



The Good News

February 23rd, 2020

Volume 20, Issue 8

Ananias and Sapphira

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We often read in the Bible about great people of faith such as Moses and Abraham. We read the Old Testament and learn of people like Enoch and Elijah who were taken into heaven and never knew death. We can read the New Testament and learn of men like Paul who, upon learning they were not following God, changed his life and became a pillar of faith in the church. There are such great lessons and great examples to be learned in the Bible, and we can thank God that He has given us such a wealth of information to know how we can be pleasing to Him. He has also provided us with the opportunity to see what events took place in the early church and how characters and hearts had to change to accommodate this faith. We find that it was not always an easy transition for people to make, adjusting from the Old Law to the New Law. One such example is Ananias and Sapphira in **Acts 5**. Let us consider two elements of their character that is not compatible with the Christian heart and which ultimately led to their downfall.

They lied, Acts 5:1-5, 7-9 – The most obvious of points from this text is certainly the sin which Peter himself points out: “*Why have you conceived this thing in your heart? You have not lied to men but to God.*” Throughout the New Testament, lying is not only condemned as a sin but epitomizes the very character that Christians are to cast off. The point of a lie is to deceive. We are never to lie to one another (**Col. 3:9**), and we can never lie to God as He knows our hearts. As **Col. 3:9** points out, we have cast off the old man with his deeds and are to be a new creature, innocent and pure.

They sought the praise of the brethren, Acts 5:1-2 – We do not have a Scripture specifically saying this, but let’s use our deductive reasoning. Our context (**Acts 4:32-37**) involves all of the brethren who had means to give some of their belongings to those who had none. Of course, there would naturally be a praising of these generous brethren. While some have surmised that Ananias and Sapphira were greedy, that’s not a necessary inference. Perhaps they had some bills they needed to pay or some other purpose for the amount they kept back. What motivation might they have had for pretending they were giving ALL the proceeds? Why lie about it? It appears they desired the attention and praise that would come from giving an amount of money that would have appeared to be a great sacrifice on their part. They must have thought that they would not have received as much praise had they admitted they were only giving a portion of the proceeds. While we should always seek to do good unto our brethren, our motivation should be the praise from God, not man (**John 12:43**).

Let us always seek a Christian character, not given to lying or desiring the praise of man.