

LESSON 3

ANANIAS AND SAPPHIRA

BEFORE YOU TEACH

Barnabas

Barnabas was a Levite by birth but his family was from Cyprus. He was a cousin of Mark and nephew of Mary. He would make important contributions to the life and ministry of the early church. Although Joseph was his real name, the believers called him Barnabas, the "son of encouragement". Barnabas made a generous donation of land to the church. Although as a Levite he likely would not have owned inherited land in Palestine, as Levites carried out temple duties and were supported by the rest of the Israelites, Barnabas may have owned land in Cyprus. In any case, his generosity would stand in sharp contrast to the subsequent actions of Ananias and Sapphira.

The Early Church

Early believers relied on each other tremendously for support. Some were poor and in need. Often, Jews who accepted Jesus as the Messiah were cut off from their families. As a result, believers shared their homes, their food and any resources available. The number of believers grew by the day, and this sharing became even more of a necessity.

UNDERSTANDING YOUR STUDENTS

Ananias and Sapphira thought that they could get away with lying about their offering because they didn't think anyone would know. But they forgot about God. He sees and knows all things. According to Jeremiah 23:23-24, God is everywhere and can see everything that people do. No one can hide from Him.

Although none of your students would be guilty of such a crime, it is still important to have them understand that God is omnipresent. Perhaps at some point in their lives they have said to themselves, "No one will find out. Besides, it's only this one time." Ananias and Sapphira might have said the same thing. They probably didn't even realize they had broken one of the Ten Commandments in the process. Sometimes, a person's downfall only takes that one moment of wavering between doing what is right and what is wrong.

At this age, your students are beginning to know the difference between right and wrong. But if they always keep in mind that God is constantly watching them and examining their hearts, it will make it easier for them to make the right decision during times of trials. Life is full of temptations. If students can begin now to appreciate the love and power of God, they will be able to stand firm in their faith as they grow in the Lord.

BIBLE TEXT

Acts 4:32-5:11

BIBLE TRUTH

God is almighty and knows the thoughts of every person.

LESSON OBJECTIVES

1. To know that God is constantly watching, and that He loves a cheerful giver.
2. To learn the importance of being honest and truthful in front of God.

MEMORY VERSE

"Distributing to the needs of the saints."

(Romans 12:13a)

PRAYER

In the name of the Lord Jesus, we pray. Lord Jesus, thank You so much for watching over us through another week. We are here to count Your blessings and remember how much You love every one of us. In our class today, we are going to learn about two people who did not share willingly. Please open our ears and hearts so that we may understand Your teachings. Please also help us to be generous with one another and share the things that we have, as it is Your will. Hallelujah! Amen.

VOCABULARY

omnipresent: God is a spirit and is everywhere at all times

apostle: twelve original followers of Jesus

lying: telling an untrue statement to mislead others

truth: a statement according to what is real

REVIEW

Last week, we learned about how Peter and John healed a crippled man. Do you remember what happened? [Wait for students to respond.] This crippled man had been unable to walk all his life. He always begged for money at the temple's gate, but Peter and John gave him a new chance in life by healing him completely. What did the man do after he was well again? [Pause.] That's right! He followed the two apostles into the temple and praised God for this miracle. All the people who saw him were amazed. Because Peter and John preached about the power of Jesus, the leaders of the temple arrested them and put them in jail because they didn't believe in Jesus. Do you remember what happened to Peter and John the next day? [Pause.] The leaders decided to let Peter and John go because they couldn't find any fault with them. All the believers then praised God for His protection, and were filled with the Holy Spirit. They bravely went out and preached God's message of salvation.

BIBLE STORY

Tell Lies or Tell the Truth?

[To begin the story today, bring two clear cups, one filled with clear dish detergent and water, and the other with only water.] Boys and girls, can you tell if both cups look the same or different? [Allow students to look and discuss.] Well, both cups may look the same, but they are actually different. Sometimes, we simply cannot "see" when someone is lying, but guess what? God can. God knows and sees all things, so He knows when we have not been honest. [Show students that one cup actually has soapy water in it by stirring the mixture to create soap bubbles.] Sometimes, it may seem easier to tell a lie than to tell the truth, but God really doesn't like it when we do that. In our story today, we are going to learn about a husband-and-wife pair who decided to lie to people and to God, and the horrible consequences of their action.

The Believers Share

After Lord Jesus died, Peter and the other apostles went to many places to preach the good news of Jesus' resurrection. Whenever they went somewhere to preach, many people believed and got baptized. The number of followers grew more and more each day. The believers included all sorts of people: young and old, Jews and Greeks. Some were rich while some were poor. But they all had one thing in common: their love for Jesus.

Even though some of the believers had very little money, no one was ever without food to eat or clothes to wear. This was because all the believers shared what they had with each other. Some of the people even sold the things they owned and gave the money to the apostles. The apostles used this money to buy food and clothes to

distribute among the needy. Everyone was joyous and thanked God every day.

Barnabas Shares

One of the believers who shared his belongings with others was a man called Barnabas. He owned a piece of land and one day, he decided to sell it to help the needy.

He thought to himself, "I will give the money to the apostles. They know who needs the most help, and I am sure they will use the money to take care of them."

After Barnabas sold his land, he went to the apostles.

"Here's all the money from the land I sold," Barnabas said. "Please use it to help the believers who need food and clothes."

Barnabas really wanted to help the church and by sharing what he had, he showed how much he loved Jesus.

Ananias and Sapphira

Among the believers was a married couple that also owned a piece of land. Their names were Ananias and Sapphira. They heard about how Barnabas had sold his land and given the money to the apostles to help the poor. They also heard all the good things people were saying about Barnabas for being so kind and generous. They wanted other people to think that they were kind and giving too, so they decided to sell their land.

But after they sold it, they realized the land was worth a lot of money. They changed their mind about what they were going to do with the money. Instead of giving all of the money to the apostles, they were going to keep some for themselves. However, they wanted everyone to praise

them and think that they were just as generous as Barnabas. So they decided to tell a lie.

"We will keep some money for ourselves," Ananias and Sapphira thought, "but we will tell the apostles that we gave them all the money from the sale of the land." They thought that this was a great plan. Now they would have money and still be praised for their good work. They didn't care that they were lying.

Ananias Lies

So, Ananias took the money that was left and brought it to Peter. Just as he and his wife had planned, he lied to the apostle.

"Here is all the money I received from the piece of land I sold," announced Ananias. "Use it to help the poor."

But Peter wasn't fooled by his words. The Holy Spirit revealed to him that Ananias was lying.

Filled with the Spirit, Peter immediately said, "Ananias, why have you done this? You didn't have to sell your land. And even after you sold it, you didn't have to give us all the money. So why did you tell us that you offered everything? You haven't lied to us, but to God."

When Ananias heard these words, he fell down and died. Those who heard about what had happened were struck with fear when they learned of the punishment for sinning against God. After Ananias died, some young men carried out his body and buried him.

Sapphira Lies

Later that day, Sapphira came to the church to look for her husband. She did not know what had happened earlier.

When Peter saw her, he asked her a very important question.

"Did you and your husband sell the land for this much money?" Peter asked.

Sapphira did not hesitate and answered, "Yes."

Peter was giving her a chance to admit the truth but Sapphira chose to lie instead.

Then Peter said, "How could you agree with your husband to test the Spirit of the Lord? Now you will be carried out just like your dead husband."

Immediately upon hearing these words, Sapphira fell down and died. Everyone who heard about this incident became afraid. They realized the power of God.

Share Willingly

The Bible says that Ananias and Sapphira were punished because they lied about what they did. They didn't really want to share their money. They only wanted to sell their land so that others would say that they were generous and good people. That day, everyone learned that sharing with others with the intention to impress was wrong. God is only pleased when people share willingly. Boys and girls, what can you do to be a cheerful giver at home, at school and at church? Can you think of any examples of sharing willingly and honestly? [Encourage students to share how they can show their love to others by being a cheerful giver.]

CHECK FOR UNDERSTANDING

1. Were all the Christians required to sell property and give money? No.
2. Who was the person that sold all his property and donated all his money? Barnabas.
3. Who did Barnabas give his money to? The apostles.
4. Why were the apostles accepting money from the believers? To help needy Christians.
5. Why did Ananias and Sapphira decide to tell a lie? They wanted to look good in front of people.
6. What was the outcome of Ananias and Sapphira's actions? God struck them dead.
7. What does it mean to be honest? To be completely truthful.
8. What can we do to share with others willingly every day? Answers may vary.

MEMORY VERSE PRACTICE

Please reinforce the memory verse every week.
You can practice the memory verse with your students anytime during class.

"Distributing to the needs of the saints." (Romans 12:13a)

SPIRITUAL TEACHING & LIFE APPLICATION

God knows the deepest part of our hearts

It's not easy to be honest and truthful all the time, is it? Even adults need constant reminders to fear God and to remember that God is always watching us. Nothing escapes Him! If even the slightest evil thought comes to our mind, God knows. Have students take turns reading the scenario below, then answer the questions that follow:

Just the other day, Doug met Tony and liked his new friend immediately. Tony told Doug that he could do cool things like play the 12-string guitar and ride horses at his ranch in the mountains. Tony promised to teach Doug how to play his guitar, but the guitar was always in the shop. Tony told Doug that it would be fixed some time, and then he would teach Doug how to play. Tony also promised that he would take Doug to his ranch in the mountains, but they never seemed to have a chance to go there either.

One day, Doug borrowed another friend's guitar, since Tony had promised to teach him how to play. When he reached Tony's house, Tony was out, but Doug told his mom the plan. Tony's mom was greatly surprised. She said Tony was out with his dad, and she was surprised

that he would offer to teach Doug how to play the guitar since Tony didn't even know how to play the guitar himself. Doug also found out that Tony didn't have a ranch in the mountains either. Tony had only wanted to impress Doug but he had lied to do it. Tony had not been truthful to his new friend. It really hurt Doug to find out that his new friend had lied to him.

Questions to Think About

1. Why did Tony lie to Doug?
2. Why would Ananias and Sapphira lie to Peter?
3. Why would it be foolish to try to lie to God?

Ananias and his wife Sapphira sold some land to give the money to the church, but they did not tell the truth about how much they sold the land for. They lied. They kept some of the money back, but they wanted everyone to think they had made a big sacrifice by selling their land. Instead of only lying to people, Ananias and Sapphira lied to God, and they paid a terrible price for their lie.

God knew the deepest part of their hearts. God knew Tony's heart, and He knows ours, too!

HOMEWORK ANSWER KEY

1. apostles
2. Peter
3. False; he was filled with the Holy Spirit and God revealed it to him.
4. True
5. Barnabas sold what he had and shared everything with those who were in need.
6. They wanted to look good and be praised by others.
7. Ananias and Sapphira were punished because they lied to God.
8. Answers may vary.
9. Answers may vary.

ACTIVITY

1**To Be Honest or Not?****Objective:** To learn to make the right choice and be honest and holy when facing different life scenarios.**Materials**

- Scenario print-outs
- Tape

Instructions

1. Print out or copy the scenarios below, and cut out each scenario.
2. Fold up each scenario, and tape them around the classroom.
3. Divide the students into four groups. Tell each group to find a scenario, read it and discuss among themselves what they would do.
4. Give the students 2 minutes to discuss, and then have each group share their response.

Scenario 1

Your mom gives you \$10.00 to buy a gift for your dad's birthday. The gift you choose only costs \$9.00. What do you do with the extra \$1.00?

Scenario 2

Your mom sends a package of candy to school for you to pass out for the class party. You give one candy to each child and there are several pieces left. What do you do with the extra pieces of candy?

Scenario 3

You invite 3 friends to come over to play. You have 8 cookies in the cookie jar. After you and your friends each eat one cookie, your friends each ask for another cookie. What do you say?

Scenario 4

The school is having a toy drive. You have already given away one of your toys. Your mom puts another toy in your backpack to donate, but you don't want to give it away. What do you do?

2

Act Out the Story

Objective: To review the story details and remind students again to always share what they have and to be honest and truthful at all times.

Instructions

Have students volunteer to act out the following roles:

- *Narrator*
- *Peter*
- *Ananias*
- *Sapphira*
- *Two body carriers*
- Remaining students to act as frightened *townspeople*

The students can follow the script below or use their own words to act out their parts. Once finished, lead a discussion to talk about how everyone feels about this story. What have they learned from Ananias and Sapphira? If they were Ananias and Sapphira and were given another chance to do everything again, what would they have done differently?

Acts 5:1-10
Ananias and Sapphira

Narrator: After Jesus died, there was a group of followers who sold what they owned and shared what they had with everyone who was in need of help. Ananias and his wife Sapphira also sold a piece of property. But they agreed to cheat and keep some of the money for themselves. So when Ananias took the rest of the money to the apostles, Peter said...

Peter: *[in a firm and powerful voice]* "Why has Satan made you keep back some of the money from the sale of the property? Why have you lied to the Holy Spirit? The property was yours before you sold it, and even after you sold it, the money was still yours. What made you do such a thing? You didn't lie to people. You lied to God!"

Narrator: As soon as Ananias heard this, he dropped dead *[Ananias act outs his sudden death]*, and everyone who heard about it was frightened. *[Townspeople act frightened.]* Some young men came in *[two body carriers come in]*, wrapped up his body, carried him out and buried him. *[Pause.]* About three hours later his wife came in, not knowing what had happened.

Peter: "Tell me, is this the price you and Ananias got for the land?"

Sapphira: "Yes, that is the price!"

Peter: *[in an angry voice]* "How could you and your husband plan secretly to test the Spirit of the Lord? Listen! The feet of the men who buried your husband are at the door, and they will carry you out also!"

Narrator: At that moment, Sapphira fell down at his feet and died. Then the young men came in *[body carriers come in again]* and, finding her dead, carried her out and buried her beside her husband. The church members were afraid, and so was everyone else who heard what had happened.

E1 Year 3 Book 3 Lesson 3—Ananias and Sapphira

Homework Assignment

Name: _____ Parent signature: _____ Date: _____

Bible Truth: God is almighty and knows the thoughts of every person.

Lesson Objectives: 1. To know that God is constantly watching, and that He loves a cheerful giver.
 2. To learn the importance of being honest and truthful in front of God.

Bible Reading: Please put a check mark in the space when you complete the reading each day.

Prayer: Please put a check mark in the space on the days you prayed to God.

	Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
Bible Reading							
Prayer							

Memory Verse

Please write down this week's memory verse.

(Romans 12:13a)

What I Learned from the Bible This Week

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Homework Assignment

Understanding What You Have Learned

Fill In the Blank

1. Barnabas sold a piece of land and willingly gave the money to the _____.
2. Ananias and Sapphira told _____ that they gave him all the money they got from selling their land.

True or False

3. Peter knew that Ananias and Sapphira were lying because he had overheard their plan earlier. _____
4. God wants everyone to do things willingly. _____

Short Answer

5. Why was Barnabas a good example of a cheerful giver?

6. Why did Ananias and his wife sell their land?

7. Peter said that Ananias and his wife didn't have to sell the land. They didn't even have to give all of the money. So why were they punished?

8. Do you think that God sees and knows everything that you do?

9. What have you learned from today's lesson? Draw three pictures to show what you've learned!

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