**You Can't Fool God**

(Acts 5:1-11 KJV)

*1But a certain man named Ananias, with Sapphira his wife, sold a possession, 2And kept back part of the price, his wife also being privy to it, and brought a certain part, and laid it at the apostles' feet.3But Peter said, Ananias, why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost, and to keep back part of the price of the land?4Whiles it remained, was it not thine own? and after it was sold, was it not in thine own power? why hast thou conceived this thing in thine heart? thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God.5And Ananias hearing these words fell down, and gave up the ghost: and great fear came on all them that heard these things.6And the young men arose, wound him up, and carried him out, and buried him.7And it was about the space of three hours after, when his wife, not knowing what was done, came in.8And Peter answered unto her, Tell me whether ye sold the land for so much? And she said, Yea, for so much.9Then Peter said unto her, How is it that ye have agreed together to tempt the Spirit of the Lord? behold, the feet of them which have buried thy husband are at the door, and shall carry thee out.10Then fell she down straightway at his feet, and yielded up the ghost: and the young men came in, and found her dead, and, carrying her forth, buried her by her husband.11And great fear came upon all the church, and upon as many as heard these things.*

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n the foregoing chapters of this book we valuably view a snapshot of a committed community of people whose hearts have been utterly redeemed and revolutionized by believing in Jesus. They found themselves freely courageous, courteous, caring about people—and freely selling land and houses and giving the money to the church for distribution to those with special needs.

If and whenever the opportunity presents itself—I encourage each of you to study the dramatic events of the book of Acts and its events such as the day of Pentecost, the healing of the lame man, and the great response of multitudes in Jerusalem and how many were added to the church and unified. I must admit that this is ideal Christianity, true, genuine life of Christianity that we all should live. But unfortunately there is also a counterfeit Christianity. And it came in shortly after this in the early church, and evidences of it will be seen on throughout the book of Acts. Wherever the true church has gone throughout the world, counterfeit Christianity has gone right along with it.

So, it is against this beautiful backdrop of the last four chapters, that we arrive at verse 1 of chapter 5 and are introduced to the first recorded sin of the ministry—that’s being identified as authentic hypocrites in the church, Ananias and Sapphira. The gracious act of giving is set in direct contrast to the motive behind the giving of Ananias and Sapphira. It would appear, through my theological research and education that they may have tried to gain the same kind of respect as Barnabas did when he gave, and that may be more speculative than fact because there was nothing ever said about how the apostles or the other believers responded when he gave.

The early church was made a success because of faith, purpose and service. However, it was Barnabas who set a good example for the people. However, not everyone followed his example. I hate to serve you notice, but unbelief and carnal living hinders God's work from going forward. Such living hurts not only God's work but discourages man inner being. So it’s in this passage we see a husband and wife—Ananias and Sapphira—lying not to man but to God—and as the result of their lying God struck them dead.

1. **Hypocrisy Perpetrated:**

(Acts 5:1-2 KJV)

*1But a certain man named Ananias, with Sapphira his wife, sold a possession, 2 And kept back part of the price, his wife also being privy to it, and brought a certain part, and laid it at the apostles' feet.*

George MacDonald wrote, "Half of the misery in the world comes from trying to look, instead of trying to be, what one is not." The name that Jesus gave to this unethical, unenthusiastical and unexceptionable practice is "hypocrisy," which simply means "wearing a mask, playing the actor." We must not think that failure to reach our ideals is hypocrisy, because no believer lives up to all that he or she knows or has in the Lord. Hypocrisy is deliberate deception, trying to make people think we are more spiritual than we really are devoted.

(Acts 5:1 KJV)

*1But a certain man named Ananias, with Sapphira his wife, sold a possession,*

* 1. **The people**—verse 1. Ananias and Sapphira sold their possessions with the thought in mind of giving the money to the church. They were following the example of Barnabas. But Barnabas giving was to please the father—whereas this couple’s giving was to please the people byway of concealment.