

# Living Generously

## Summary and Goal

As we saw previously in our sessions on the Book of Acts, the Holy Spirit was given to us to seal our salvation, bring us into the family of God, and empower us for His mission. In this session, we will examine part of that mission. First, we will discuss living generously with the gifts He's given us, knowing that nothing we own is actually ours. Second, we will look at living honestly before God and others, noticing in particular the difference between living an exposed life of sacrificial generosity (like Jesus) versus a hidden life of selfishness (like Satan, Ananias, and Sapphira). Finally, we will consider living reverently, understanding that our salvation brings accountability from God and His church.

## Session Outline

1. God's people are to live generously (Acts 4:32-35).
2. God's people are to live honestly (Acts 4:36-5:2).
3. God's people are to live reverently (Acts 5:3-11).

*Background Passage: Acts 4:32-5:16*

## Session in a Sentence

God calls on the church, His Son's bride, to practice heartfelt generosity and live reverently before Him.

## Christ Connection

Ananias and Sapphira's deceptive action was a sin against the Holy Spirit. The Spirit distinguishes between giving that is from a heart of generosity and giving that is from a heart of greed and deceit. The Holy Spirit prompts us to share our resources and give generously to those in need, following the example of Jesus, who gave up heavenly riches to share His inheritance with all who trust in Him.

## Missional Application

Because God has lavished upon us the riches of salvation and new life in Christ, we live in unity, generous and honest, as we reflect Christ's truth and love.

# Group Time

## GROUP MEMBER CONTENT

*Group content found in the Daily Discipleship Guide is included in this shaded area throughout the session.*

## Introduction

**EXPLAIN:** Use the paragraphs on page 57 in the DDG to tell the story about an elderly man and a boy sharing dessert weekly and the boy not sharing his treats when he had the chance.

Every Saturday at noon, an elderly man sits down in a booth at his favorite diner. Without fail, a father and his son come in around the same time for their weekly daddy-son lunch. The elderly man always orders a large brownie with his meal. And every week, when the boy walks past his table, he always offers to split the brownie with the boy. The boy, not surprisingly, always accepts his offer.

One Saturday morning, the boy came in with a bag of tiny chocolate candies. When the elderly gentleman noticed, he leaned over with a twinkle in his eye and said, “Want to split it?” The boy thought for a moment and said, “Sorry! These chocolates are way too small to split in half!”

**INTERACT:** Ask group members the following question.



How would you have responded to the boy? (be prepared to give an answer of your own to jump-start the conversation)

**SAY:** How often do we resemble that little boy? God has shared abundantly with us, and yet, we live as though we never have enough—at least not enough to share with anyone else. We forget so quickly that God has blessed us both materially and spiritually in more ways than we can count. We are not all blessed the same, but we all have at least one area of our lives that is shareable; to name just a few: time, attention, space, money, talents, and skills. God lavishes gifts on us so that we might be a blessing to others.

**SUMMARIZE:** In this session, we will examine part of the mission for which the Holy Spirit empowers us. First, we will discuss living generously with the gifts He’s given us, knowing that nothing we own is actually ours. Second, we will look at living honestly before God and others, noticing in particular the difference between living an exposed life of sacrificial generosity versus a hidden life of selfishness. Finally, we will consider living reverently, understanding that our salvation brings accountability from God and His church.

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## Point 1: God's people are to live generously (Acts 4:32-35).

**READ** Acts 4:32-35 (DDG p. 58).

<sup>32</sup> Now the entire group of those who believed were of one heart and mind, and no one claimed that any of his possessions was his own, but instead they held everything in common. <sup>33</sup> With great power the apostles were giving testimony to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and great grace was on all of them. <sup>34</sup> For there was not a needy person among them because all those who owned lands or houses sold them, brought the proceeds of what was sold, <sup>35</sup> and laid them at the apostles' feet. This was then distributed to each person as any had need.

**EXPLAIN:** Use the first paragraph in the DDG (p. 58) to highlight the truth that sacrificial generosity is fundamental to the gospel.

This session begins with an encouraging word: The church had continued its generous ways that had characterized them from the beginning (Acts 2:44-45). Not only were they generous with their belongings—money, food, clothing, etc.—but they also sold their houses and land to give even more money to those in need. Empowered and bound together by the gift of the Holy Spirit, these believers clearly saw generosity as a natural outflow of their salvation. This is no surprise, of course; sacrificial generosity is a fundamental component of the gospel—just look at Jesus.

**INTERACT:** Ask group members the following question.

**?** What are some ways we see sacrificial generosity as fundamental to the gospel? (the Father gave the Son for our salvation; the Son gave His life for our forgiveness; the Father and the Son gave the Holy Spirit for our new birth, our assurance, and our sanctification; God has given us everything we need for life and godliness; the gospel must be shared with others)

**EXPLAIN** some ways, if needed, that sacrificial generosity is fundamental to the gospel:

- The Father *gave* His Son for the salvation of the world (see John 3:16). This language shows us that, in part, the incarnation itself is a gift. Furthermore, the Son *gave* His life for our forgiveness from sin (see 1 John 3:16).
- From birth, we are spiritual beggars in dire need of grace. We can't earn our salvation. We can't conjure it up. We can't barter for it. In fact, we aren't even *looking for it*, being so enmeshed in our sin. Yet God made a way. He gave us the gift of His Son so that we might have the gift of grace and an eternal inheritance in Him, secured and sealed by the gift of the Holy Spirit (Rom. 6:23; Eph. 1:3-14). It is the Father who gives every good and perfect gift (Luke 11:13; Jas. 1:17).

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**EXPLAIN:** Use the second paragraph in the DDG (p. 58) to emphasize how generosity and salvation go hand-in-hand: our belief in the gospel should lead to a recognition that all we have belongs to God.

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If we are going to share in the divine nature of God by faith in Jesus and follow in the steps of our Savior (2 Pet. 1:4), then there must be no distinction between claiming Christ and being sacrificially generous. This passage shows us that generosity goes hand-in-hand with salvation, and this makes sense because our God is a generous God. If God is a giving God, then we should be His giving children who recognize that nothing we own is really ours—it all belongs to God the Creator, who has given it to us.

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- We are all sinners. Even those of us who believe and confess that Jesus is Lord still struggle with selfishness and greed. But do we understand the inconsistency in saying that we believe the gospel but aren't going to be sacrificially generous as stewards of the gifts God has given us? More importantly, are we willing to repent of this sin and fight for humility and a generous spirit?
  - Jesus, the God-Man, willingly went to the cross to save us (John 10:18; Heb. 12:2). This gift is unmatched by any worldly possession we may own. Let's join the early disciples by sharing the riches God has given us to ensure that no one is left in need.
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**FILL IN THE BLANKS:** Provide group members with the answers for the call-out in their DDG (p. 58).

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**Stewardship:** We are to invest the time, talents, and material possessions God has given us for His **kingdom** work. Motivated by God's generosity to us made most clear in the **gospel**, we are to give God the **best** of what we have, regularly, sacrificially, humbly, and cheerfully, praying that God may be **glorified** in our stewardship of His provisions.

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**Essential Doctrine “Stewardship”:** God's intention for humankind is that we serve Him as faithful stewards of His creation (Gen. 1:28; 1 Cor. 4:1-2). We are to invest the time, talents, and material possessions God has given us for His **kingdom** work (Matt. 25:14-29), knowing that God is the true owner of all we have, and that our true treasure is found not on earth but in heaven (Matt. 6:19,21; Luke 12:16-21). Motivated by God's generosity to us made most clear in the **gospel**, we are to give God the **best** of what we have (Prov. 3:9), regularly (1 Cor. 16:2), sacrificially (Matt. 12:41-44), humbly (Matt. 6:1-4), and cheerfully (2 Cor. 9:6-7), praying that God may be **glorified** in our stewardship of His provisions.

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## Point 2: God's people are to live honestly (Acts 4:36–5:2).

**READ** Acts 4:36–5:2 (DDG p. 59).

<sup>36</sup> Joseph, a Levite from Cyprus by birth, the one the apostles called Barnabas (which is translated Son of Encouragement), <sup>37</sup> sold a field he owned, brought the money, and laid it at the apostles' feet.

<sup>5:1</sup> But a man named Ananias, with his wife Sapphira, sold a piece of property. <sup>2</sup> However, he kept back part of the proceeds with his wife's knowledge, and brought a portion of it and laid it at the apostles' feet.

**EXPLAIN:** Use the first paragraph in the DDG (p. 59) to explain the nature of Ananias and Sapphira's shared dishonesty in what they offered to the church from the sale of their property.

At the end of Acts 4, Barnabas sold a field and gave the proceeds to the apostles. The author then used the word “but” to indicate a juxtaposition: “*But*” Ananias and Sapphira sold a piece of property. In verse 2 we start to see the reason for the “but”—deception. It's not that they decided to give a portion of the proceeds and keep some of the money for themselves. That wouldn't have been a sin necessarily. However, Luke's wording—“with his wife's knowledge”—sets the stage for their dishonesty: not everyone was supposed to know.

### Voices from the Church

“If I'm dishonest or selfish in my use of a few dollars, I would be dishonest or selfish in my use of a million dollars ... God pays a great deal of attention to the ‘little things.’”<sup>1</sup>

—Randy Alcorn

- It seems likely that the couple told the apostles they'd given everything, but they conspired together to keep some for themselves. Perhaps they were lacking in generosity, but they certainly lied about the extent of their generosity, as we will see in verse 3.
- Throughout the Book of Acts, sacrificial generosity is on full display. This had been a hallmark of the early church. The death and resurrection Jesus, alongside the gift of the Holy Spirit, was the impetus for their understanding of generosity. And yet, Ananias and Sapphira went against the grain and disrupted the gospel ecosystem of generosity with their deception.

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**EXPLAIN:** Use the second paragraph in the DDG (p. 59) to call attention to the differences presented in this passage between **Christ’s people** and **Satan’s people**.

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The juxtaposition between **Christ’s people** (the generous, community-oriented church) and **Satan’s people** (the selfish, “me”-oriented Ananias and Sapphira) is obvious in the text. As God’s people, we are to live honest lives, open for all to see. The early church held everything in common to help fulfill one another’s needs. They ate together regularly. They worshiped together. Nothing was hidden. Ananias and Sapphira, however, turned away from this gospel-centered way of life.

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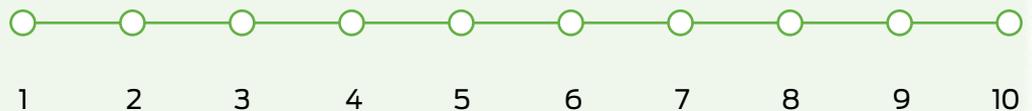
*Illustration:* As we consider the meaning of sacrificial generosity in the Christian life, two lives in the Bible are instructive for us: the **life of Christ** and the **life of Satan**.

- **Christ** lived a generous life, honest and humble and completely exposed. As we discussed already, the Father’s sending of the Son was a gift—the greatest gift. Jesus’ life reflected this through His constant humility and service as He put the needs of others above His own. Because He never sinned, His life was the portrait of honesty. As God in the flesh, it was His very nature indeed to be honest. When Jesus was at His most exposed—nailed to a cross, naked or close to it, a seemingly worthless criminal—He didn’t hide. He went to the cross willingly. The Creator of the universe was stripped down to nothing so that He might give us all of His riches. God has been abundantly generous and has withheld nothing from us; sending His own Son shows us this.
  - **Satan** is “the father of lies” (John 8:44). He’s been a deceiver since before our first parents encountered him in the garden. He lied to them, and he lies to us. He still uses the same tactics on us that he did back then: twisting God’s Word, minimizing God’s image in us, and maximizing God’s creation over the glory of its Creator (see Gen. 3:1-5).
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**INSTRUCT:** Ask group members to use the scale in their DDG (p. 59) to examine themselves regarding their integrity with the truth, being able to live openly or in secrecy.

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On a scale of 1 (the secrecy of Ananias and Sapphira) to 10 (the openness of the early church), where does your sense of personal integrity land?



### Point 3: God's people are to live reverently (Acts 5:3-11).

**READ:** Ask a volunteer to read Acts 5:3-11 (DDG p. 60).

<sup>3</sup> “Ananias,” Peter asked, “why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit and keep back part of the proceeds of the land? <sup>4</sup> Wasn't it yours while you possessed it? And after it was sold, wasn't it at your disposal? Why is it that you planned this thing in your heart? You have not lied to people but to God.” <sup>5</sup> When he heard these words, Ananias dropped dead, and a great fear came on all who heard. <sup>6</sup> The young men got up, wrapped his body, carried him out, and buried him.

<sup>7</sup> About three hours later, his wife came in, not knowing what had happened.

<sup>8</sup> “Tell me,” Peter asked her, “did you sell the land for this price?”

“Yes,” she said, “for that price.”

<sup>9</sup> Then Peter said to her, “Why did you agree 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.”

<sup>10</sup> Instantly she dropped dead at his feet. When the young men came in, they found her dead, carried her out, and buried her beside her husband. <sup>11</sup> Then great fear came on the whole church and on all who heard these things.

**EXPLAIN:** Use the first paragraph in the DDG (p. 60) to address God's swift punishment of Ananias and Sapphira that takes us by surprise.

The Book of Acts flows smoothly to this point; God has provided victory after victory for the church, even through persecution! But then He punishes two people in the church with death for being a little deceptive and greedy? Yes, they didn't revere God or respect the family of faith. They dishonored the Savior and lied to the Holy Spirit.

- The Holy Spirit has been active throughout the Book of Acts, particularly with respect to giving spiritual gifts and working miracles through the disciples. God is generous to His church through the Holy Spirit and calls His people to be generous with His gifts.
- Ephesians 1:3-14 tells us that the Father lavishes gifts on us, has an inheritance waiting for us through His Son, and has sent the Holy Spirit as the down payment and seal of this inheritance. This reality should help us understand how serious Ananias and Sapphira's sin of lying to God the Holy Spirit was.

**FILL IN THE BLANKS:** Provide group members with the answers for the call-out in their DDG (p. 60).

**Deity of the Holy Spirit:** The Holy Spirit is the **Third** Person of the Trinity, possessing the **fullness** of deity like the Father and Son.

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**Essential Doctrine “Deity of the Holy Spirit”:** The Holy Spirit is the **Third** Person of the Trinity, possessing the **fullness** of deity like the Father and Son. His deity can be seen in the fact that He is eternal (Heb. 9:14), omnipresent (Ps. 139:7-8), the creator and giver of life (Gen. 1:2; Ps. 104:30; John 3:5-7), and directly identified with the triune God (Matt. 28:19; 2 Cor. 13:14).

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**EXPLAIN:** Use the second paragraph in the DDG (p. 60) to point out how what happened to Ananias and Sapphira should cause us to revere God.

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God led Peter to shine a light on Ananias and Sapphira’s deceit so the church could root out unrepentant sin in its midst. The result was a just punishment for their sin, but also a benefit for the church—they greatly feared the Lord. We are accountable to God, our Creator and Savior, and we ought to revere Him just as the early church did in light of these events.

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- As Jeremiah 17:9 tells us, the heart is deceitful and sick. Even as believers, who have been born again through faith in Jesus and the work of the Holy Spirit, our hearts still deal with residual blindness to our sinful tendencies, and we’ll wander into danger without someone there to hold us back. We lament the phrase “just follow your heart,” and yet, we follow our own hearts into the dangerous intersection of sin and death every time we don’t seek accountability from God and others (see Isa. 47:10).
- According to Scripture, accountability is crucial to Christian living because community is crucial to Christian living. Allowing yourself to be held accountable by multiple layers of people is not only wise, it’s also God-honoring. It recognizes the great power and majesty of God while also leaning on His grace for forgiveness and sanctification. It acknowledges the gift of fellowship and community and fosters the Christ-like attitudes of self-forgetfulness and humility.

*Application:* Considering ourselves accountable “only to God and family,” as some say, is dangerous. Sometimes those closest to us are the blindest to our sins. Therefore, we also should be accountable to the leaders of a local church (Heb. 13:17) and to other local church members (1 Cor. 5). We’re also rightly held accountable by our employer (2 Thess. 3:10-12) and, to an extent, even an earthly government (Mark 12:17; Rom. 13:1). We may not physically die instantaneously like the couple in this passage, but our spiritual life—both now and eternally—is in danger without fundamental reverence for God encouraged through the family of faith.

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**INTERACT:** Ask group members the following question.

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What are some ways we should express our reverence for God? (putting sin to death in our own lives; caring about one another to address the sin we see in each other’s lives; striving for purity in the faith and fellowship of the church; joyfully and gratefully sharing the gospel of Jesus)

# My Mission

**EXPLAIN:** We were created for life in the Spirit, specifically, to exist in communion with God and His church both now and for eternity (Rev. 21–22). In the age to come, life in the Spirit will look like people of every tribe, tongue, and nation worshiping God and exercising dominion as part of God’s completely new creation. Our false gods of deceit, greed, consumerism, and hyper-individualism will be destroyed. God alone is worthy of our worship, and only He will be worshiped in the end. At that time, we will see human beings live in a consistently and thoroughly generous way. In the meantime, may we receive His grace and live with sacrificial generosity toward others so they can hear about and believe in Jesus, who sacrificed everything for us.

**READ** the following missional application statement in the DDG (p. 61), and encourage group members to choose at least one of the options below as a way to respond to the truth of God’s Word.

Because God has lavished upon us the riches of salvation and new life in Christ, we live in unity, generous and honest, as we reflect Christ’s truth and love.

- **How has this session caused you to reconsider your motives when it comes to generosity, especially with regard to the local church?**
- **What role does a healthy fear of God have in motivating us to pursue holiness together as a group and church?**
- **Why is the purity and generosity of the church relevant to how we present the gospel to non-Christians?**



## Voices from Church History

“The Spirit of the fear of God shall fill Him. He will not judge according to appearance nor reprove according to report, but will render judgement to the lowly and have compassion on the humble of the earth.”<sup>2</sup>

–Irenaeus (c. 130-202)

**CLOSE IN PRAYER:** Spirit of God, You are always faithful to bring the Father’s purposes in the Son to perfection, whether that be in salvation or judgment. Thank You for indwelling and empowering us to live with conviction, integrity, and love as we carry out Jesus’ mission for the church. Help us to maintain unity with one another as we proclaim the glorious truth about Christ and practice radical generosity in His name. Amen.

**PACK ITEM 7: SPIRIT-LED GIVING:** Pass out copies of this handout that identifies some characteristics of Spirit-led giving so your group members can reflect on these during their **Daily Study** this week.

**INSTRUCT:** As your group departs, encourage group members to read and respond to the **Daily Study** devotions in their DDG (pp. 62-64), which build and expand upon the group study. Also advocate for small groups or families to use **Encourage One Another** (p. 65) for mutual accountability and fellowship grounded upon the foundation of God’s Word.

# Daily Discipleship

Throughout the week following the session, use the ideas below to remind and encourage your group members to live as disciples of Jesus Christ. The **Daily Study** devotions in the DDG (pp. 62-64) will help group members get into God's Word and study it for themselves. **Encourage One Another** (p. 65) will help group members and families fellowship with one another with purpose.

## Daily Study

Brief daily devotions in the DDG (pp. 62-64) will help group members take initiative in their own discipleship.

- Make sure all group members have access to a Bible to read. Have some Bibles available to give to guests who may need one, or offer to get one and arrange a time to meet to give it and show how to navigate it for the devotions.
- Share the following idea from the devotion for **Day 1** as a part of point 1 in the session: **The Father sent His only Son, who subsequently sent us the Holy Spirit, so that we might be adopted into God's family and inherit all the riches of heaven.**



Consider leading by example and reading the daily devotions yourself with your own DDG. Based on your study, use brief messages throughout the week (group text, email, social media) to encourage your group to keep up with their daily time in God's Word and to live it out. Here are a couple of examples you can use:

- **Day 2:** "We cannot argue with the command to be *sacrificially* generous; generosity isn't a mathematical calculation but rather a posture of heart."
- **Day 4:** "As we seek to join God in His mission to save sinners, we can rejoice that salvation does not depend on us and that God will clear the way."



Visit [www.GospelProject.com/Blog](http://www.GospelProject.com/Blog) for additional content and resources you can use to help group members gain more insight into their daily studies. Send group members a link or a portion of a blog post or other content that you believe will be helpful and encouraging for their time in God's Word.

## Encourage One Another

This brief plan for fellowship and accountability in the group member's DDG (p. 65) will help groups of 2-4 people to meet sometime during the week to reflect on the session and to share how God is working and they are responding. It could also be used for family discipleship with students and children who are using *The Gospel Project* in their groups.

- **Encourage group members to make a list of people they each know who could benefit from their own act of tangible generosity.**
- See yourself as a member of the group who also needs encouragement in the faith, and participate in such a group this week.

# Additional Commentary

## Point 1: God's people are to live generously (Acts 4:32-35).

“Following the first outpouring of the Spirit, the early converts spontaneously formed a community (2:41-47). This was not something they were told to do; it was what they wanted to do. The same thing happened after the outpouring of the Spirit in 4:31. All the believers were in harmony and they shared their possessions with each other (4:32). No one insisted that something was ‘mine.’ Everything belonged to everybody. Underlying this unity and the healings, signs and wonders and boldness of the apostles was the truth of the *resurrection of . . . Jesus*, which the apostles continued to proclaim (4:33). God’s grace was so powerfully at work that no one in the community was in need (4:34a). This was a fulfillment of the promise in Deuteronomy 15:4-5 . . . People were even prepared to sell their possessions in order to have money to share with others. The money was given to the apostles, who distributed it. There is no sign of their retaining any of it to enrich themselves, as some would do today (4:34b-35).”<sup>3</sup>

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“The practice of Spirit-filled generosity began by believers thinking differently about property and its use. One evidence that the believers were of one mind was their new perspective on their property. It was no longer private property, but it was community property and ‘they held everything in common’ (v. 32). Unlike some ancient communities that sought to share material possessions, the practice of generosity was not obligatory. It was voluntary. With that perspective, when someone was in need, the new community rallied to help their spiritual siblings. They sold houses and land and then brought the proceeds to the apostles. The apostles, in turn, distributed the proceeds to the needy among the believers. This simple process of generosity echoed the extravagant grace of God that the new community was experiencing.”<sup>4</sup>

## Point 2: God's people are to live honestly (Acts 4:36–5:2).

“The positive picture of the community’s sharing is marred by the account of a couple who abused the practice by holding back a portion of a gift while claiming to be giving it totally to the church. The context is important to note: the incident is bracketed by references to the Spirit’s power (4:31,33; 5:12-16). The Spirit was closely linked to the unity of the fellowship manifested in their sharing. Ananias and Sapphira abused the fellowship through their deception and thereby threatened its unity. The couple **kept back . . . some of the proceeds**. ‘Kept back’ (Greek *nosphizō*) means ‘to put aside for oneself, to keep back’ in a secret and dishonest way. It is an uncommon word, which was used also in the Septuagint in the story of Achan (Josh. 7:1), who received a sentence of death for holding back some of the spoils from Ai that were dedicated to God.”<sup>5</sup>

“One of the pictures Luke provides here is wonderfully positive and encouraging (4:32-37); the other is terrifying and sobering (5:1-11). These two stories are intimately, and no doubt strategically, tied together. Historically, Luke describes the actions of certain members of the church who lived during the same time period. Their stories are tied together grammatically. After telling the first story, he begins the next story with the word *but* (5:1). Both accounts describe the selling of property and the giving of an offering from the sales. Both stories also use the adjective ‘great’: in the first story we read of ‘great grace’ (4:33); in the next we read of ‘great fear’ (5:5,11). Luke uses the two scenarios to highlight the kindness and severity of God at work in the church. As a whole, the two stories cooperate to illustrate the nature and importance of *unity*. Verse 32 describes the unity of the church. The first story highlights how unity is experienced, and the next shows how unity is endangered.”<sup>6</sup>

### **Point 3: God’s people are to live reverently (Acts 5:3-11).**

“The story of Ananias is to the book of Acts what the story of Achan is to the book of Joshua. In both narratives an act of deceit interrupts the victorious progress of the people of God. It may be that the author of Acts himself wished to point this comparison: when he says that Ananias ‘kept back’ part of the price (v. 2), he uses the same Greek word as is used in the Greek version of Joshua 7:1 where it is said that the Israelites (represented by Achan) ‘broke faith’ by retaining for private use property that had been devoted to God. The incident of Ananias and Sapphira is felt by many readers to present a stumbling block partly ethical and partly intellectual. The intellectual difficulty is not so great as is sometimes supposed. We know almost nothing of the private beliefs of Ananias and his wife, but at a certain stage of religious awareness sudden death is a familiar sequel to the realization that one has unwittingly infringed a taboo.”<sup>7</sup>

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“The account of Ananias and Sapphira is one of the most disturbing texts in the New Testament. It reveals how essential unity within the church is to God, and how seriously God takes deceit that threatens that unity (see also 2:42-47). Thankfully, most do not receive immediate judgment for our sins like Ananias and Sapphira did. Such judgment is rare, even in Scripture. However, we can be sure that sin will be dealt with, and the consequence of sin without Christ’s atonement is always death (Rom. 6:23). Jesus did not choose to die for us because our sin was trivial. Our sin was great, but he chose to die for us because his love for us was greater. The God who punished Ananias and Sapphira is the same radically merciful God who offers grace even to those who arranged the crucifixion of his Son (Acts 2:23,37-39; 3:13-20).”<sup>8</sup>

## References

1. Randy Alcorn, *Managing God’s Money* (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale, 2011), 4.
2. St. Irenaeus of Lyons, *On the Apostolic Preaching*, trans. John Behr (Crestwood, NY: St Vladimir’s Seminary Press, 1997), 79.
3. Babu Immanuel Venkataraman, “Acts,” in *South Asia Bible Commentary*, gen. ed. Brian Wintle (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2015), 1463.
4. Robert A. Weathers, “The Generosity of the New Community,” *Biblical Illustrator* (Winter 2017-18): 12.
5. John B. Polhill, “Acts,” in *ESV Study Bible* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2008), 2089, n. 5:1-11; n. 5:2.
6. Tony Merida, *Christ-Centered Exposition: Exalting Jesus in Acts* (Nashville, TN: B&H, 2017), 67 [Wordsearch].
7. F. F. Bruce, *The Book of Acts*, in *The New International Commentary on the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2010) [Wordsearch].
8. Justin S. Holcomb, “Acts,” in *Gospel Transformation Bible* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2013), 1459, n. 5:1-11.