

When Giving is Not Cheerful

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Acts / Ananias and Sapphira Struck Dead / Acts 5:1–11; Acts 4:32–37

One of the most solemn and serious stories in the New Testament, Ananias and Sapphira stand as a great warning to Christians today. Why did God kill them? Is it a sin that some Christians are committing today? We need to make sure we understand the answer because this is obviously something God takes very seriously.

› Illustration about Giving

- This story is
 - In NT
 - most solemn
 - most serious
 - What lessons for us?

- Context of Story

[Acts 4:32–35](#) (ESV)

Now the full number of those who believed were of one heart and soul, and no one said that any of the things that belonged to him was his own, but they had everything in common. And with great power the

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apostles were giving their testimony to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and great grace was upon them all. There was not a needy person among them, for as many as were owners of lands or houses sold them and brought the proceeds of what was sold and laid it at the apostles' feet, and it was distributed to each as any had need.

- Many People Joining
 - Many needing help.
 - Why?

Many of these early believers were immediately cut off from family and friends by the zealous bigotry of the Jews, and it was necessary to provide them with food and shelter. - AA p. 70

- Why great need?
 - lost jobs
 - lost families
 - lost financial foundation
- People giving up
 - everything to be
 - Christian.

- Leaders,
 - saw their sacrifice,
 - care for them.

- Others sell their stuff
 - to provide for those
 - who gave up all.

- They have a
 - joint treasury.

- Apostles manage
 - the moneybag
 - to provide for all.
 - (next chapter
 - Deacon job).

Commune

- You see why?

- But How?
 - No more selfishness?
 - No more pride?
 - No more arrogance?
 - No more fighting
 - No more arguing?
 - for top place?
- How?

This liberality on the part of the believers was the result of the outpouring of the Spirit. - AA p. 70

- Outpouring of Spirit
 - great evidence of
 - Christian living.

- This way of living.

- gave more power
 - to their preaching.

- Those who listened.
 - knew it wasn't just
 - a show...

- Satan wanted to
 - destroy it.
 - damage public testimony
 - hurt church!

- You get context...
 - What is happening
 - Showing God's character
 - clearly
 - distinctly.

- Satan wants to

- mar that.
- Ananias and Sapphira
 - context?
 - Huge sacrifices
 - people giving up all
 - people losing much
 - other caring for them
 - member selling things
 - giving their retirement

Acts 5:1-2 ESV

But a man named Ananias, with his wife Sapphira, sold a piece of property, and with his wife's knowledge he kept back for himself some of the proceeds and brought only a part of it and laid it at the apostles' feet.

- Why did that make
 - this decision.
- What is their story?

Acts of the Apostles Chapter 7—A Warning against Hypocrisy

With others, these professed disciples had shared the privilege of hearing the gospel preached by the apostles. They had been present with other believers when, after the apostles had prayed, “the place was shaken where they were assembled together; and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost.” Acts 4:31.

- Ananias and Sapphira
 - were not newly come
 - to the faith.
- They were leaders.
 - they were among
 - the 120.
 - people looked up to them...

Acts of the Apostles Chapter 7—A Warning against Hypocrisy

Deep conviction had rested upon all present, and under the direct influence of the Spirit of God, Ananias and Sapphira had made a pledge to give to the Lord the proceeds from the sale of certain property.

- It was at Pentecost
 - HS convicted them.

- to sell property.
- Came directly from God.

Acts 5:1-2 ESV

But a man named Ananias, with his wife Sapphira, sold a piece of property, and with his wife's knowledge he kept back for himself some of the proceeds and brought only a part of it and laid it at the apostles' feet.

- Convicted to sell
 - but made public pledge
 - but then had regrets.
 - too hasty...
- Promised to give
 - 100% of sell price
- Wanted to change mind.
 - want to keep some.
- But now

- embarrassed to tell
 - they won't give 100%.

- Decided to lie.
 - say this is 100%
 - but keep some.

- They wanted
 - others respect
 - other's admiration
 - keep money
 - be selfish
 - be thought of as
 - extremely generous.

PROBLEMS:

1. Public Pledge / Vow
2. Lie About Amount

3. Manipulation / Hypocrisy

The Vow

Acts 5:2 *ESV*

and with his wife's knowledge he kept back for himself some of the proceeds and brought only a part of it and laid it at the apostles' feet.

- Brings it in.
- God tells Peter

[Acts 5:3-4](#) (ESV)

But Peter said, "Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit and to keep back for yourself part of the proceeds of the land? While it remained unsold,

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did it not remain your own? And after it was sold, was it not at your disposal? Why is it that you have contrived this deed in your heart? You have not lied to man but to God."

- Peter's Words:

“While it remained unsold, did it not remain your own?”

- In other words,
 - nobody
 - made you pledge.
 - required how much.
 - manipulated your sacrifice...
- HS convicted you.
 - You chose to do it.
- Once you pledged...
 - You promised God.
 - You vowed it.
- God is so serious about vows.

Vows

Ecclesiastes 5:4-6 ESV

When you vow a vow to God, do not delay paying it, for he has no pleasure in fools. Pay what you vow. It is better that you should not vow than that you should vow and not pay. Let not your mouth lead you into sin, and do not say before the messenger that it was a mistake. Why should God be angry at your voice and destroy the work of your hands?

Deuteronomy 23:21-23 ESV

“If you make a vow to the LORD your God, you shall not delay fulfilling it, for the LORD your God will surely require it of you, and you will be guilty of sin. But if you refrain from vowing, you will not be guilty of sin. You shall be careful to do what has passed your lips, for you have voluntarily vowed to the LORD your God what you have promised with your mouth.

Numbers 30:2 ESV

If a man vows a vow to the LORD, or swears an oath to bind himself by a pledge, he shall not break his word. He shall do according to all that proceeds out of his mouth.

[Psalm 66:13](#) (ESV)

I will come into your house with burnt offerings;

I will perform my vows to you,

Psalm 56:12 ESV

I must perform my vows to you, O God;

I will render thank offerings to you.

Jonah 2:9 ESV

But I with the voice of thanksgiving

will sacrifice to you;

what I have vowed I will pay.

Salvation belongs to the LORD!”

KEY IDEAS ABOUT PLEDGES

1. Pledged are Common.
2. God Likes Pledges.
3. God Does Not Require Pledges.
4. God Hold Us To Our Pledges.

Tithes vs. Offerings

- Tithing Still Applies Today
- Tithing Predates Mosaic Covenant
 - [Gen 14](#) .. - Abraham

- [Gen 28](#) - Jacob

› Commanded in NT

What Is Tithe?

- Tithe means 1/10th.
- Tithe = 10% of income.

What is Tithe Used For?

Numbers 18:21 ESV

“To the Levites I have given every tithe in Israel for an inheritance, in return for their service that they do, their service in the tent of meeting,

- It pays the salary of
 - those who work
 - full time in ministry.
- By the way,

- Levites also
 - paid tithing
 - on their salary.
- Where do you pay it?

Deuteronomy 12:5-6 ESV

But you shall seek the place that the LORD your God will choose out of all your tribes to put his name and make his habitation there. There you shall go, and there you shall bring your burnt offerings and your sacrifices, your tithes and the contribution that you present, your vow offerings, your freewill offerings, and the firstborn of your herd and of your flock.

- They had
 - main treasury
 - at the sanctuary.
- Did not stay
 - in local synagogue.
 - main treasury
 - paid priests and Levites.

Diverting Tithe

- For God's Work
 - Not you ideas
 - Not helping Friends.
- There was a special tithe
 - for that too.

Deuteronomy 12:5-6 **ESV**

But you shall seek the place that the LORD your God will choose out of all your tribes to put his name and make his habitation there. There you shall go, and there you shall bring your burnt offerings and your sacrifices, your tithes and the contribution that you present, your vow offerings, your freewill offerings, and the firstborn of your herd and of your flock.

- Once every 3 years
 - special tithe
 - in addition to regular tithe
 - help less fortunate.
- They also had first fruits
 - in addition to tithing.

- That means
 - they were giving
 - at least 20% of income
 - to God.
- That was before king
 - that was before
 - other taxes.

Bad Leaders

- I hear people say.
 - I don't want to
 - give to bad leaders...
- Think,
 - were there ever
 - bad leaders

- in the bible?
 - Son's of Aaron
 - Nadab and Abihu
 - Sons of Eli
 - Won't mention...
- Show me passage,
 - if Levites are bad,
 - use tithe in other way...
- No such verse...
 - why?
- Because we are not
 - paying tithe to
 - priests and Levites
 - but to God.

Malachi 3:8 ESV

Will man rob God? Yet you are robbing me. But you say, 'How have we robbed you?' In your tithes and contributions.

- God says,
 - if we refuse to pay tithe
 - we are stealing from
 - God himself!!!
 - (not Priests)
 - (not Levites)
 - (not conference)

Tithes in the NT

1 Corinthians 9:13–14 NIV

Don't you know that those who serve in the temple get their food from the temple, and that those who serve at the altar share in what is offered on the altar? In the same way, the Lord has commanded that those who preach the gospel should receive their living from the gospel.

1 Timothy 5:17–18 ESV

Let the elders who rule well be considered worthy of double honor, especially those who labor in preaching and teaching. For the Scripture says, "You shall not muzzle an ox when it treads out the grain," and, "The laborer deserves his wages."

- Those who make this
 - their primary work.
- Paid to do it,
 - by the tithe...

Tithes Summary

- 10% of Income
- Still Applies Today
- Directly to Storehouse
- Use to Pay Levites

Modern Day Statistics

- > 25% of Church members tithe in average church.
- Ours is much higher
- Our Tithe is Up 10%

What Is Offering

- Giving to Church
 - outside of 10% tithe.
- It can be
 - Local Church.
 - Conf Ministries.
 - World Missions.
 - Independent Ministries.
 - Help those in need.

Bible Teaching about Offering

2 Corinthians 9:6-7 ESV

The point is this: whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. Each one must give as he has decided in his heart, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.

- Offering

- In addition to tithe.
- Optional Amount
- Give with Joy

Acts of the Apostles Chapter 7—A Warning against Hypocrisy

God has made the proclamation of the gospel dependent upon the labors and the gifts of His people. Voluntary offerings and the tithe constitute the revenue of the Lord's work. Of the means entrusted to man, God claims a certain portion,—the tenth. He leaves all free to say whether or not they will give more than this. But when the heart is stirred by the influence of the Holy Spirit, and a vow is made to give a certain amount, the one who vows has no longer any right to the consecrated portion.

- We will ask you.
 - Consider Pledging for
 - the new church...
- Take your pledge seriously.
 - It is a promise to God.

Ananias and Sapphira

- Back to Story

Acts 5:3–4 ESV

But Peter said, “Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit and to keep back for yourself part of the proceeds of the land? While it remained unsold, did it not remain your own? And after it was sold, was it not at your disposal? Why is it that you have contrived this deed in your heart? You have not lied to man but to God.”

- Ananias
 - Lied to God.
 - Serious result

Acts 5:5–6 ESV

When Ananias heard these words, he fell down and breathed his last. And great fear came upon all who heard of it. The young men rose and wrapped him up and carried him out and buried him.

- God killed him.
 - sooo....
- Important Points...
 - God takes this

- really seriously.
- Issues:
 - Vows
 - Lies
 - Hypocrisy
- Same with wife.

[Acts 5:7-10](#) (ESV)

After an interval of about three hours his wife came in, not knowing what had happened. And Peter said to her, "Tell me whether you sold the land for so much." And she said, "Yes, for so much." But Peter said to her,

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"How is it that you have agreed together to test the Spirit of the Lord? Behold, the feet of those who have buried your husband are at the door, and they will carry you out." Immediately she fell down at his feet and breathed her last. When the young men came in they found her dead, and they carried her out and buried her beside her husband.

- Both died.
- Some say,

- people aren't
- killed today for pledges...
- Is problem not there?

Why did God kill them?

1. Guard Church

Acts of the Apostles Chapter 7—A Warning against Hypocrisy

Infinite Wisdom saw that this signal manifestation of the wrath of God was necessary to guard the young church from becoming demoralized. Their numbers were rapidly increasing. The church would have been endangered if, in the rapid increase of converts, men and women had been added who, while professing to serve God, were worshipping mammon.

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Acts of the Apostles Chapter 7—A Warning against Hypocrisy

It was designed as a warning to the church, to lead them to avoid pretense and hypocrisy, and to beware of robbing God.

2. Warning to Us

Acts of the Apostles Chapter 7—A Warning against Hypocrisy

From the stern punishment meted out to those perjurers, God would have us learn also how deep is His hatred and contempt for all hypocrisy and deception.

- Their sin
 - Deception
 - Covetousness
 - Greed
 - Desire for Applause
 - Hypocrisy

- Their sin
 - is common today.
 - nobody dropping dead.
 - God still hates it.
 -

APPEAL

1. Pursue Honesty
2. Pursue Generosity
3. Pursue Genuine Piety

4. Joyfully Fulfill Pledges