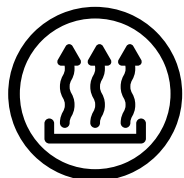




ACTS: THE STORY CONTINUES



WARM-UP

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

Pray for your time together as a group.

Read out loud as a group

ACTS 4:32-37 (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.



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

Possible Answers: In this passage the early church was able to eliminate need among its members entirely. How great would it be to know that because of the generosity of the church as a whole that there are no people living with unmet needs!



The generosity and graciousness of God towards us leads us to be generous and gracious towards others. When is it easier to be generous? When is it hard?

Possible Answers: answers may vary. Examples: It's easier when you have abundance, when life doesn't have big bumps, when you're moved emotionally for a cause. It's harder when life is difficult, you aren't in a great spot financially, you feel like something isn't logical, etc



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?

Possible Answers: Answers will vary, but some examples are volunteering with ministries, tithing, giving to special fundraisers, helping with scholarships to events, praying for specific needs of others, spending time with someone who is lonely, struggling, or just needs a friend, etc.

Read out loud as a group

ACTS 5:1-10 (NIV)

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.



How did Ananias and Sapphira miss the point of generosity?

Possible Answers: Giving was elective, but they lied about the amount that they gave. Therefore, their giving was more about appearances than genuine surrender to God. They wanted to look like they were giving more than they were. If their generosity was purely to honor themselves



These deaths can feel a bit extreme, but let's take a deeper look. God ended the lives of two people who were focused on their own glory over His glory. What might this communicate to us about what will ultimately kill us/has killed us?

Possible Answers: The lie that goes back to the garden: that we can know good and evil and choose goodness all on our own. The lie that we can be good by ourselves and then deeply believing it. It also shows us the severity of God's coming wrath.



Vs 11 states "Great fear seized the whole church and all who heard about these events.". Why do you think they were afraid? And what do these events teach us about grace?

Possible Answers: if it was fear and they had a correct reading of the bible, they would know that they were no better than Ananias and Sapphira. Who hasn't lied, been prideful, liked praise, or focused on works-based goals? It's purely the radical, unfair nature of grace that we aren't dropping dead like them. It shows us that grace is unfair (we get the better end of the deal), complete, and it saves us from the coming wrath.



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

Possible Answers: Not being willing to share sin/struggle, trying to look like we have it all together all the time, coming to church to be seen rather than to worship, volunteering so we'll look like "good church members," etc.

Optional Activity

Set a timer for 5-10 minutes and individually find/search or create a meme for some part of the passage at <https://imgflip.com/memegenerator>. Take time to share your memes with the group or in small groups!

DISCUSSION FOR ACCOUNTABILITY



- How can you allow God's grace to work through you in the area of generosity?
- Are there any areas of your life where you desire integrity? How can you depend on God more in these areas? How can we help as a community?