

LESSON 4

BARNABAS, STEPHEN, ANANIAS, AND SAPPHIRA

OBJECTIVES

1. To learn about the life and deeds of Barnabas, Stephen, Ananias, and Sapphira.
2. To be able to articulate how these people set positive and negative examples and what we can learn from them.

MEMORY VERSE

"Distributing to the needs of the saints, given to hospitality."

(Romans 12:13)

PRAYER

1. Thank You, Lord, for guiding us here on this blessed Sabbath so that we can worship You and learn more about Your word.
2. Today, we will study a few examples of those who worked hard for You and those who went against You.
3. Please help us learn from these examples and allow us to grow in Your name.
4. May You guide us through today's lesson and help us apply its teachings to our lives.



Overview

1. Barnabas

- a. Led Saul into the fellowship of the apostles
- b. Nurtured another young worker of God, John Mark

2. Stephen

- a. Witnessed to the People
- b. Witnessed to the Court
- c. God Had Other Plans

3. Ananias and Sapphira

4. Linking to the Ten Basic Beliefs—Jesus Christ is our Savior

5. Life Application

- a. Growing Our Church with Love
- b. We Should Not Be Ashamed of the Gospel
- c. We Should Not Deceive the Workers of God

6. Activity—Are You a Faithful Witness for the Lord?



Background Knowledge for Teachers

Barnabas

Barnabas, one of the leading figures in the apostolic church, was well known for his love toward brothers. Barnabas simply meant "Son of Encouragement." His name is itself a testimony! He was indeed known by his good deeds. The first mention of Barnabas is recorded in Acts 4:32-37, when he sold his land and laid the money received for it at the apostles' feet.

Because of him, the church members were more willing to accept Saul. Barnabas had the discernment and reputation to identify and help Saul into the fellowship of the apostles (Acts 9:26-30). The apostles would have missed the vital ministry of Saul, if not for Barnabas. Saul eventually returned to Tarsus, and we don't hear from him again for about ten years. Then, God used Barnabas to bring him back (Acts 11:22-26). Barnabas and Saul spent a whole year at Antioch together.

In addition, Barnabas brought the calling out of John Mark, as he had done with Paul (Acts 15:36-39). Paul was impatient with Mark for his immaturity, but Barnabas gave Mark a second chance. The success of Barnabas can be seen in the outcome with Paul and Mark.

Stephen

The Sadducees, the dominant party in the council, accepted and studied only the writings of Moses. In their view, to curse Moses was a crime.

From Stephen's speech, we know that their accusations against him were false. Stephen based his review of Israel's history on Moses' writings.

When Stephen was brought before the council of religious leaders, they falsely accused Stephen of wanting to do away with Moses' laws because they knew that the Sadducees, who controlled the council, believed only in Moses' laws.

Stephen's speech stated three main points: (1) Israel's history is the history of God's acts in the world; (2) people worshipped God long before there was a temple, because God does not live in a temple; and (3) Jesus' death was just one more example of Israel's rebellion and rejection of God. In his speech, Stephen used this opportunity to summarize his teachings about Jesus.

At the end of his sermon, Stephen saw the glory of God and Jesus standing at the right hand of God. His words are similar to Jesus' words spoken before the council. The crowd would not tolerate Stephen's words, so they stoned him and killed him.

Ananias and Sapphira

When Ananias and Sapphira sold their property, they kept some of the profits back. However, they wanted to appear as if they had given all of their profits to the apostles. The couple thought that no one would know about their plan. However, because of the guidance of the Holy Spirit, Peter was able to discover the couple's lie. Consequently, both Ananias and Sapphira were chastised by the Holy Spirit and died in the presence of Peter.



Reaching Out to Your Students

Barnabas

From his records in the Bible, it can be inferred that Barnabas was a very mild-tempered and accepting man. Although he was the one who had introduced Paul to the church, Barnabas was humble enough to play a less prominent role in their work together. Paul, being the more literary man, was the key speaker on their missionary trips (Acts 14:12).

Since we live in a world where most people eagerly flaunt their talents in an effort to stand out from the rest, it is easy to forget that individuals possess different types of personalities and gifts. God needs workers of all different sorts for His great work of the gospel! Every one of us is unique, with our own specialized talents. The example of Barnabas should come as a very good lesson to our students that being a supporter who sees the good in others is a very important type of work, too. Most importantly, we must have good virtues of love and acceptance to allow God's work to progress.

Stephen

When Stephen was speaking, he was facing a very angry crowd. They were ready to kill him at a moment's notice. But Stephen was not afraid to talk about Jesus. For him, it was an honor to be able to suffer for the sake of the gospel.

Your students will most likely not face this kind of persecution today, but they will still face obstacles that may discourage them from talking about God. For example, their friends may use God's name in vain on a regular basis, or they might feel awkward attending church services on Saturday while the rest of their friends are hanging out. They may also be teased about saying grace before a meal. Any of these things can lead your students to hide the fact that they believe in God. As a teacher, it is important to let them know that you understand what they are going through and how they are feeling so that they don't feel so alone.

Explain to them that, sometimes, people are mean to others because they don't know how to react or are even afraid themselves, just like the crowd who crucified Jesus. Encourage your students to keep honoring God through their conduct and words. God will help them overcome any fears they may have.

Ananias and Sapphira

Even though church workers are all humans, we need to keep in mind that it is actually God who governs the church. No one is able to deceive God, whether in little or great things. From the seriousness of the punishment upon Ananias and Sapphira, we can see that it is a great sin to lie to God.



Opener

5 Minutes

For the past two weeks, we have been talking about how the first church was established after the Day of Pentecost. The church grew and many people came to believe in Jesus. Among these early believers, there were some events and characters that we will study today.

First is a man named Stephen. His life is a continual challenge to all Christians because he was the first to die for the faith. Think for a moment: Would you be willing to die for our Lord? Are you really willing to live for Him? How?

Hopefully, you will have some answers for these questions by the end of this lesson.

Secondly, we will look at a person by the name of Barnabas. He was a good example because he showed love to those who were not accepted by many. His spirituality and biblical knowledge enabled him to preach and to perform miracles, thus glorifying God's name. In addition, during the meetings regarding Gentile circumcision, he gave testimonies of how Gentiles received God's salvation, thereby helping the believers understand God's will better.

Lastly, we will be studying the story of Ananias and Sapphira. In contrast to the first two, their story serves as a warning for us, teaching us not to follow in their footsteps. This is a couple who lied to the apostles. Ananias and Sapphira's deaths tell us that God's justice will rid sinners from of the church. These sinners may be among us temporarily, but eventually they will not be able to stand before God's judgment.



Vocabulary

persecute: to harm or treat someone badly because of their beliefs, ethnicity, etc.

mentor: a person who guides and teaches another, especially one who is younger



Bible Discovery & Spiritual Teaching

30-35 Minutes

I. Barnabas

The Bible record several different names for Barnabas. Acts 4:36 records the name "Joses," while Acts 15:22 records "Judas" or "Barsabas." The name "Barnabas" was given to him by the apostles. It means "Son of Encouragement." Now, let's think a little about this name. What type of person do you think Barnabas was to be given such a name? What kind of relationship do you think he had with the people around him? [Let students brainstorm and share. Answers should be along the lines of him being humble, always encouraging and helping others.]

Barnabas was no doubt a faithful believer and worker for God. In particular, he did two very important things that helped the church and pushed forward the work of the gospel.

Barnabas led Saul into the fellowship of the Apostles

We have all heard of Paul, the great apostle who was once a persecutor of Christians going by the name of Saul. Did

you know that Barnabas had a big role to play in his early years as a Christian? When he was first converted, Saul was still a name much feared by the early believers, including the other apostles. Let's read Acts 9:26-28. As you can see, Barnabas opened up the door for Saul to be accepted in the church then. He boldly kept an open mind and worked along with God's will. Let's imagine and talk about what could have happened had Barnabas not been there to receive Paul with an open mind! [Allow students to respond. The church may still have eventually come to accept him but that would have taken some time, which could have been used for better church-coordinated preaching of the gospel.]

Although, Barnabas can be seen as a kind of mentor to Paul in his early days as a Christian, Barnabas was humble enough to play a secondary role to Paul on their missionary trip together. In Acts 14:12, we read that Paul was the chief speaker. Barnabas was surely not only a kind and embracing person to accept Paul at first; he also had a big heart to play second fiddle to someone he had brought to the church.

Let's read Roman 12:8. "He who exhorts, in exhortation; he who gives, with liberality; he who leads, with diligence; he who shows mercy, with cheerfulness." Sometimes, the society we live in wants us to push ourselves to be what we are not. Some of us may be the outspoken type, while others are the quieter type. Some like to stand out, while others may simply enjoy being in the background. We need to recognize that, in God's kingdom, God loves everyone who loves Him and obeys His word. Each one of us is unique in our own ways, and we're all special in God's heart. In God's kingdom, there's a need for different types of workers, all with different talents and personalities. Paul and Barnabas were quite different in some ways, but with one mind for God, they worked together to further the gospel of the Lord.

Barnabas nurtured another young worker of God, John Mark

There's another very noteworthy point about Barnabas. On their missionary journey together, Paul and Barnabas actually had an assistant. He was a young man named John Mark (Acts 13:5). However, this John Mark left them halfway through the trip (Acts 13:13) for reasons unknown. Later, we can see in Acts 15:38 that Paul did not want to take Mark with him again on another missionary journey. Paul rightfully had reservations about bringing him again. What if he ran away once more? Barnabas, however, wanted to give the young lad a second chance. So, he and Paul actually parted ways and went to different places to preach (Acts 15:39-40). Here, we once again see the broad and open mind of Barnabas. Mark must have shown his repentance for running away on the last missionary journey and his desire to go on another missionary trip. Barnabas gave him a second chance. To be kind and not strike someone out over a previous failure or fault is a great virtue. Let us remember Barnabas' kindness and be like him when dealing with others.

II. Stephen

The church in Jerusalem had many Jewish Christians who had lived in the land of Israel all their lives and spoke the Aramaic language. (From the fifth through the first centuries B.C., Aramaic was the language spoken by the Jewish. Many Jews who lived in other cities spoke only Greek.)

One day, the believers who spoke Greek complained to the apostles that their widows were being neglected.

The apostles were concerned about all the widows, but they were very busy preaching and praying. So, the apostles advised the people who made up the church to

select seven men to make sure everyone was receiving a fair share to meet their needs.

The first person they selected was a Greek-speaking man named Stephen. Why did they pick Stephen? He had earned a reputation as a good man, full of faith and the Holy Spirit.

So, Stephen and the other six men who were selected took over the distribution of food to the widows, and everyone was pleased to know that all the women and children were treated fairly. He was a good person, and God was with him.

Stephen Witnessed to the People

Stephen also knew that people needed to know that Jesus is their Savior. Stephen spoke boldly in public and told other Greek-speaking Jews that they needed to trust Jesus as Savior and have their sins forgiven. The Holy Spirit even gave Stephen the power to do miracles.

However, the Greek-speaking Jews hated the Christian message, and they hated Stephen. They tried to argue with Stephen, but they were unable to refute what he was saying, which probably made them even more upset. They told lies about Stephen and about God. Finally, the people Stephen was witnessing to dragged him off to the Sanhedrin—the Jewish court.

Stephen Witnessed to the Court

Stephen was put on trial by the men of the Sanhedrin—the same court that had condemned Jesus to death. The mob that dragged Stephen to court was yelling accusations. The high priest asked Stephen, "Are their charges true?"

Now, Stephen took his chance to speak because he had a lot to say! He spoke about all the times in years gone by when God spoke to the Jewish people, and they refused to listen. This statement made the members of the court very angry. Stephen told them how their forefathers had killed the prophets who predicted that the Messiah would come. Then, when the Messiah Jesus came, they killed Him. They killed the One whom God sent to be the Savior.

All those present were furious with Stephen now. Stephen stopped talking for a minute and looked up. He cried out that he saw Jesus in heaven, standing at the right hand of God. When the men of the court heard this, they were so furious that they covered their ears because they couldn't stand to hear any more words. They rushed at Stephen, grabbed him, and dragged him outside the city. Then, they picked up heavy rocks and threw them at Stephen until he died.

God Had Other Plans

That act of murder was terrible. Stephen took the risk to tell those hostile people about Jesus, and they killed him. Nevertheless, something wonderful happened after Stephen died.

The Jewish leaders started persecuting all the Christians in the city. Many Christians left Jerusalem to find safety in some other city.

Wherever the Christians went, they told others about Jesus. Many people in other cities heard about Jesus and believed in Him. God made something good come out of Stephen's death—many more people had the opportunity to become Christians.

III. Ananias and Sapphira

The story of Ananias and Sapphira is probably one of the most vivid depictions of God's immediate punishment in the New Testament. "So great fear came upon all the church and upon all who heard these things." Acts 5:11 describes how powerful a testimony it was to the whole church. Unfortunately, it was not a testimony of a great example of faith. Instead, it is a testimony of warning that we as believers should heed.

The early church showed what it was like to be one big family in Christ. The believers lived near each other and shared many things. A lot of them even sold all that they had and brought it to the church to share with the other brethren.

Like many believers of their time, Ananias and Sapphira sold their possessions and laid the money at the apostles' feet as a contribution to the church. However, unlike many

of the believers, they kept back part of the money. What's worse, they told the apostles that it was the full amount from the sale of their possessions. That was the part where they sinned. They lied when there was no need to lie. If they had been truthful about keeping back a portion of their earnings, it would have been fine.

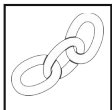
Let's read Acts 5:4. Peter said to Ananias, "While it remained, was it not your own? And after it was sold, was it not in your own control? Why have you conceived this thing in your heart? You have not lied to men but to God." So, Ananias was struck dead immediately.

Ananias plotted with his wife before he even brought the gift to the apostles. He first came to the apostles alone. His wife came around three hours later, not knowing that God had struck her husband Ananias dead. When asked by the apostles about the money, she claimed, just as her husband had, that they had brought all of their earnings to the apostles. Peter then asked her, "How is it that you have agreed together to test the Spirit of the Lord?" (Acts 5:9). Like her husband, she was struck dead on the spot.

Perhaps Ananias and Sapphira wanted to receive glory or honor for giving all of the money to the church. Perhaps they just wanted to keep the money for themselves. Whatever the reason was, such greed led to a lie, which led to terrible consequences. God struck them dead, right away. They were not lying merely to the apostles, but also to God. For that, the sin was great, and they were both severely punished with immediate death.

FOR TEACHERS

Hand out the Bible Discovery worksheet to the students. Guide them to complete the worksheet according to the instructions. Keep a copy of the Teacher Version to reference.



Linking to the Ten Basic Beliefs

2-5 Minutes

Jesus Christ is the only Savior of mankind, the Creator of the heavens and earth, and the only true God.

When Stephen boldly went about preaching of Jesus Christ as the Messiah, the non-Christian Jews became upset at him because they thought that he was spreading lies. They did not know the truth about Jesus Christ. Nowadays, we know the truth about Jesus Christ and His role as our Savior. Like Stephen, we must boldly preach the salvation of Jesus Christ to all those around us, whether or not they will receive our words kindly.



Check for Understanding

5 Minutes

Short Answer

- 1. What are some virtues of Barnabas from which we can learn?** Love, open-mindedness, kindness to accept others, etc.
- 2. Why are these virtues important for God's work?** We need to be loving and kind when we are preaching the gospel to others.
- 3. How do we show kindness to members who are disliked?** We can take the initiative to talk to them, understand their needs, and bring them to meet other members.
- 4. How do we know that the Lord was with Stephen?** He was able to do miracles and was filled with the Holy Spirit.
- 5. Why did the people hate him?** They hated him because he preached that the One they crucified was Jesus, the Messiah.
- 6. What did God allow Stephen to see before he died?** The glory of God and Jesus standing at God's right hand.
- 7. When the church in Jerusalem was persecuted, what did the believers do?** They scattered and preached God's word in other places.
- 8. Why have Christians been willing to risk their lives and safety for the sake of the gospel?** They know that this is the only way people can be saved.
- 9. What kind of attitude should we have when offering our possessions to God?** We must offer willingly and in secret. We must not show off when we are offering.

Fill In the Blank

- 1. Barnabas showed his love by meeting _____ (Saul) and receiving him into the circle of members.**
- 2. Stephen was a young man who loved _____ (Jesus). The Bible said that he was full of grace and did great _____ (wonders) and signs among the people.**
- 3. Stephen went before the council, some of these Jews came to argue with him. Stephen, with the help of the _____ (Holy Spirit), spoke with such wisdom that the Jews could not argue with him.**
- 4. Stephen said, "You always resist the Holy Spirit; as your fathers did, so do you. And they killed those who foretold the coming of the Just One, of whom you now have become the betrayers and _____ (murderers)."**
- 5. This made the people so angry that they grabbed him and took him outside the _____ (city) to stone him. Stephen looked toward heaven and said, "I see the heavens opened and the _____ (Son of Man) standing at the right hand of God!"**
- 6. That day, a severe persecution began against the _____ (church) in Jerusalem, and everyone, except the apostles, was scattered throughout the countryside of Judea and Samaria.**



Life Application

10 Minutes

1. Growing Our Church with Love

In Lesson 1, we talked about the coming of the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost. On that day, around 3,000 people heard the good news and were baptized into Christ. They continued to have fellowship, pray, and worship God together. This marked the beginning of the church.

Let's think for a moment. Ever since the church first started, it has surely been growing. The more people who get baptized into Christ, the more churches are being built. How did all this happen? What did the members at that time do to grow the church? [Let students answer.] Of course, we know that Jesus' disciples devoted their whole lives to preaching the word of God, fulfilling the Great Commission that Jesus gave them. But that was not enough... It took every believer's effort to help the church grow! Today, we learned about Barnabas, who became one of the very important workers during the apostolic times. Not only did he join the apostles in preaching the gospel, he also took care of the members with great love. Barnabas sold his land and gave his money to the apostles in order to aid the church's ministry. He also spent a great deal of time in encouraging other church members while preaching the word of God boldly. Why did he do all this? Why didn't he reserve the land for himself? Why did he bother to spend his time encouraging others who weren't related to him? [Pause for students to think.] Barnabas did all these things because he loved God and wanted the kingdom of God to come upon all mankind. The love of God inspired him to love others. He

loved them and cared for their souls. Thank God that it is because of people like Barnabas in the church back then, and those in our church today, that the church of God has been growing under His grace.

As you can see, growing a church requires its members to love and care for one another. Imagine what would happen to our church under these scenarios:

- **No one is willing to teach and/or preach the word of God.**
Our members will lack spiritual food; fewer people will find the truth; etc.
- **No one tithes to the church.**
Our church will have no money to use towards maintenance, events, purchasing new buildings, etc.
- **No one cares about those who haven't come to church for a while.**
Our church will have more and more lost sheep.

Today, we need to be like Barnabas, who willingly devoted himself to growing the church of God. But one Barnabas wasn't enough—there were many others, like the apostles, who were also working diligently for the Lord! With that said, God can use all of our help. We can be today's apostles to preach the gospel, and love and care for others! If each one of us here is like Barnabas, our church will continue to grow under the grace of our Lord!

2. We Should Not Be Ashamed of the Gospel

The second Bible character we learned about today was Stephen. Do you remember how he lost his life? [Let students answer.] He was stoned to death for preaching the word of Christ. Today, thank God that we can profess to be Christians openly and publicly where we live. Most likely, we will never face the kind of persecution that Stephen had to face at his time. However, the story of Stephen offers a very important teaching that we can apply to our lives—we should never be ashamed of the gospel!

[Hand out the Life Application worksheet to the students. For each scenario, ask your students what they would do. Discuss with them whether or not their decision reflects that they are not ashamed of the gospel.]

Stephen bravely preached Christ, even when facing death. Today, our lives may not be threatened, but we can still face other types of persecution when we talk about Jesus Christ our Savior. Let me share a few examples with you:

1. Your friends invited you to go swimming with them this Saturday. The last time they invited you, you declined because you had to go to church. They made fun of you and said it was strange that you go to church on Saturdays because their churches observe the Sabbath on Sundays. This time, you have to explain to them again the reason you cannot go. **What would you say?**
2. One of your classmates, Juno, is sitting at the same table as you during lunch, and you are about to start eating. Last time, when you and Juno were at the same table, he laughed at you when he saw you saying grace before you ate. You were embarrassed. **What are you going to do? Will you say grace in front of him again?**
3. Your best friend's grandmother is critically ill, and he is extremely worried. He is very frustrated because he doesn't know what he can do to help his grandmother. As a Christian, you know that the best thing your friend can do right now is to pray to God, but he doesn't know how since he's not a Christian. **What would you do? Would you teach him how to pray?**
4. You and your friends are playing basketball together. Some of your team members have a habit of saying "Oh, my God!" or "Jesus Christ!" when they are frustrated, and they often say them out loud when they are playing basketball. As a Christian, you know that they are using God's name in vain. **What would you do? Would you correct them?**

Matthew 10:32-33 says, “Therefore whoever confesses Me before men, him I will also confess before My Father who is in heaven. But whoever denies Me before men, him I will also deny before My Father who is in heaven.”

Here, the Bible tells us that Jesus will not know us nor admit us into His kingdom if we deny Him before men. When we are around each other, we have no problem sharing the word of Christ because we are all God’s children. But when we are around others who do not know Christ, we become hesitant to let others know that we are Christians. Oftentimes, we even try to avoid conversations about God or church. Imagine if Stephen or the other apostles were like that back in their time, could it have been possible for the good news to be preached? Absolutely not! If they were ashamed of the gospel, they would never have converted so many people to believe in Christ. Today, we are not only the children of God, but we are also His apostles. We are all responsible to lead people to Christ and to teach them the truth. We can do this by preaching to them in words, or showing them the ways of God in actions. Both ways require that we not be ashamed of the gospel and be willing to share with others that we are the children of God.

Let me give you a challenge for this coming week. Every day, try to say or do something at least once to show someone that you are a Christian. Do you think you can do that? Let’s discuss what we can do to shine for the Lord! [Brainstorm ideas with your students about how they can complete this challenge.]

3. We Should Not Deceive the Workers of God

The last people that we learned about today were Ananias and Sapphira. Do you remember what they did? [Let students share their answers.] They sold their possessions and kept part of the money to themselves. As Peter said to Ananias, “Satan has filled [his] heart to lie to the Holy Spirit.” What does that mean? [Pause for students to think.]

As Christians, we know that lying is a sin in God’s eyes. The Holy Spirit dwells within our hearts to remind us constantly that God wants us to be honest. However, Ananias ignored the fact that the Holy Spirit in his heart didn’t want him to lie, and he attempted to deceive the apostles anyway. He allowed Satan to dominate over the Spirit of God in his heart. Ananias had complete control over what to do with the money he had, but he allowed evil to take over his heart. In this case, as Peter said, he had not lied to men but to God—he chose Satan over God!

Today, we all know that lying is against God’s commandments. Have you ever felt guilty to God when you think about lying to someone? [Let students to answer.] If you have, that means that the Spirit of God is working within you. He is constantly reminding us of the word of God and guiding us on the right path. When we feel this way, there is often a spiritual battle within our hearts—a battle between God’s Spirit and Satan. Take lying as an example: While the Spirit of God reminds us that lying is a sin in God’s eyes, Satan is working hard to convince us that lying is a much better choice.

When we experience this type of battle in our hearts, it is important for us to listen to the voice of God. What is God saying to us? What is the Spirit telling us is right in God’s eyes? Oftentimes, it is not difficult to find that voice. What is difficult, however, is for us to follow what that voice is telling us. Ananias and Sapphira probably heard that voice, too, but they didn’t listen because they chose to hear what Satan was telling them. Today, when Satan’s voice battles with God’s in our hearts, let us stand strong in our faith. Say a prayer in our hearts and ask God to strengthen us so that we can be strong enough to follow His ways. When we pray to God with a sincere heart to obey Him, God will surely give us strength to overcome Satan.



Activity

Are You a Faithful Witness for the Lord?

10-15 Minutes

Objective: To learn what characteristics a faithful witness needs and to whom they should preach.

Give students colored pencils and divide them into two teams. Have one team look at key verses in Acts 6 and mark the verses that describe the kind of person Stephen was. Have another team mark verses that describe the people he witnessed to. Have both teams give a report. Then summarize the positive outcome of Stephen's ministry.

HOMEWORK ANSWER KEY

1. Holy Spirit, glory, Jesus, heavens
2. heart, Holy Spirit, control, God
3. False; they were wary of him in the beginning.
4. True
5. True
6. Answers may vary.
7. Answers may vary.

Be Bold in Witnessing

Stephen was a faithful witness and he paid for it with his life. Sometimes witnessing may cause us great trouble. Stephen found that out, but he didn't let it stop him. He kept on witnessing.

Use your Bible to discover why we need to be brave even though witnessing is tough. Answer the questions in your own words.

Read 2 Corinthians 11:23-27. Paul understood how witnessing could bring him trouble. What were some of the troubles he experienced because of his preaching?

Imprisonment, beatings, stoning, lack of sleep, shipwreck, hunger and thirst, cold and exposure, danger, etc.

Most of us may not go through what Paul did, but we may have to face some frightening things if we are faithful witnesses for the Lord. How can we keep from being afraid?

Read Hebrews 13:6. What does it tell us?

We shouldn't be afraid because the Lord is with us.

Jesus warned His followers that they would have trouble in the world. Why should we be cheerful instead of discouraged by these troubles?

Because we can always turn to Jesus for help and comfort by praying to Him.

Read John 16:33. Write down what it says.

"These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world."

Read Hebrews 13:5-6. Write down what it says.

"Let your conduct be without covetousness; be content with such things as you have. For He Himself has said, 'I will never leave you nor forsake you.'"

Read 1 Peter 2:20. Write down what it says.

"For what credit is it if, when you are beaten for your faults, you take it patiently? But when you do good and suffer, if you take it patiently, this is commendable before God."

Today, we may not face as much physical persecution as the early believers did. However, we definitely have our own challenges. We should always be bold like the early believers and persist in our endeavors to preach God's gospel to all mankind.

BE BOLD in witnessing!

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Today, we may not face as much physical persecution as the early believers did. However, we definitely have our own challenges. We should always be bold like the early believers and persist in our endeavors to preach God's gospel to all mankind.

Growing Our Church with Love

Today, we learned about Barnabas, who became one of the very important workers during the apostolic times. Not only did he join the apostles in preaching the gospel, he also took care of the members with great love. Barnabas sold his land and gave his money to the apostles in order to aid the church's ministry. He also spent a great deal of time in encouraging other church members while preaching the word of God boldly.



The love of God inspired him to love others. He loved them and cared for their souls.

As you can see, growing a church requires its members to love and care for one another. Imagine what would happen to our church under these scenarios:

- **No one is willing to teach and/or preach the word of God.**
- **No one tithes to the church.**
- **No one cares about those who haven't come to church for a while.**



We can be today's apostles to preach the gospel, and love and care for others!

If each one of us here is like Barnabas, our church will continue to grow under the grace of our Lord!



WE SHOULD NOT be
ashamed
of the gospel

Read each of the scenarios below.

If you were in these situations, how would you answer?

1. Your friends invited you to go swimming with them this Saturday. The last time they invited you, you declined because you had to go to church. They made fun of you and said it was strange that you go to church on Saturdays because their churches observe the Sabbath on Sundays. This time, you have to explain to them again the reason you cannot go.



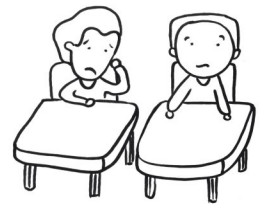
What would you say?

2. One of your classmates, Juno, is sitting at the same table as you during lunch, and you are about to start eating. Last time, when you and Juno were at the same table, he laughed at you when he saw you saying grace before you ate. You were embarrassed.



What are you going to do? Will you say grace in front of him again?

3. Your best friend's grandmother is critically ill, and he is extremely worried. He is very frustrated because he doesn't know what he can do to help his grandmother. As a Christian, you know that the best thing your friend can do right now is to pray to God, but he doesn't know how since he's not a Christian.



What would you do? Would you teach him how to pray?

4. You and your friends are playing basketball together. Some of your team members have a habit of saying "Oh, my God!" or "Jesus Christ!" when they are frustrated, and they often say them out loud when they are playing basketball. As a Christian, you know that they are using God's name in vain.



What would you do? Would you correct them?

we should not
Deceive
 the workers of God

“Satan has filled [his] heart to lie to the Holy Spirit.” As Christians, we know that lying is a sin in God’s eyes.



Ananias allowed Satan to dominate over the Spirit of God in his heart.

He chose Satan over God!

The Spirit of God is working within us, constantly reminding us of the word of God and guiding us on the right path. When we feel this way, there is often a spiritual battle within our hearts—a battle between God’s Spirit and Satan.

While the Spirit of God reminds us that lying is a sin in God’s eyes, Satan is working hard to convince us that lying is a much better choice.



When we experience this type of battle in our hearts, it is important for us to **listen to the voice of God**.

What is God saying to us?
 What is the Spirit telling us is right in God’s eyes?

Ananias and Sapphira chose to hear what Satan was telling them.

Say a prayer in our hearts and ask God to strengthen us so that we can be strong enough to follow His ways. When we pray to God with a sincere heart to obey Him, God will surely give us strength to overcome Satan.



E2 Year 3 Book 1 Lesson 4—Barnabas, Stephen, Ananias, and Sapphira

Homework Assignment

Name: _____ Parent signature: _____ Date: _____

Weekly Bible Reading: _____

Bible Reading: Check each box when you complete that day's reading.

Prayer: Check each box after you pray to God that day.

	Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
Read							
Pray							

What I Learned from the Bible This Week

1. _____

2. _____

Memory Verse

Please write down this week's memory verse. (**Romans 12:13**)

Fill In the Blank

1. But Stephen, "being full of the _____, gazed into heaven and saw the _____ of God, and _____ standing at the right hand of God, and said, 'Look! I see the _____ opened and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God!'" (Acts 7:55-56)
2. But Peter said, "Ananias, why has Satan filled your _____ to lie to the _____ and keep back part of the price of the land for yourself? While it remained, was it not your own? And after it was sold, was it not in your own _____? Why have you conceived this thing in your heart? You have not lied to men but to _____." (Acts 5:3-4)

True or False

3. When Paul was converted, all the apostles and believers in the church immediately welcomed him. _____
4. Stephen was stoned to death for preaching the gospel, becoming the first Christian to die for the gospel. _____
5. Ananias and Sapphira did not have to lie about giving all their possessions to the church because there was no such requirement from the church. _____

Short Answer

6. Do you feel that you are an encouraging person like Barnabas? List 2 encouraging things you can do or say and to whom you will do or say these things.

7. Are there people in your lives to whom you should be preaching? Write down 2 obstacles that are stopping you from preaching to them. Then, write down how you can overcome these obstacles.

