were no needy people among them, because those who owned land or houses would sell them (35) and bring the money to the apostles to give to those in need.

The early Christians were so excited to know the truth about Jesus and God's love for them that they wanted to live together like one big happy family. The scriptures say, "*All the believers were in one heart and mind.*" This enabled them to share possessions and property. No one went hungry or was in need.

None of these Christians felt that what they had was their own, so they were able to give and share.

How do you feel about your things? Is it easy for you to share what you have with others? We need to remember that everything we have comes as a gift from God!

Acts 5:1

But there was a certain man named Ananias who, with his wife, Sapphira, sold some property.

This was a voluntary decision. If believers did choose to sell something they owned, the money was theirs to use as they wanted. But Ananias and Sapphira desired praise. They wanted to appear to be generous. So, they made a plan to lie...

Acts 5:2-6

He brought part of the money to the apostles, claiming it was the full amount. With his wife's consent, he kept the rest. (3) Then Peter said, "Ananias, why have you let Satan fill your heart? You lied to the Holy Spirit, and you kept some of the money for yourself. (4) The property was yours to sell or not sell, as you wished. And after selling it, the money was also yours to give away. How could you do a thing like this? You weren't lying to us but to God!" (5) As soon as Ananias heard these words, he fell to the floor and died. Everyone who heard about it was terrified. (6) Then some young men got up, wrapped him in a sheet, and took him out and buried him.

Meanwhile, his wife didn't know what had happened to her husband...

Acts 5:7-10

About three hours later his wife came in, not knowing what had happened. (8) Peter asked her, "Was this the price you and your husband received for your land?" "Yes," she replied, "that was the price." (9) And Peter said, "How could the two of you even think of conspiring to test the Spirit of the Lord like this? The young men who buried your husband are just outside the door, and they will carry you out, too." (10) Instantly, she fell to the floor and died. When the young men came in and saw that she was dead, they carried her out and buried her beside her husband.

What was Ananias' and Sapphira's sin? Was it stinginess? Greed? Covetousness? No, it was their choice whether or not to sell their land and how much to give. No, their sin was lying! Saying they gave the whole amount and trying to make people think they were more generous than they really were.

Have you ever lied so that others will think you are special? Have you ever pretended to be good in ways you really aren't so you'll look good? Have you ever bragged about yourself to make people like you? That's being a hypocrite.

[Teacher, write "*hypocrite*" on the board.] The word *Hypocrite* is a Greek word for "*stage actor*." That's why we use this word to describe someone who pretends to be what he is not. Greek hypocrites (actors) used to wear masks to play out their parts.

What are some hypocritical things people sometimes do in church? (Pretend to be big tithers, prayers, etc.)

When you are a hypocrite, a play actor, you may be able to fool some people with lies, but God is not fooled! He knows what you are really like inside. Don't think you can deceive God and escape His discipline.

Galatians 6:7 says,

Don't be misled—you cannot mock the justice of God. You will always harvest what you plant.

Why do you think God judged Ananias and Sapphira's dishonesty so harshly? All lying is bad, but it is especially destructive in a church. It prevents the Holy Spirit from working effectively. When we lie to try to deceive people about our righteousness, we destroy our testimony about Christ.

God hates lying. If you lie you have no part with Jesus. The Bible says that Satan is the father of lies.

John 8:44

For you are the children of your father the devil, and you love to do the evil things he does. He was a murderer from the beginning. He has always hated the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he lies, it is consistent with his character; for he is a liar and the father of lies.

God expects you to be truthful.

Object Lesson

[Teacher, give each child a lemon wedge and a gumdrop.]

Have you ever told a lie? Or, has anyone ever lied to you? How did it make you feel? Lying makes our heart attitude sour.

To demonstrate this, each time I say something untrue, lick the lemon. When I say something true, lick the candy. Here goes:

- The sky is purple and green.
- God knows when we're dishonest.
- Two plus four equals twenty.
- Kangaroo live in the ocean.
- God loves us.
- God wants us to be honest.
- Truth is sweet and good. [Let the children finish their gumdrops.]

CLOSING PRAYER

Father, help us to always be truthful with You and with others. And, help us to be honest in everything we do. We also ask You to help us to be generous with the things You have given us. Don't let me hold back from sharing with others, as Ananias and Sapphira did. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

Learning Centers

Craft Corner

Game Center

Use the following questions in a discussion:

Discussion questions:

1. When have you lied or had someone lie to you?
2. Did anyone know you lied? How did you feel?
3. What happens when we're not honest?
4. Why do you think honesty is important to God?
5. Does God always know if you're truthful? Explain.
6. Discuss how dishonesty is like a trap: one lie often leads to more, and before you know it, the lies have taken over.

