

Acts 4:32-5:11

Generosity and Integrity

? Has there ever been a time when you've been impacted by someone's generosity?

Previously in Acts

Last week we discussed Peter and John's boldness in the face of great adversity from Jewish leaders. They set an example of how we should respond through faith when we face opposition and hard circumstances.

Acts 4:32-5:11 (NIV)

³² All the believers were one in heart and mind. No one claimed that any of their possessions was their own, but they shared everything they had. ³³ With great power the apostles continued to testify to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus. And God's grace was so powerfully at work in them all ³⁴ that there were no needy persons among them. For from time to time those who owned land or houses sold them, brought the money from the sales ³⁵ and put it at the apostles' feet, and it was distributed to anyone who had need.

³⁶ Joseph, a Levite from Cyprus, whom the apostles called Barnabas (which means "son of encouragement"), ³⁷ sold a field he owned and brought the money and put it at the apostles' feet.

5:1 Now a man named Ananias, together with his wife Sapphira, also sold a piece of property. ² With his wife's full knowledge he kept back part of the money for himself, but brought the rest and put it at the apostles' feet.

³ Then Peter said, "Ananias, how is it that Satan has so filled your heart that you have lied to the Holy Spirit and have kept for yourself some of the money you received for the land? ⁴ Didn't it belong to you before it was sold? And after it was sold, wasn't the money at your disposal? What made you think of doing such a thing? You have not lied just to human beings but to God." ⁵ When Ananias heard this, he fell down and died. And great fear seized all who heard what had happened. ⁶ Then some young men came forward, wrapped up his body, and carried him out and buried him.

⁷ About three hours later his wife came in, not knowing what had happened. ⁸ Peter asked her, "Tell me, is this the price you and Ananias got for the land?"

"Yes," she said, "that is the price."

⁹ Peter said to her, "How could you conspire to test the Spirit of the Lord? Listen! The feet of the men who buried your husband are at the door, and they will carry you out also."

¹⁰ At that moment she fell down at his feet and died. Then the young men came in and, finding her dead, carried her out and buried her beside her husband. ¹¹ Great fear seized the whole church and all who heard about these events.

Generosity in Action: Eliminating Need in the Church

? Based on the examples in this passage, how would you define generosity?

? How does generosity of some have the ability to impact the church as a whole?

? Verse 33 credits God's grace with eliminating need in the Christian community. What does this tell us about the source of generosity?

? When giving the early Church literally "put it at the apostles' feet," (v. 35 & 2). What do you think it looks like to "put it at the apostles' feet" in today's context?

? What does the early church's example tell us about our responsibility to the poor, orphaned widowed, and those in need?

? At Hope we often talk about giving in the context of the 3 Ts: time, treasure, and tickers (hearts). What are ways we can be generous with our time, treasure and tickers?

Generosity Gone Sour-Giving with Integrity

? How did Ananias and Sapphira miss the point of generosity?

? What does Ananias and Sapphira's example tell us about our potential motivations toward generosity?

? Ananias and Sapphira lacked integrity with their generosity. What are other areas of church life where we could potentially fall into lacking integrity?

? How does a lack of integrity have the potential of hurting the church community as a whole?

? Peter tells Ananias that he has lied to the Holy Spirit. Do you think Ananias equated his lying to Peter and the Church with lying to God? How does our behavior within the Church reflect our heart toward God?

For Discussion and Accountability

? How can you better allow God's grace to work through you in the area of generosity?

? Are there any areas of your life where you need to work on your integrity? How can you depend on God more in these areas?