



LESSON 76

3rd and 4th Grade

Principle: Dangers of greed.

Bible Character(s): Ananias and Sapphira

Scripture Reference: Acts 4:32-5:11



PERSONAL PREPARATION: Before this weekend, read through Acts 4:32-5:11. This

passage opens illustrating the community God created for believers in His kingdom, to be united in fellowship with one another, providing for all those in need. An incident of abuse of this community reveals God's displeasure of sin and His just nature, as well as the presence of Satan. Ananias and Sapphira deceptively hold back a portion of their gift to the church, after claiming to give the full amount. Their sin was not keeping part of their gift, for they had the freedom to keep it all if they pleased, but their deception and vain desire to appear charitable was the sin. Their sinful behavior threatened the unity of the fellowship of the church. Through the Holy Spirit in Peter, Ananias and Sapphira face fatal consequences for their sin when God's judgment comes down on them. We receive a healthy fear of God's displeasure of sin and discipline, as well as a reverent awe of God's presence from this story. This lesson may generate some questions from your campers, as well as some fear as they see how God dealt with Ananias and Sapphira's sin. God is very gracious to us. He was also very gracious to the early church. God protected the early church from Ananias and Sapphira's sin. Here is an excerpt from an article on our passage for today:

"...their (Ananias and Sapphira) deaths appear to be a very harsh and merciless punishment, but it was crucial from the start to eliminate any doubt that God could be deceived or even tolerate deceit. The result of the deaths was that the entire community recognized the seriousness of the presence of God in their midst." (Hedging Bets: A Theological Reading of Acts 4:32-5:11 by Kevin Beck, Aug. 26, 2004)

How do you respond to how God dealt with Ananias and Sapphira? Do you have a hard time understanding His punishment for them for the sake of the early church and for the sake of the purity of the Gospel? Spend a few minutes in prayer, asking God to help you understand His heart with regard to sin. Examine how your heart needs to change so you do not suffer from greed in your own life.

PLUG IN TIME - 5-10 minutes as the kids begin to arrive

Arrive early to check the supplies in the bin and review the lesson. Write today's principle on the whiteboard. Remember to greet all campers upon arrival; meet their parents; welcome and introduce all visitors. Create a welcoming cabin for all campers!

Ask campers...

Go around the room and have campers share examples of favorite things they have been given. **How** does it make you feel when you are given something? Does it make you want more of what you were given? Are you happy and thankful for what you are given?



BIG GROUP TIME - 35-40 minutes

As you line up, remind campers we are going to have fun as an entire Camp Grace group! We are going to live out GRACE by **Glorifying God** through worship, **Respecting All leaders**, and **Accepting Responsibility** to listen with attentive ears, minds, and hearts - fully **Celebrating Christ** with passion! We should **Encourage Others** to do the same, by not distracting them from their worship of God.

The Bridge to Small Group

Today we will discuss that all we have or own belongs to God. We can trust God with our things by sharing and giving to others. We will also look at the condition of our hearts as we make choices to act or behave in a certain way.

Small Group Time - 25-30 minutes

Getting Started

If your cabin did well in Big Group, acknowledge it. If not, take a couple of minutes to talk about how they can do better next time.

What did you learn in Big Group? What was the candy for? (Kids at the hospital.) What happened to Ape's candy? (Ape ate the candy but led the staff members to think a bear got it.) What made Ape tell the truth? (He heard about God punishing Ananias and Sapphira to death for keeping money for themselves and lying about it, and realized it was wrong of him to eat the candy and lie about it.)

Last week we read about Peter and John. What happened to them when they told others about Jesus? They were thrown in jail! They wanted to honor Jesus for changing their lives by sharing Him with others, even if it meant suffering. They were bold and courageous in speaking about Jesus because they had the Holy Spirit in them. After they were released from prison, everyone began praising God. We can also live for Christ and share Him with others, even if it means we will suffer persecution or people will make fun of us.

Today we are continuing our study in the book of Acts. We will see how the believers shared what they owned with each other.

Let's begin in Acts 4 [NLT].

Acts 4:32-35

³² All the believers were united in heart and mind. And they felt that what they owned was not their own, so they shared everything they had. ³³ The apostles testified powerfully to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and God's great blessing was upon them all. ³⁴ There were no needy people among them, because those who owned land or houses would sell them ³⁵ and bring the money to the apostles to give to those in need.

The believers knew that everything they owned – their money, food, houses, animals – all of these things were given to them by God. It is easy to share your things when you know that nothing belongs to you. They shared everything they had with each other. How would you feel about sharing everything you have? (Allow responses.)

Gift Exchange



The purpose is to see how we respond when we feel that something that is ours is taken from us.

Supplies:

Bag of gifts (with enough gifts for each child) (1 per bin)

Slips numbered 1-15 (1 set per bin)

Pull out gifts based on how many total campers you have. Have each camper draw a number. Explain that they will go in order from 1-15 (it's okay if all numbers aren't chosen) to pick gifts. The camper who draws the smallest number gets to pick a gift from the bag first. The camper with the next smallest number can steal the gift from the first, or blindly pick a new gift. Continue in this way until each camper has a gift. Gifts can only be stolen once. The campers get to keep the gifts they end up with. (Please clip the set of numbers back together at the end of this activity.)

Tie It Together



How did you feel when someone stole a gift from you? (Allow responses.) How would you feel if your parents took all your Christmas presents and gave them to Goodwill or Miracle Hill? (Allow responses.) It would probably be hard to have all of your Christmas presents given away, if you did not choose to do that. Is it easier to give away something that is not yours? Why or why not? (Allow responses.) We need to remember that everything we have – our clothes, food, toys, house, etc – has been given to us by God. He wants us to take care of what He has given us, use these things wisely, and share with others. Does this change the way you look at all of your stuff? Is it easier to share with others when you know that it is not yours, but God's? (Allow responses.) God will always give us what we need. He wants us to share our things.

God desires for us to have a sharing heart because He commands us to love Him and love others. When we want to have everything for ourselves, it reveals that we have a selfish, greedy heart. This kind of heart does not show love for God or desire to follow Him. To love God and love others well, we must be willing to sacrifice our own desires and wants. We must have a heart that cares more about the needs of others than our own, and is willing to give up what we have for the sake of others.

It can be a difficult thing to do, especially when it means giving up something that we really want. Jesus was our perfect example of loving God and others. He obeyed God's call by sacrificing His life for our sake. We can be like Jesus in having a heart that desires to love and sacrifice for God and for others.

Let's continue reading and see exactly how some individuals shared what they owned.

Acts 4:36-37

³⁶ For instance, there was Joseph, the one the apostles nicknamed Barnabas (which means "Son of Encouragement"). He was from the tribe of Levi and came from the island of Cyprus. ³⁷ He sold a field he owned and brought the money to the apostles.

We can follow Barnabas' example. We can give money to the church just as Barnabas gave money to the apostles. When we are a part of the church, we are called to give to the church and share what we have.

Let's continue reading to see an example of two people who were not "united in heart and mind." They were part of the church, but their hearts were not pure in sacrificing and giving.

Acts 5:1-4

¹ But there was a certain man named Ananias who, with his wife, Sapphira, sold some property. ² He brought part of the money to the apostles, claiming it was the full amount. With his wife's consent, he kept the rest.

³ Then Peter said, "Ananias, why have you let Satan fill your heart? You lied to the Holy Spirit, and you kept some of the money for yourself. ⁴ The property was yours to sell or not sell, as you wished. And after selling it, the money was also yours to give away. How could you do a thing like this? You weren't lying to us but to God!"

What did Ananias do wrong? Was it wrong to give half the money and keep some for himself? (No.) Was it wrong for him to claim that he had given all of it? (Yes.) Our actions, or the way we behave, show where our heart is or what we believe in. When Ananias lied, what did this show about his heart? (That he did not trust God, he was self-focused.) Did he really want to give money to the apostles because he believed and trusted God with all that he owned? Was Ananias more concerned with what others thought of him? Do you think he was worried about giving up all his money and not being able to live? Both of these things show that he was not trusting God. He was more concerned with what he wanted instead of what God was calling him to do.

God Sees The Heart



The purpose is to reinforce that God sees our heart and we cannot hide the truth from Him.

Supplies:

Worksheet – "God Sees the Heart" side (1 per camper)

White crayons

Have campers turn to the “God See the Heart” side. Have them draw a heart and write their names with white crayon. Have the campers trade worksheets. Then have them take markers and color over the cards. Each name and heart will show up.

Tie It Together



We cannot see each other’s hearts, but God can. We are transparent to God; He sees what we think and feel. We cannot cover up our sin by lying to those around us. God knows what is in our hearts. Even when we do good things, if our motive or reason for doing these things is to glorify ourselves instead of God, we are sinning. When you share your things with others or give things away, do you complain about it? (Allow responses.) God can see what is in your heart. He cares more about your heart attitude than your actions.

Honest or Fake



The purpose is to help the campers see that doing the right thing is not enough; the condition of our heart is what God cares about.

Supplies:

Situation cards (1 set per bin)

Honest and Fake cards (2 sets per bin)

Split the campers into two teams. Explain that **God cares about what’s in our hearts. He cares about whether we are honest in following Him, or if we are fake and choosing to live for ourselves.** Each team will draw a situation card from the pile (you may want to put them in the bin). The cabin counselor will read the situation card and the first team to show the correct card (“honest” or “fake”) will receive one point. The team with the most points when all the situation cards have been drawn will win the game. (Please clip the cards back in sets for the next session and storage.)

Tie It Together



As we live our lives and make choices about how to act or behave, we need to look at our hearts and see why we are acting or behaving the way we are. Remember, God cares about what is in our hearts. You have the choice to be honest (about following God) or fake (and follow yourself and your own desires). God wants you to be honest in the way you live for Him. He wants you to have a heart that desires to glorify Him.

Let’s continue reading and see what happens to Ananias.

Acts 5:5-6

⁵ As soon as Ananias heard these words, he fell to the floor and died. Everyone who heard about it was terrified. ⁶ Then some young men got up, wrapped him in a sheet, and took him out and buried him.

God disciplined Ananias because his greedy heart caused him to sin. Does anyone know what greed is? (Allow responses.) Greed is a desire to have more of something than you actually need. Ananias was greedy, and this caused him to sin against God and against the church. His discipline was death.

Let's continue reading to see what happens to Sapphira, Ananias' wife.

Acts 5:7-10

⁷ About three hours later his wife came in, not knowing what had happened. ⁸ Peter asked her, "Was this the price you and your husband received for your land?"

"Yes," she replied, "that was the price."

⁹ And Peter said, "How could the two of you even think of conspiring to test the Spirit of the Lord like this? The young men who buried your husband are just outside the door, and they will carry you out, too."

¹⁰ Instantly, she fell to the floor and died. When the young men came in and saw that she was dead, they carried her out and buried her beside her husband.

Sapphira was disciplined as well; she also died. Does this seem like a really bad punishment to you? (Allow responses.) Have you lied before? Does it scare you to know that God punished Ananias and Sapphira with death for their sin? (Allow responses.) It scared those who saw this happen as well.

Acts 5:11

¹¹ Great fear gripped the entire church and everyone else who heard what had happened.

We can tell from these verses that God takes our sin very seriously. We also need to take our sin seriously. We need to look at our heart, not just our actions. Ananias and Sapphira were disciplined for their sin. God did not want others in the church to be affected by this sin. He desires for us to be without sin as well. This is why Jesus lived here on earth and died on the cross. He took our punishment for our sin so that we do not have to be separated from God. When we believe and trust in Jesus Christ, He forgives us of our sins.

Selfless Heart



The purpose is for the campers to examine what scripture says about having a faithful heart.

Supplies:

Worksheet – "Selfless Heart" side (1 per camper)

Have campers complete the "Selfless Heart" side of the worksheet. (They can keep the traded worksheet with the classmate's name and heart.)

Tie It Together



Ananias and Sapphira had greedy hearts, and it caused them to sin against God and the

people of the church by lying. God wants us to have a heart that desires to love and obey Him. Greed only reveals selfishness in our heart. We need to seek God to change our heart to make us more like Jesus. When our heart is changed, our actions and behaviors change to reveal what God has done in us. We can follow Jesus' example and have selfless hearts that love others and sacrifice our own desires and wants for the sake of others.

Prayer Time

Spend a few minutes in prayer to close small group time. Ask God to change our hearts so we are selfless, obedient, and share with others.



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