

# A Practical Study of ACTS:

## Take It To Them!

### “Putting the GO Back in the Gospel”

#### Study Number Four – Acts 5:1-42

Someone has said that when Satan can't accomplish His purposes externally, he'll begin to work internally.

Nehemiah, when he began to build a wall, found that Sanballet and Tobiah didn't want the wall built and outside gave all kinds of opposition. But then inside, the people started to get discouraged and the debris started to pile up. And the wall was only half built and the people wanted to quit. And that was far harder for Nehemiah than the external

As we come to chapter 5, we see the evil one looking for opportunities to get inside. In the first chapter of Acts we witnessed the Preliminary Preparations for Pentecost. We called it the beginning, the getting ready for the big event.

And then in chapter two we looked at Pentecost itself.

And in our last study we looked at the Healing of the lame man and the opposition began to manifest itself.

To refresh our minds, we ended our study with Barnabas,

whose name means “son of encouragement,” bringing all of the money he received from the sale of some property. And he got a lot of press from the body of Christ, the believers. They really appreciated what he had done.

There were a couple of people in the congregation that got a little bit green with envy over all of the appreciation and all of the things that he got. And so they have a desire to do the same thing. So when we get to chapter 5, we’re going to be looking at it.

This is not mandatory in the early church. Some people say this is a picture of communism—everybody has everything in common. And people are selling to take care of needs and all that. It’s not that at all. These people have such a genuine love and concern for each other that they’re just sharing. They’re meeting needs. And they’re creatively being led by the Spirit to do the things that they need to do to make it happen.

In *The Review of the News* of August 28, 1985 they quote Abigail VanBuren—who writes “Dear Abby”—as she described the five different governments in the world. She says:

**COMMUNISM**: You have two cows. The government takes both of them and gives you part of the milk.

**SOCIALISM**: You have two cows. The government takes one and gives it to your neighbor.

**FASCISM**: You have two cows. The government takes both

cows and sells you the milk.

NAZISM: You have two cows. The government takes both of them and shoots you.

BUREAUCRACY: You have two cows. The government takes both of them. Shoots one, milks the other, then pours the milk down the drain.  
(source unknown)

This is not communism that we're looking at. This is a group of people who've grown to have a deep love and appreciation for one another and their lives flow into one another. And that's why it's happening.

Now the big word "But" that starts our study is a great contrast from what we had in chapter 4. We begin our study with Acts 5:1.

**v. 1 But a certain man named Ananias, with his wife Sapphira, sold a piece of property.**

"But a certain man named Ananias, with his wife Sapphira, sold a piece of property."

**v. 2 And kept back some of the price for himself, with his wife's full knowledge, and having brought a certain part, he placed it at the feet of the apostles.**

"And kept back some of the price for himself, with his wife's

full knowledge, and having brought a certain part, he placed it at the feet of the apostles.”

We have the evil one getting on the inside. The corruption comes from within now. There is great danger here.

The name “Ananias” means “Yahweh is gracious” or “Jehovah is gracious.”

“Sapphira” means “beautiful.”

These two people certainly don’t live up to their names in the story which is quite obvious.

What is wrong here in Acts chapter 5? Well, Ananias is pretending to do something that he really isn’t doing. And the Lord deals with that very severely.

They had decided to sell the property and when they sold it they were going to give it to the benevolent fund of the local church, to the body. And then they decide, “hey, this is a lot of money. Let’s just keep back part of it and let’s say that we did this.”

So here comes Ananias down the aisle singing, “I surrender all, I surrender all. All to Thee my blessed Savior, I surrender all.” And in short he’s lying to God because he isn’t.

We all love to bask in the glow of grateful praise. And we want it so bad that sometimes we’ll do things like this in order to

get it. It's a serious, serious matter.

This has its counterpart. As soon as the children of Israel get into the Promised Land, Joshua said the Lord made it clear "you're not to take anything out of Jericho." But Achan sees a good Babylonish garment and some silver articles and decides, "Hey, I can't do without that." And he takes this stuff and stashes it in the floor of his tent. And it's tragic that the next battle they have at Ai, the children of Israel are defeated.

Sin, when it gets inside, corrupts. It paralyzes. It pollutes.

And the body of Christ, at this point, is protected by the Lord Himself in the judgment that takes place here in just a minute.

Look at verse 3:

**v. 3 But Peter said, "Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart, to lie to the Holy Spirit, and to keep back some of the price of the land?"**

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

Peter, as he looks at Ananias, asks him **FOUR QUESTIONS**. And it's just one right after the other. The fourth one is the big one but we'll start at the beginning.

1. “Why has Satan filled your heart, to lie to the Holy Spirit, and keep back some of the price of the land?”

Instead of the Spirit filling his heart, Satan is filling his heart.

This is almost an instant replay of what happened in the Upper room with Judas Iscariot.

We read in John 13:

### John 13:2

And during supper, the devil having already put into the heart of Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon, to betray Him,”

Realize Judas and Ananias act exactly the same way? Judas pretended to be something he was not and acted contrary to the way he should have acted. Ananias is pretending to be something he's not and acts contrary to the way that he should have.

The evil one is called “the father of lies.” The hypocrite is Satan's masterpiece. Some people don't understand this.

In Isaiah 14 when Satan is described, his 5-fold program is described in the five “I will's.” He says, “I will be like the Most High God. I want to be like Him but I don't want to be Him.” So his crowning glory is the person who pretends to be something he's not.

And Ananias is doing that. And Peter's first question to him is, "Why are you allowing him to fill your heart at this point?"

Job 13:16 says:

### Job 13:16

This also will be my salvation, for a hypocrite may not come before His presence.

Dr. Donald Grey Barnhouse used to say:

You know I won't let my congregation sing the third verse of that great old hymn "At Calvary" because it says:

"Now I've given to Jesus everything,  
Now I gladly own Him as my King.  
Now my raptured soul can only sing of Calvary."

And then he would say this: "Now I've given to Jesus everything,"—watch out Ananias! "Now I gladly own Him as my King,"—take care Sapphira!

Do you realize around here if this place were like the early church, we'd need a morgue in the basement and a mortician on the pastoral staff?  
(source unknown)

He was serious about pretension—about doing things that would make the Lord very angry.

This is the very thing that the Lord scores the most in His ministry. We can put beside that Matthew 23. We have the 7-fold woe of the Lord on the hypocrites.

Woe to you scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites.  
Woe to you scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites.  
Woe to you scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites.

He just continues to speak and so He's very severe with the matter of pretension.

Eugene H. Peterson talks about why we are phony and why we pretend. He says:

(Run With the Horses: The Quest for the Best in Life by Eugene H. Peterson)

I think they have lived for so long on the basis of outward appearances that they have no feel for inward reality. I think they were so impressed with the success of the reform that they thought that was all there was to it. We live in a culture where image is everything and substance is nothing. We live in a culture where a new beginning is far more attractive than a long follow-through. IMAGES are important. BEGINNINGS are important. But an image without substance is a lie. A beginning without a continuation is a lie.  
(source unknown)

What's he saying? We live to the surface. It's the image. We

like the new beginning. We all get excited. But it's not as neat to have the long follow-through, in essence is what he's saying

Verse 4—next question.

**v. 4 While it remained [unsold], did it not remain your own? And having sold it, was it not under your authority? Why did you resolve upon this deed in your heart? You did not lie to men, but to God.”**

“While it remained [unsold], did it not remain your own?”—**QUESTION #2.**

“You didn't have to do this. While it was still your property, it was still your property. And then he goes a step further with the next question.”

“And having sold it, was it not under your authority?”

“You could have had that money and done with it what you wanted to. That was your business”—question #3.

And then question #4. Here comes the biggie:

“Why did you resolve upon this deed in your heart? You did not lie to men, but rather you lied to God.”“

He told a lie.

In *Our Daily Bread* there was a cute little story that talks

about what happens when we tell a lie:

Telling a lie is only a stopgap measure. Sooner or later the truth comes out. The story is told of four high school boys who couldn't resist the temptation to skip morning classes. Each had been smitten with a bad case of spring fever. After lunch they showed up at school and reported to the teacher that their car had a flat tire. Much to their relief, she smiled and said, "Well, you missed a quiz this morning, so take your seats and get out a pencil and paper." Still smiling, she waited as they settled down and got ready for her questions. Then she said, "First question: Which tire was flat?"

(from *Our Daily Bread*, April 26, 1985)

It has to come out doesn't it?

Ruth Harms Calkin in her book *Lord, Could You Hurry a Little* says:

(Lord, Could You Hurry a Little by Ruth Harms Calkin)

"Lord, forgive me for telling You I love You when deep in my heart I frantically fight against Your will."

(source unknown)

How we pretend.

**v. 5 And Ananias, hearing these words, fell down and breathed his last; and there came a great fear upon all those who heard.**

“And Ananias, hearing these words,”—shocked Peter and the rest of the crew right there. He did three things. He:

“fell down and breathed his last; and there came a great fear upon all those who heard.”

Notice there’s no defense here at all. Peter speaks and Ananias drops dead.

Now did he have a cardiac arrest? Did he suffer such a blow to his ego that the shock brought him to his own demise? All we know is that God’s hand of judgment falls on Ananias.

**v. 6 And the younger men arose and covered him up, and having carried him out, buried him.**

“And the younger men arose and covered him up, and having carried him out, they buried him.”

It’s sad to think that the first burial in the Christian church was a hypocrite. But that’s the first one who dies.

Peter says:

1 Peter 4:17

For the time has come for judgment, that it must begin at the house of the Lord.

Now how do we deal with those matters when we see something that severe? Well living in our society and our culture we've been hardened to that sort of thing.

The apostle Paul tells the Corinthian church that if they would judge themselves they wouldn't be judged. But because they aren't doing it, there are a number of them that have died physically because of it. And they're taking the Lord's table in an unworthy manner. And as a result of that, they're eating and drinking judgment unto themselves.

There are THREE "GREATS" in the early church:

1. great POWER,
2. great GRACE, and
3. great FEAR.

Ray Steadman probably has the best statement on why this happened and what we're supposed to learn from a tragic event like this. He said:

Why did this terrible tragedy occur? Why was the Holy Spirit so severe? Is this what He always does with His church? No, it doesn't happen physically now but this is a picture by which God teaches us a sharp and penetrating lesson. ... so this

judgment of God pictures what happens in a person's life when he indulges in pretense. The moment we pretend to be something we are not we are immediately cut off from the flow of the life of Christ.  
(source unknown)

And he goes on to say that this doesn't mean that we lost our salvation. This just simply means that we are no longer a vital part of a living movement. And wherever we go we spread death rather than life.

We are unresponsive selves to the body of Christ. And if they had been allowed to live, they would have "paralyzed the power by polluting its purity." (G. Campbell Morgan)  
(source unknown)

**v. 7 Now there elapsed an interval of about three hours, and his wife came in, not knowing what had happened.**

"Now there elapsed an interval of about three hours, and his wife came in, not knowing what had happened."

Evidently she'd been gone. She got kind of worried about him being delayed and wondered what happened. Well last she'd heard he was going over to the believers' and was going to make this big present.

And so she comes walking in. Watch the questions now. The questions are designed to reveal that she is a cohort in this,

because that's all that's necessary. They had agreed to do this together.

**v. 8 And Peter responded to her, “Tell me whether you sold the land for so much?” And she said, “Yes, for so much.”**

“And Peter responded to her, ‘Tell me whether you sold the land for so much?’”—QUESTION—“And she said, ‘Why Yes, for so much.’”

“You know exactly how much he sold it for.”

**v. 9 Then Peter said to her, “Why is it that you have agreed together to put the Spirit of the Lord to the test? Behold, the feet of those who buried your husband are at the door, and they shall carry you out.”**

“Then Peter said to her, ‘Why is it that you have agreed together to put the Spirit of the Lord to the test?’—QUESTION #2—“Behold, the feet of those who buried your husband are at the door, and they shall carry you out.””

**v. 10 And she fell immediately at his feet, and breathed her last; and the young men, having entered, found her dead, and having carried her out, they buried her beside her husband.**

“And she fell immediately at his feet, and breathed her last;

and the young men, having entered, found her dead, and having carried her out, they buried her beside her husband.”

C. S. Lewis said:

Guilty partners in life, and companions in death, the names of Ananias and Sapphira ... belonging to the company of Achan, Judas [Iscairiot] and Demas; [who forsook the Lord because of his love for this present world.]

(source unknown)

Now immediately the question comes:

Why did this happen?

What kind of people are these?

Were they Christians? or were they not?

Well we have TWO CHOICES.

We can decide that they were not Christians. They were associating with the body of believers but they were not willing to go through the process of coming into a relationship with Jesus Christ.

This is Judas Iscairiot. He was with Christ but never in Christ. He was always with them, and took his part in the ministry. But remember, by an act of his will, he chose to turn to go to his own place. We looked at that in study #1.

This is possible.

1. They're not Christians.

They've piddled and pretended too long. Time ran out before they scored. They just didn't realize they were in the last two minutes.

2 Peter 3:9 says:

2 Peter 3:9

The Lord is not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance.

But there comes a time when it's the last time.

That last chance and that last opportunity is going to come!  
Just as sure as we live.

Today has been a gift of life from God's hand. We didn't have anything to do about it. God gave it to us. It's a gift. And what we're doing with it is going to determine our eternal destiny.

Ananias and Sapphira could be going through the motions and this was their last chance.

2. The other possibility is that they could be Christians.

And being Christians, this is called the “sin unto death” in 1 John 5, James 5 and 1 Corinthians 11.

There is a process that the Lord goes through with believers. It’s a three-fold process designed for recovery.

If He doesn’t get a favorable response in the first two phases of this program of recovery, then phase number three leaves Him with no alternative.

The way God works is summarized with THREE C’s:

## 1. CIRCUMSTANCES.

He creates circumstances around us to get us to lovingly respond to deal with that pretension in our life, to deal with that unethical behavior—that sinful problem that keeps coming around all the time. He provides us many opportunities to deal with it by circumstance. That’s the gentle side of God.

## 2. CHASTENING—which isn’t so pleasant.

Hebrews 12 says: “no chastening is joyful for the present.” (ref. Hebrews 12: 11)

This is when we’re taken on a whaling expedition and God applies the board of education to the seat of knowledge and we start to hurt. It’s doing something drastic in life to get our attention—this has got to be taken care of!

### 3. COME HOME.

And then we come to phrase number three and we never know when that is. As long as you resist and rebel, we'll never know when phase three is going to come. And that's come on to the house. "You're going to be better with Me here than you are there. You're my stubborn, rebellious child. It's time to COME HOME."

This could have been phrase 3. They could have been brought home.

**v. 11 And great fear came upon the whole church, and upon all who heard of these things.**

"And great fear came upon the whole church, and upon all who heard of these things."

Imagine, we open your newspaper on Monday morning and the headline says, "Two Fatalities at Church This Week."

That would kind of get our attention and we would begin to read to try to see what in the world happened over at the church where two people lost their lives.

Another little account in *Our Daily Bread* that was written on this particular story is an illustration of two women who lost their lives in an apartment fire simply because their smoke detector did not go off:

Two young women lost their lives in a fire that swept through their apartment while they slept. Ironically, the house was equipped with a smoke detector that was in good working order. But it has failed to operate. Why? The fire inspectors concluded that the safety device had been deactivated for a party that was held at the girls' home the night before. Someone had disconnected the unit, as I have sometimes done with my own, to keep it from sounding off because of the smoke from cooking or candles.

In Acts 5 we have another example of two people who probably de-activated an early alarm system that could have saved their lives. Ananias and Sapphira must have quenched the Holy Spirit and quieted their consciences, believing that they had plenty of good reasons for doing what they did. Why should they be overly sensitive to that annoying inner voice when the money they brought would benefit others, even though they lied about it. Besides, they had probably rationalized many times before and nothing happened.

But there was a last time, and the patience of God came to an end and they both lost their lives. If we could only realize that the Holy Spirit was not given to us merely to annoy us like a highly sensitive smoke detector. He doesn't sound false alarms. When he activates our conscience by bringing to mind a principle of God's word, it is really His love and wisdom in action. So why quench Him [when He's working in our lives]?

(from *Our Daily Bread*, December 7, year unknown)

One theologian said:

“This is repulsive. This is horrible. This is the God of the Old Testament! I want the God of the New Testament! This God of love and gush and grace and all that stuff.”  
(source unknown)

R. C. Sproul says:

(The Holiness of God by R. C. Sproul)

It is the confusion between justice and mercy that makes us shrink in horror when we read the stories of Nadab, Abihu, and Uzzah. [And of course you could put Ananias and Sapphira here] When God’s justice falls, we are offended because we think God owes perpetual mercy. We must not take His grace for granted. We must never lose our capacity to be amazed by His grace. We sing the song, “Amazing Justice.” Our lyrics tend to go like this:

Amazing Justice, cruel and sharp  
That wounds a saint like me:  
I’m so darn good it makes no sense—  
The tower fell on me!  
(source unknown)

What’s he saying? We are not overwhelmed enough with God’s grace that when we get shocked by His justice, it just blows us out of the tub. This is the other side of God.

God wouldn't be God if there weren't consequences for disobedience. This is an act of His justice to protect the birth of the body of Christ of believers.

**v. 12 And through the hands of the apostles many signs and wonders were taking place among the people; and they were all with one accord in Solomon's covered colonnade.**

“And through the hands of the apostles many signs and wonders were taking place among the people; and they were all with one accord in Solomon's covered colonnade.”

Notice where they're still meeting? They're still up at the temple. They're in “one accord.”

“And through the hands of the apostles” many things are still “taking place” and happening “among the people.”

There are no people here that have:

**PROFESSION** without **POSSESSION** and

**RELIGION** without **RELATIONSHIP**.

They're all of “one accord.”

But look at verse 13. This helps us understand that Ananias and Sapphira probably were not Christians.

**v. 13 But none of the rest was daring to be entering into fellowship with them; but the people were esteeming them highly.**

“But none of the rest was daring to be entering into fellowship with them; but the people were esteeming them highly.”

We have a lot of people today that socially show up at the church. They don't have any relationship with Christ but they're going through the motions of ritual. They have a lot of religion but they don't know anything about a personal relationship with Christ. And they show up and go through the motions and they get away with it.

And these people are saying, “Hey, Ananias and Sapphira were good folks! Hey we better shape up! We can't be this way!”

What happened as a result of that judgment? People stopped playing games. And they stopped playing games with God and with His people.

The people that were going through the motions got shook! They started respecting them, but they respected them from a distance. They didn't get in there with them.

Look what verse 14 says:

**v. 14 And those believing on the Lord were the more constantly being added to the number, crowds both of men and women;**

“And those believing on the Lord were the more constantly being added to the number, crowds both of men and women;”

People were still coming to Christ. Even more were coming! Coming on the single condition of believing, and they were “being added to the number.”

What’s that tell us? If we’re going through a rough time now, it could be that God is going to get greater fruitfulness as a result of the pruning process that’s going on in our life. God is going to work. He’s going to use that. He’s going to get benefit and blessing from that.

This seems to indicate that there were a bunch of people who are associating with acceptance. Who were there professing but had no possession of a personal relationship.

Now look at verse 15.

**v. 15 to such an extent that they were even carrying out those who were ill into the streets, and placing them upon cots and pallets, in order that the shadow of Peter, as he was coming, might overshadow some of them.**

“to such an extent that they were even carrying out those who

were ill into the streets, and placing them upon cots and pallets, in order that the shadow of Peter, as he was coming, might overshadow some of them.”

Now some people look at this and they say, “Boy, wouldn’t it be great if we could have this today?” And they get all caught up in a healing ministry.

The body of Christ is really decimated by the healers and the non-healers. They call it that but that’s not really a true indication.

God can heal in answer to our prayer if that’s His desire for someone to continue to live. But God uses doctors, too, and medicine in the process of doing it.

The big problem with the modern healing movement is it always seems that the healing resides in the recipient.

In the New Testament, the healing happened to reside in the healer. These people are putting people out on the cots so “the shadow of Peter,” the healer who has the power of healing within him, would cast over them and as a result be healed.

Jesus had the very same ability. A woman reaches out and touches the hem of His garment and she’s instantaneously healed. (ref. Luke 8:40-48)

There are no people on the face of the earth today that have the power of healing in them! We’ve made such a caricature of

New Testament healing and say, “This is what ought to be happening in the church today.” And it isn’t happening. Let’s face it! We don’t have any healers that have the power of healing. If they did they could raise the dead and empty the hospitals. But they don’t. They just make bucks off poor widows who have some psychosomatic illness that’ll come and hope to have enough faith in order to get themselves together and then grace the treasury.

That’s basically what’s happening in the manipulation of so many folks on this whole business and misunderstanding of healing.

**v. 16 And also the people from the cities in the vicinity of Jerusalem were coming together, carrying sick ones and those who were being troubled by unclean spirits; and they were all being healed.**

“And also the people from the cities in the vicinity of Jerusalem were coming together, carrying sick ones and those who were being troubled by unclean spirits; and they were”—WHAT?—“all being healed.”

There weren’t any people going away saying, “Hey you don’t have enough faith so you ain’t getting it!”

This was a unanimous movement. It was a sign/gift of the early church that was demonstrated. God uses it.

Dwight L. Moody said:

(The Life of Dwight L. Moody by W. R. Moody)

God heals through doctors and medicine. Do you ask what I would do if I were ill? I'd get the best doctor in town, trust in him, and trust in the Lord to work through him.

(source unknown)

And then Ruth Harms Calkin was seriously ill when she said this:

(Lord, You Love to Say Yes by Ruth Harms Calkin)

Lord—

Here in my narrow hospital bed

I wait with brooding apprehension.

I trusted You exclusively

I prayed with fervent supplication.

I had so achingly hoped

You would touch and heal me

Without medication

Without the aid of man.

Wouldn't this give You great glory?

Wouldn't this enhance Your reputation?

I'm perplexed, Lord

I'm entangled in brambles of doubt

Surely You can extricate me....

[And then she always adds what the Lord says]

Dear child, listen!  
I have a plan for your doctor, too.  
I have given him the sacred assignment  
Of becoming My instrument of healing  
As we work together in your behalf.  
So trust Me to create a double joy:  
Yours and his.  
(source unknown)

There's so many of these folks that say, "Tell God that you believe so therefore He's obligated to heal." We don't tell God anything. We never find Jesus questioning the authority of the Father.

He just simply says, "Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me. But nevertheless, not my will but Yours be done."  
(ref. Luke 22:42)

And here in this situation, the power resided in Peter himself. Placed there by the Spirit of God for the purpose of a designed demonstration that God is at work in their midst.

And we can never fully understand what goes on when some people get well and some people die.

Paula D'Arcy lost her husband and her little daughter in a car accident. She wrote a very mature book on grief and suffering called *Where the Wind Begins*. She says:

(Where the Wind Begins by Paula D'Arcy)

But my detractors will have more arguments and, yes, I do know that in history's course God has at times stepped in and many could accept the authority of free will, whatever it is, until this issue of God's seeming favoritism arises. Mary's child lies sick and dying. Her family, friends, and church pray for the child to live and she does. She is cured beyond explanation. A miracle. God intervened. Now Carol's child lies sick and dying. Her family, friends, and church pray for the child to live and she doesn't. There is no cure, no miracle, no intervention. I have lived in the depth of this argument because I was a Carol and the human question can't help but burst from every Carol's heart, "Why? It isn't fair!" How can God choose one weeping mother over another, or one suffering patient, or one lonely person. Such despair is followed by a search for formulas. Mary's miracle can be yours if you pray this prayer; if you use this ointment; if you visit this shrine; if you have this many people praying; if you really believe; if you never doubt. Such solutions are tricky, again, because they cover another false assumption. They assume that there is a way for humans to control God and force Him to intervene; that there is a magic formula. But if we can control Him, then is he God? And isn't fairness a human term defined in infinite ways, perceived with human eyes and hearts and thus limited, very limited. God is not just a super human, He is Himself. His fairness and His justice are divine, eternal. His justice takes all things into account. Things we can't know.  
(source unknown)

Ruth had a girl lying next to her in the hospital who was a

younger mother and who was about to die. And so she said this prayer:

(Lord, Could You Hurry a Little? by Ruth Harms Calkin)

Lord

As I lie here in my hospital bed  
Between clean white sheets  
My heart swells with gratitude  
That the small benign tumor  
Is no longer a part of my body.  
Vividly I remember  
How You gently whispered, “Fear not”  
The night before my surgery.

The pretty young woman  
In the bed next to mine  
Has just had her third surgery.  
Her painful malignancy  
Necessitates heavy sedation.  
She has three children  
All under ten years of age.  
A year ago her husband left her—  
Without warning or financial aid.  
Lord, what did You whisper to her  
The night before her surgery?  
(source unknown)

We’ll never explain it. God is sovereign. He can heal, or He can not heal. And His ultimate purpose is to “work all things

together for good.” (ref. Romans 8:28) So we’re forced into the corner of trust and that’s where He wants us. Just to trust Him. To ask Him, but if He doesn’t, that’s His business not ours.

**v. 17** **But the high priest rose up and all those with him, the sect which is of the Sadducees, were filled with jealousy.**

“But the high priest rose up”—now here comes the opposition—“and all those with him, the sect which is of the Sadducees, were filled with jealousy.”

**v. 18** **And they laid their hands upon the apostles, and put them in a public jail.**

“And they laid their hands upon the apostles, and put them in a public jail.”

**v. 19** **But an angel of the Lord during the night opened the doors of the prison, and taking them out he said:**

“But an angel of the Lord during the night opened the doors of the prison, and taking them out he said:”

**v. 20** **“Be going on your way, and having taken a stand, be speaking in the temple to the people all the words of this life.”**

“Be going on your way, and having taken a stand, be speaking in the temple to the people all the words of this life.”

Now this is just exactly like the Resurrection of Christ. These people come out there on Sunday morning and they find the stone rolled away.

Now why was the stone rolled away? Well it certainly was not rolled away to let Jesus out. He was already gone. The stone was rolled away to let the people in.

And we don't have to open a jail either to get these people out. The angel of the Lord comes, takes them out! And when they get there, they're going to find out it's all locked up the next morning.

**v. 21 And having heard this, they went about daybreak into the temple and began teaching. Now when the high priest and those with him had come, they called together the Sanhedrin and all the Council of elders of the sons of Israel, and they sent to the prison-house to have them brought.**

“And having heard this, they went about daybreak into the temple and began teaching. Now when the high priest and those who were with him had come, they called together the Sanhedrin and all the Council of elders of the sons of Israel, and they sent to the prison-house to have them brought.”

Realize there are five Old Testament terms there? Remember

we could pretend like we're at the Synagogue and we have the Star of David hanging around our neck? We could relate to these people looking for the Messiah. That's the way we study the book of Acts.

Look there. We have

1. "temple,"
2. "high priest,"
3. "Sanhedrin"—that's the Jewish ruling body,
4. the "elders," and
5. "the sons of Israel."

Five terms that all communicate that.

**v. 22 But the officers who came did not find them in the prison; and having returned, they reported back,**

"But the officers who came did not find them in the prison; and having returned, they reported back,"

**v. 23 saying, "We found the prison-house locked quite securely and the guards were standing at the doors; but when we opened up, we found no one inside."**

"saying, 'We found the prison-house locked quite securely and

the guards were standing at the doors; but when we opened up, we found no one inside.”

**v. 24 Now when the captain of the temple guard and the chief priests heard these words, they were greatly perplexed about them as to what might become of this.**

“Now when the captain of the temple guard and the chief priests heard these words, they were greatly perplexed about them as to what might become of this.”

**v. 25 Then a certain one having come, brought word to them: “Behold! the men whom you put in prison are in the temple standing and teaching the people!”**

“Then a certain one having come, brought word to them: ‘Behold! the men whom you put in prison are in the temple standing and teaching the people!’”

Well now we have to make another arrest.

**v. 26 Then the captain, having gone with the officers, was bringing them without violence, for they were fearing the people, lest they should be stoned.**

“Then the captain, having gone with the officers, was bringing them without violence, for they were fearing the people, lest they should be stoned.”

**v. 27 And having brought them, they stood them in the midst of the Council. And the high priest questioned them,**

“And having brought them, they stood them in the midst of the Council. And the high priest questioned them,”

**v. 28 saying, “With a charge we commanded you not to be teaching in this name, and behold! you have filled Jerusalem with your teaching, and you are intending to bring upon us the blood of this man.”**

“saying, ‘With a charge we commanded you not to be teaching in this name, and behold! you have filled Jerusalem with your teaching, and you are intending to bring upon us the blood of this man.’”

**v. 29 But Peter and the apostles answering said: “It is a necessity to be obeying God rather than men.**

“But Peter and the apostles answering said: ‘It is a necessity to be obeying God rather than men.’”

We’ve already seen that.

**v. 30 The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom you killed, hanging Him upon a cross.**

“The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom you killed, hanging Him upon a cross.”

Look how he introduces Jesus to them in verse 31.

**v. 31 This one God exalted to His right hand as a Leader and a Savior, to give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins.**

“This one God exalted to His right hand as a Leader and a Savior, to give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins.”

Make no mistake about it, the world needs a Savior not a helper. Jesus Christ is that Savior.

**v. 32 And we are witnesses of these things; and so is the Holy Spirit, whom God gave to those who are obeying Him.”**

“And we are witnesses of these things; and so is the Holy Spirit, whom God gave to those who are obeying Him.”

**v. 33 Now when they heard this, they were cut in two and were intending to slay them.**

“Now when they heard this, they were cut in two and were intending to slay them.”

This is a complete replay of the life of Christ. It's like they're so much under conviction they're ready to kill him. Gamaliel, one of the apostle Paul's seminary professors, is a prominent citizen on the Sanhedrin. And he's going to speak here and

he's going to give some tremendous advice.

**v. 34 But a certain Pharisee named Gamaliel, a teacher of the Law, respected by all the people, stood up in the Council, and gave orders to put the men outside for a brief period.**

“But a certain Pharisee named Gamaliel, a teacher of the Law, respected by all the people, stood up in the Council, and gave orders to put the men outside for a brief period.”

He has a little speech he wants to give. Now watch this. This is so great.

**v. 35 And he said to them: “Men, Israelites, be taking heed to yourselves with regard to what you are about to be doing to these men,**

“And he said to them: ‘Men, Israelites, be taking heed to yourselves with regard to what you are about to be doing to these men,’”

**v. 36 for before these days there arose Theudas, claiming to be somebody; and a group of about four hundred men joined up with him, who was killed, and all as many as were obeying him were broken up and came to nothing.**

“for before these days there arose Theudas, claiming to be somebody; and a group of about four hundred men joined up

with him, who was killed, and all as many as were obeying him were broken up and came to nothing.”

**v. 37 After this man there arose Judas of Galilee in the days of the census, and drew away some people after him. That one also perished, and all those who were obeying him were scattered.**

“After this man there arose Judas of Galilee in the days of the census, and drew away some people after him. That one also perished, and all those who were obeying him were scattered.”

**v. 38 And so in the present case, I am saying to you, stay away from these men and let them alone, because if this plan or this work be of men, it will be overthrown.**

“And so in the present case, I am saying to you, stay away from these men and let them alone, because if this plan or this work be of men, it will be overthrown.”

**v. 39 But if it is of God, you will not be able to overthrow them; or else you may even be found fighting against God.”**

“But if it is of God, you will not be able to overthrow them; or else you may even be found fighting against God.”

2 Corinthians 2:14

Now thanks be unto God, who is always leading us in a constant pageant of triumph.

### Romans 8:37-38

But in all these things we overwhelmingly conquer through Him who loved us....

### Romans 8:31

If God be for us, who can be against us?

Us and God make a majority. If we're in His will and we're doing His thing, nothing's going to stop us.

Theudas wasn't. Neither was Judas. They both were doing things for their own selfish purposes and they came to naught.

What's that teach us? That teaches us that the rule is of the divine will, that it will flourish. The rule teaches that we can't overthrow something when it is God's purpose that's being accomplished.

**v. 40 And they were persuaded by him; and having called the apostles, having beaten them, they ordered them not to be speaking in the name of Jesus, and released them.**

“And they were persuaded by him; and having called the apostles, having beaten them, they ordered them not to be

speaking in the name of Jesus, and then they released them.”

So they went out crying—is that what it said?

**v. 41 So they went on their way rejoicing from the presence of the Sanhedrin, that they were deemed worthy to be dishonored for the sake of the name.**

“So they went on their way rejoicing from the presence of the Sanhedrin, that they were deemed worthy to be dishonored for the sake of the name.”

**v. 42 And every day, in the temple and at home, they did not cease teaching and giving out the good news that the Christ is Jesus.**

“And every day, in the temple and at home, they did not cease teaching and giving out the good news that”—WHAT?—“the Christ is Jesus.”

The Messiah has already come. It’s in the Person of Jesus!

And the real issue to the Jews in Jerusalem is, Jesus the Christ? Yes!

And the message is all focused on the Person of the Lord Jesus.

We got 10 lessons out of that study.

Lesson #1: Lying, with regard to spiritual matters, has a tremendous price attached.

Lesson #2: Satan filled the heart of Ananias instead of the Spirit of God.

Lesson #3: If Ananias and Sapphira are Christians, this is what is known as the sin unto death.

Lesson #4: Healing, in the New Testament, is always 100% and permanent.

Lesson #5: The Lord protects and provides for His own when they are in difficulties.

The Lord came down and opened the prison gates, got them out and told them to keep on teaching.

Lesson #6: It is necessary for us to be obeying God rather than men.

Remember in chapter 4 it was a question: “Should we obey God rather than you?”

And now it’s a necessity.

Lesson #7: If God is involved in your program, there is no way of stopping you.

He’s going to bless us. He’s going to meet our needs.

Lesson #8: Nothing can affect the apostles' joy.

They just keep on going—even joyful to be able to suffer for the cause of Christ.

Lesson #9: It is a privilege to suffer for the cause of Christ.

### Philippians 1:29

For unto you it's given on the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on Him but also to suffer for His sake.

Lesson #10: They kept on teaching and giving out the good news.

So much of what goes on in the body of Christ among believers today, the Spirit never really has a chance to manifest Himself among the believers because He's so grieved and so quenched.

Now let's face it, this is exactly where a lot of us live. We live in a community of pretenders. People who are not real.

And as a result we go through the motions to come and to read and study and maybe get a little buzz, but nothing really happens to change our lives. The Spirit is grieved and quenched.

John MacArthur talks about this whole business of what is missing in the body of Christ:

(The Ultimate Priority by John MacArthur, Jr.)

Tragically, the element of worship is largely missing amid all the activity that goes on in the church! [And I would just say with that, the evidence of the Spirit among us.] A number of years ago I read a newspaper account of a christening party in a wealthy Boston suburb. The parents had opened their palatial home to friends and relatives, who had come to celebrate the wonderful event. As the party was moving along and the people were having a wonderful time eating and drinking and celebrating and enjoying one another, somebody said, “By the way, where is the baby?”

The heart of the mother jumped, and she instantly left the room and rushed into the master bedroom, where she had left the baby asleep in the middle of the massive bed. The baby was dead, smothered by the coats of the guests.

I’ve often thought about that in reference to how the Lord Jesus Christ is treated in His own church. We are busy supposedly celebrating Him, while He is smothered by the coats of the guests.

(source unknown)

We don’t want this to be just another Bible study. We don’t want it to be another part of satisfying intellectual curiosity by studying a book. We would want it to be a place where we decide, as the Spirit of God speaks to us, specifically about what we do in light of what we study.

Father, we come to You and pray that Your Holy Spirit might

Speak to our hearts. Take this serious message and apply the principles of it to where we live. Father, we realize the apostle Paul constantly exercised himself to have a conscience void of offense toward God and toward men. We just pray that our hearts might be right with You. If there has been sin, we've confessed it and repented of it and dealt with it and we're open and right with You as far as we know. And as the Holy Spirit shines within our hearts, we pray that we would cooperate and say with David, "Search me, O God and know my heart. Try me and know my thoughts and see if there be any wicked way in me. And then lead me in the way everlasting." We are so thankful that You sent Jesus and that He purchased our pardon and He paid the whole price and became our Savior when we by faith received Him into our lives. If there's someone without Christ, we pray that they would make that big decision. It's been association without acceptance. That they would right now experience the joy of the new birth by receiving the Lord Jesus Christ. In the Savior's name we pray. Amen.

Copyright © 2024 by Bible Teaching Resources by Don Anderson Ministries. The author's teacher notes incorporated quoted, paraphrased and summarized material from a variety of sources, all of which have been appropriately credited to the best of our ability. Quotations particularly reside within the realm of fair use. It is the nature of teacher notes to contain references that may prove difficult to accurately attribute. Any use of material without proper citation is unintentional. Teacher notes have been compiled by Genevieve Martin.

# A Practical Study of ACTS:

## Take It To Them!

### “Putting the GO Back in the Gospel”

#### STUDY NUMBER FOUR – ACTS 5:1-42

#### NOTES

v. 1 But a certain man named Ananias, with his wife Sapphira, sold a piece of property.

v. 2 And kept back some of the price for himself, with his wife’s full knowledge, and having brought a certain part, he placed it at the feet of the apostles.

v. 3 But Peter said, “Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart, to lie to the Holy Spirit, and to keep back some of the price of the land?”

v. 4 While it remained [unsold], did it not remain your own? And having sold it, was it not under your authority? Why did you resolve upon this deed in your heart? You did not lie to men, but to God.”

v. 5 And Ananias, hearing these words, fell down and breathed his last; and there came a great fear upon all those who heard.

v. 6 And the younger men arose and covered him up, and having carried him out, buried him.

v. 7 Now there elapsed an interval of about three hours, and his wife came in, not knowing what had happened.

v. 8 And Peter responded to her, “Tell me whether you sold the land for so much?” And she said, “Yes, for so much.”

v. 9 Then Peter said to her, “Why is it that you have agreed together to put the Spirit of the Lord to the test? Behold, the feet of those who buried your husband are at the door, and they shall carry you out.”

v. 10 And she fell immediately at his feet, and breathed her last; and the young men, having entered, found her dead, and having carried her out, they buried her beside her husband.

v. 11 And great fear came upon the whole church, and upon all who heard of these things.

## NOTES

v. 12 And through the hands of the apostles many signs and wonders were taking place among the people; and they were all with one accord in Solomon's covered colonnade.

v. 13 But none of the rest was daring to be entering into fellowship with them; but the people were esteeming them highly.

v. 14 And those believing on the Lord were the more constantly being added to the number, crowds both of men and women;

v. 15 to such an extent that they were even carrying out those who were ill into the streets, and placing them upon cots and pallets, in order that the shadow of Peter, as he was coming, might overshadow some of them.

v. 16 And also the people from the cities in the vicinity of Jerusalem were coming together, carrying sick ones and those who were being troubled by unclean spirits; and they were all being healed.

v. 17 But the high priest rose up and all those with him, the sect which is of the Sadducees, were filled with jealousy.

v. 18 And they laid their hands upon the apostles, and put them in a public jail.

v. 19 But an angel of the Lord during the night opened the doors of the prison, and taking them out he said:

v. 20 "Be going on your way, and having taken a stand, be speaking in the temple to the people all the words of this life."

v. 21 And having heard this, they went about daybreak into the temple and began teaching. Now when the high priest and those with him had come, they called together the Sanhedrin and all the Council of elders of the sons of Israel, and they sent to the prison-house to have them brought.

v. 22 But the officers who came did not find them in the prison; and having returned, they reported back,

v. 23 saying, "We found the prison-house locked quite securely and the guards were standing at the doors; but when we opened up, we found no one inside."

v. 24 Now when the captain of the temple guard and the chief priests heard these words, they were greatly perplexed about them as to what might become of this.

v. 25 Then a certain one having come, brought word to them: "Behold! the men whom you put in prison are in the temple standing and teaching the people!"

v. 26 Then the captain, having gone with the officers, was bringing them without violence, for they were fearing the people, lest they should be stoned.

## NOTES

v. 27 And having brought them, they stood them in the midst of the Council. And the high priest questioned them,

v. 28 saying, “With a charge we commanded you not to be teaching in this name, and behold! you have filled Jerusalem with your teaching, and you are intending to bring upon us the blood of this man.”

v. 29 But Peter and the apostles answering said: “It is a necessity to be obeying God rather than men.

v. 30 The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom you killed, hanging Him upon a cross.

v. 31 This one God exalted to His right hand as a Leader and a Savior, to give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins.

v. 32 And we are witnesses of these things; and so is the Holy Spirit, whom God gave to those who are obeying Him.”

v. 33 Now when they heard this, they were cut in two and were intending to slay them.

v. 34 But a certain Pharisee named Gamaliel, a teacher of the Law, respected by all the people, stood up in the Council, and gave orders to put the men outside for a brief period.

v. 35 And he said to them: “Men, Israelites, be taking heed to yourselves with regard to what you are about to be doing to these men,

v. 36 for before these days there arose Theudas, claiming to be somebody; and a group of about four hundred men joined up with him, who was killed, and all as many as were obeying him were broken up and came to nothing.

v. 37 After this man there arose Judas of Galilee in the days of the census, and drew away some people after him. That one also perished, and all those who were obeying him were scattered.

v. 38 And so in the present case, I am saying to you, stay away from these men and let them alone, because if this plan or this work be of men, it will be overthrown.

v. 39 But if it is of God, you will not be able to overthrow them; or else you may even be found fighting against God.”

v. 40 And they were persuaded by him; and having called the apostles, having beaten them, they ordered them not to be speaking in the name of Jesus, and released them.

v. 41 So they went on their way rejoicing from the presence of the Sanhedrin, that they were deemed worthy to be dishonored for the sake of the name.

v. 42 And every day, in the temple and at home, they did not cease teaching and giving out the good news that the Christ is Jesus.

**QUESTIONS:**

1. Read Acts 5:1-42 and in your own words pull out the main thought of this passage.

---

---

---

2. What did Ananias and Sapphira do wrong according to verse 2?

---

---

---

3. What question does Peter ask in verse 3?

---

---

---

4. What was the response of the church in verse 11 to these acts of judgment?

---

---

---

Copyright © 2024 by Bible Teaching Resources by Don Anderson Ministries. The author's teacher notes incorporate quoted, paraphrased and summarized material from a variety of sources, all of which have been appropriately credited to the best of our ability. Quotations particularly reside within the realm of fair use. It is the nature of teacher notes to contain references that may prove difficult to accurately attribute. Any use of material without proper citation is unintentional. Teacher notes have been compiled by Genevieve Martin.

5. What was the response of the high priest and the Sadducees, according to verse 17?

---

---

---

6. How did the Lord deliver them from prison, and what did He tell them to do, according to verses 19 & 20?

---

---

---

7. What is the counsel of Gamaliel in verses 35-39?

---

---

---

8. What was the apostles' response, according to verses 41 & 42?

---

---

---

9. What verse in the study has meant the most to you?

---

---

---

10. What lesson have you learned from this study?

---

---

---

**LESSONS FROM THE PASSAGE:**

What are some of the lessons we can learn from this particular study?

LESSON #1: Lying, with regard to spiritual matters, has a tremendous price attached.

LESSON #2: Satan filled the heart of Ananias instead of the Spirit.

LESSON #3: If Ananias and Sapphira are Christians, this is what is known as the sin unto death.

LESSON #4: Healing, in the New Testament, is always 100% and permanent.

LESSON #5: The Lord protects and provides for His own when they are in difficulties.

LESSON #6: It is necessary for us to be obeying God rather than man.

Copyright © 2024 by Bible Teaching Resources by Don Anderson Ministries. The author's teacher notes incorporate quoted, paraphrased and summarized material from a variety of sources, all of which have been appropriately credited to the best of our ability. Quotations particularly reside within the realm of fair use. It is the nature of teacher notes to contain references that may prove difficult to accurately attribute. Any use of material without proper citation is unintentional. Teacher notes have been compiled by Genevieve Martin.

LESSON #7: If God is involved in your program, there is no way of stopping you.

LESSON #8: Nothing can affect the apostles' joy.

LESSON #9: It is a privilege to suffer for the cause of Christ.

LESSON #10: They kept on teaching and giving out the good news that the Christ is Jesus.