

Family Lesson 76

Principle: Dangers of greed.

Bible Character(s): Ananias and Sapphira

Scripture Reference: Acts 4:32-5:11

1. Worship - Choose your favorite songs from the [Spotify playlist](#) found on the curriculum resource page. Have fun, sing loudly, and follow along with the motions!

2. Bible Lesson - Read through the lesson with your family. The bold font is meant to be read aloud along with the Scripture references.

Bible Lesson

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.

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 share what they own 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 know that everything they own—their money, food, houses, animals—all of these things have been given to them by God. It is easy to share your things when you know that nothing belongs to you, so they share everything they have with each other. How would you feel about sharing everything you have? (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 wants 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.

That does not show love for God or a desire to follow him. To love God and love others well, we must give up our own selfish wants. This can be hard, 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 for his life by giving up his life for us. We can be like Jesus when we give up what we want and love others.

Let’s continue reading and see exactly how some individuals share what they own.

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 gives 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 are not “united in heart and mind.” They are part of the church, but their hearts are 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 does Ananias do wrong? Is it wrong to give half the money and keep some for himself? (No.) Is it wrong for him to say that he has given all of it? (Yes.) Our actions, or the way we behave, show the nature of our heart. When Ananias lies, what does this show about his heart? Does he trust God? (Allow responses.) Is he focused on God or himself? Does he really want to give money to the apostles because he believes and trusts God with all that he owns? Is Ananias worried about what others think of him? (Allow responses.) Ananias has a greedy heart. He does not trust God with what God has given him. He is more concerned with what he wants instead of what God is calling him to do.

Help your child see that doing the right thing is not enough; the condition of our heart is what God cares about. 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. Read each situation and have your child respond: “honest” or “fake.”

1. It’s your birthday, and your mom sends cupcakes with you to school. She tells you that you are not to eat any on the way to school because there are just enough to be shared with everyone in your class. You get on the bus, and then eat three cupcakes without anyone seeing. When it’s time to pass them out, there aren’t enough for everyone in your class. Your teacher says your mom miscounted, and you agree with your teacher.
2. Your mother tells you to clean your room thoroughly before you go play outside. You follow her directions and put everything away just like she asked. As you are cleaning, you think about how unfair your mom is, because you are missing time with your friends. You are mad that your mom made you clean your room.
3. Your parents are going out for the night and leave a babysitter in charge. Your parents tell you that you must respect her and obey everything she tells you to do. After watching a

movie and playing for a while, your babysitter tells you it's time to get ready for bed. Normally, you stay up later than this. You go change into your pajamas, then brush your teeth, and go to the bathroom. You would rather stay up 'til normal time, but you go to bed without getting mad or upset.

4. You're at the grocery store with your mom. When you're in the checkout line, she tells you and your sister that you can pick out only one piece of candy to eat on the way home. Your dad normally lets you pick out two pieces. You look at all the candy and finally choose a Snickers bar. You turn to your sister and quietly complain about your mom.
5. It's your brother's turn to clean off the table after dinner. Your parents ask YOU to clear all the dirty dishes, put them in the dishwasher, and wipe the table clean. You follow their directions and clean the table. A little while later your mom praises you for doing such a great job. You are mean to your brother for the rest of the night because you are mad that he didn't have to clean the table.
6. You're at church in Up & Out and a couple of kids decide to do a craft. They all end up cutting things out and putting glitter and glue on them. When they are done, they leave their mess and go play games. When it is almost time to go, your leader asks who made the mess, but no one says anything. Your leader asks you to clean up the mess, and you do so with a good attitude because you are happy to help out even if it wasn't your mess.
7. You are in Camp Grace big group. During worship, you're singing and doing the motions, but instead of worshiping God, you are more concerned about what the camper next to you is doing and what they think of you.

As we live our lives and make choices about how to act or behave, we need to look at our hearts and think about 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 disciplines Ananias because his greedy heart causes 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 is greedy, and this causes him to sin against God and against the church. His discipline is 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 is disciplined as well; she also dies. Does this seem like a really bad punishment to you? (Allow responses.) Have you ever lied before? Does it scare you to know that God punishes Ananias and Sapphira with death for their sin? (Allow responses.) It scares 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 hearts, not just our actions. God does not want others in the church to be affected by Ananias' and Sapphira's sin, so he disciplines them. God wants 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. Help your child understand that the root of sin is in our heart, not in our words and actions. You can talk about or show them a picture of weeds ([GCK resource page](#)). Ask your child how they would stop a weed from continuing to grow?

What happens when a weed is not pulled out by its root? (Allow responses.) It will keep growing! If you do not stop the weed at its root, it may "disappear" for a little while, but it sprouts back up and keeps growing. This is like sin. Sin comes from our heart; it shows what we believe about God and our attitude towards loving and following him. Our actions and words are a result of what is in our heart. Just like a weed continues to grow, sin continues to grow when we do not deal with our heart—when we do not recognize our sin, repent of it, and obey God's commands. Ananias and Sapphira had greedy hearts that caused them to sin against God and other people. God does not want us to be like Ananias and Sapphira; he wants us to have selfless hearts, so that we can love and sacrifice just as Jesus did.

Prayer

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

Activity

"God Sees the Heart" - the purpose of this activity is to reinforce that God sees our heart and we cannot hide the truth from him.

Supplies:

Piece of paper
White crayon or colored pencil
Markers

Give your child a piece of paper to fold in half like a card. Have them draw a heart and write their name on the card with a white crayon. Then have them take a marker and color over the card. Their name and the heart will show up.

We cannot see each others' hearts, but God can. God can see 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 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.

