

LESSON 48

Ananias & Sapphira

ACTS 4:32–5:11



BIBLE TRUTH

THE SPIRIT OF GOD IS POURED OUT IN GRACE, DISCIPLINE, AND POWER

LESSON SNAPSHOT

1. OPENING REVIEW 5 MIN

Use last week’s lesson outline to review with the children what they learned.

2. BIBLE STORY 10 MIN

Read Acts 4:32—5:11 from the Scriptures or read story 126, “Ananias & Sapphira,” from *The Gospel Story Bible*.

3. OBJECT LESSON 1 15 MIN

Fool’s Gold

SUPPLIES:

- ✓ enough small rocks to give one to every child
- ✓ gold spray paint

4. TEACHING/DISCUSSION 10 MIN

Using the teaching points, teach through the lesson for today.

5. OBJECT LESSON 2 10 MIN

God Is the Giver of All Things

SUPPLIES:

- ✓ one full-sized candy bar
- ✓ a large bag full of chocolates, enough for every child to receive at least one

6. SWORD BIBLE MEMORY 5 MIN

7. ACTIVITY TIME 10 MIN

Color a Picture

SUPPLIES:

- ✓ coloring page for NT Lesson 48—one for each child
- ✓ markers or crayons

8. CLOSING PRAYER 5 MIN

9. BONUS OBJECT LESSON 10 MIN

Two Flashlights

SUPPLIES:

- ✓ two flashlights—one without batteries and one bright one
- ✓ Bible

TOTAL 80 MIN

PREPARING TO TEACH

TEACHING POINTS

Great grace led the new believers to do great things for God—It is amazing to read about the early Christians and how the Spirit of God worked grace into their lives. We can often forget that the descriptions are of brand-new believers, not people who had been Christians for years and years. The first believers were so affected by the gospel and the in-filling of the Spirit that they were glad to sell their possessions and share with those in need. Joseph sold a field and brought the money to the apostles so that those in need could be cared for. In Acts 4:33 we learn how they were able to do these good works: “great grace was upon them all.”

Great grace is guarded by God—Acts 5 starts out, “But a man...” With these words Luke contrasts the generosity of Joseph with the deception of Ananias and Sapphira. Perhaps Joseph was praised or esteemed for selling his field and giving the money to those in need. Ananias and Sapphira sold a field too, and they pretended to give all the money to the apostles while keeping some of it for themselves. They did not have to sell their field, and they did not have to give all the money to the apostles. But this sin—this lie—was treated by God as a very serious matter. The Holy Spirit brought severe discipline for the good of all.

Peter confronted Ananias and, later, Sapphira for lying. His words help all of us to remember that when we sin against each other, our greater sin is against God. Immediately, Ananias and then his wife fell down dead, and great fear came upon those who saw. The Holy Spirit was working to keep the church pure. Jesus said, “I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it” (Matthew 16:18). When Ananias and Sapphira sought to deceive the early church and so discredit its witness, they sided with the gates of hell against the church and God judged them for it. The result was that a holy fear came upon both believers and unbelievers when they heard of God’s judgment.

You can’t fake great grace—There is no comparison between the selfish attempt of Ananias and Sapphira and the great grace that fell upon the church with the power of the Holy Spirit. After God judged Ananias and Sapphira, many people were healed and believers were added (Acts 5:14). We need to remember that three thousand were converted after Peter’s explanation of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. That means that thousands were being converted here as well. When people understood the gospel and saw the power of God, many put their faith in Jesus.

The compromise of Ananias and Sapphira had the potential to hinder the work of God. That is why the Lord judged them so severely. This swift judgment served to warn the early believers of the dangers of sin and of the fearful holiness of God and to help them realize you can’t fake God’s great grace.

Where Is the Gospel?

How does today's Bible story fit into God's greater plan of redemption?

The Holy Spirit was poured out on the early church with great power. There was a mighty outpouring of grace in the lives of the new Christians. The transformed lives of the new believers validated the gospel message that was being proclaimed. More than ever, Luke tells us people were "added to the Lord" (Acts 5:14). When a person believes the gospel, they are not just added to some club, they are added to the "body of Christ" (1 Corinthians 12:27) with Jesus as the head of that body (Ephesians 1:22–23).

THE LESSON

OPENING REVIEW 5 MIN

Use last week's lesson outline to review with the children what they learned.

BIBLE STORY 10 MIN

Read Acts 4:32—5:11 from the Scriptures or read story 126, "Ananias & Sapphira," from *The Gospel Story Bible*.

OBJECT LESSON 1 15 MIN

Fool's Gold

SUPPLIES:

- ✓ enough small rocks to give one to every child
- ✓ gold spray paint

Before class spray the rocks with gold paint.

In class display the painted rocks, and tell the kids you are giving away gold nuggets. Play out the fact that they are genuine, but have the kids expose your nuggets as fakes. When they expose your deception, try to convince them that they are real by making up an absurd story. This should help them see through your story even more. Finally, talk to them about how they knew that your story was not real and the nuggets were fakes.

Mention that God is all-knowing—he always knows the truth and he can always expose our sin.

Talk about what Ananias and Sapphira did and why what they did was wrong and could have harmed the church.

Then give each child a gold rock to take home to remind them that God is our greatest treasure.

TEACHING/DISCUSSION 10 MIN

Using the teaching points, teach through the lesson for today.

OBJECT LESON 2 10 MIN

God Is the Giver of All Things

SUPPLIES:

- ✓ one full-sized candy bar
- ✓ a large bag full of chocolates, enough for every child to receive at least one

The object of this lesson is to help the children see that when we really grasp that God is our gracious provider, it is easy to share what we have with others who are in need.

Ask for a volunteer and give her the full-sized chocolate bar. Then ask her the following questions:

- **If you had to share the candy bar, how many people would you want to share it with? Would you be willing to share it with the whole class?**
- **What happens to the size of the pieces when there are more people to share with?**

(The pieces get smaller.)

- **What happens to the size of your piece when you have to share with a lot of others?**

(My piece gets smaller and smaller.)

- **Does that make you want to share it with the whole class or just a few people?**

(If she still wants to share it with the whole class, ask everyone if they agree. Ask if anyone would prefer to keep the whole chocolate bar for themselves.)

Produce the bag of chocolates and ask the class if knowing the teacher had a whole supply of candy to hand out would affect how generous they were with their own candy.

Then take the bag of candy to your volunteer and ask, “If you knew that I had this whole bag of chocolates and that I loved to reward generosity, would you be more likely to share your candy bar?” (Yes, because I would know you have plenty and can give me more).

Hand the bag of chocolates to your volunteer and tell her to take the bag and share it with the class—and, by the way, that she gets to keep the big candy bar. (She should be eager to do so.)

God gives us all good things and then asks us to share with others. Read Malachi 3:10 to see God’s desire to reward our giving. With regard to giving money, which is what this passage is about, God says to test him in this.

Share Psalm 50:10–11 to help the children see that God owns and controls everything. Share James 1:17 to help the children see that every good thing we receive is from the Lord.

Finally, connect it to today’s Bible story. If Ananias and Sapphira had believed that God owned everything and would be generous with those who themselves are generous, and if they believed that God’s riches were infinite, they would have been more willing to give and less willing to lie.

SWORD BIBLE MEMORY 5 MIN

Take time during the class to review the SWORD Bible Memory verses with the class. Provide the opportunity for each child to recite the verses to an adult worker.

ACTIVITY TIME 10 MIN

Color a Picture

SUPPLIES:

- ✓ coloring page for NT Lesson 48—one for each child
- ✓ markers or crayons

While the children are coloring, engage them by asking the following questions:

- **What is happening in the picture?**
(Ananias is dying.)
- **Why did God kill Ananias?**
(Ananias lied about the money he got for the land he sold.)
- **Did Sapphira tell the truth when she came a little later?**
(No, she did not tell the truth. She lied by telling Peter the money she gave was the full price she and her husband received.)

CLOSING PRAYER 5 MIN

Pick several children to pray prayers based on the day’s Scripture passages.

BONUS OBJECT LESSON 10 MIN

Two Flashlights

SUPPLIES:

- ✓ two flashlights—one without batteries and one bright one

The object of this object lesson is to help the children understand the nature of God’s holiness and the judgment of sin.

Darken the windows and turn off the lights. Shine the flashlight and ask the children to tell you what happens to the darkness when the light shines. (The darkness flees instantly.) The idea is to compare the light to God’s holiness and the darkness to sin. One way to do this is to mix up the language. Tell the children that the light destroys the darkness or judges the darkness.

Next, shine the light without batteries. Ask the children to evaluate that flashlight. They will say that it does not work. Tell the children to assume the second flashlight is broken and cannot be fixed. Ask them if it is accurate to continue to call it a flashlight. Explain that if it cannot provide light, it is not a light at all. Perhaps it should be called a “flash nothing.”

Explain to the children that God’s holiness is like the flashlight and that God’s judgment is like the light. Sin is the darkness. For God to truly be holy, he must judge sin. If he were to stop judging sin, he would not be holy. He would not be who he is.

Sometimes we think God should overlook sin, but that is not possible. Even in God’s mercy toward believers, he did not completely overlook sin. Our sin was placed on Jesus, who God punished instead of us. Because Jesus took our sin (darkness) and gave us his righteousness (light), we are light to God in Jesus and there is no need for God to judge us.

Ask the following questions:

- **Why should the holiness of God put a healthy fear in our hearts?**

(We cannot take sin lightly. God is serious about judging sin.)

- **How do we trust in Jesus?**

(We need to have faith that Jesus is God and man. He died on the cross for our sins and rose again that we might have new life. These are the basic components of the gospel, and it is in the gospel that we place our hope for salvation. When we fully trust in Christ and give him our lives, we will be saved.)

