



The Man God Uses—part 7

As we continue our series on the person God uses, we learn God honors those who are uncompromising in their faith.

Those Who Compromise

In Acts 5, we read about Ananias and Sapphira—a couple who conspired to sell a plot of land and donate only a portion of the proceeds to the church while claiming that they were giving the entire amount. Because of this, God struck both of them dead. Now the important thing for us to consider is this: What was the sin of Ananias and Sapphira?

Notice Peter's statement in Acts 5:3b-4: *"Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit and keep back part of the price of the land for yourself? While it remained, was it not your own? And after it was sold, was it not in your own control? Why have you conceived this thing in your heart? You have not lied to men but to God."*

What Went Wrong?

God had not asked Ananias and Sapphira to give everything they had to the church. In fact, they were not required to give anything at all. The problem was not that they kept part of the money but that they had lied about it. Their sin was hypocrisy. They were trying to deceive the congregation into thinking that they were more spiritual than they actually were.

Throughout history, we find that the Holy Spirit functions in an atmosphere of purity. If we want the Holy Spirit to work in our lives, then we must first repent of our sins. When we allow the Lord to cleanse us from all unrighteousness, we open the door for Him to work in our lives and in the lives of others in the church. However, the moment hypocrisy begins to creep in—caused by a person's desire to receive glory—the atmosphere is polluted, and the work of God is hindered.

The Nature of the Holy Spirit

Notice one other component in the account of Ananias and Sapphira. Peter inquired in Acts 5:3b-4, *"Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit? ... You have not lied to men but to God."* Two truths are observed. First, the Holy Spirit is God. He is one of the three Persons of the

triune Godhead, and this is one of many Scriptures which distinctly states that fact. So if someone tells you that the doctrine of the Trinity is not found in the Bible, these verses refute such a foolish idea.

Second, the Holy Spirit is a Person—not an impersonal force. Notice that Ananias had lied to the Holy Spirit. I can't lie to gravity or to electricity because I can't lie to an impersonal force. The Holy Spirit is God, and we

summoned the apostles the next morning, the officers reported that their locked and guarded cell was empty.

Even after their imprisonment, the apostles refused to compromise. Luke relates in Acts 5:25: *"So one came and told them, saying, 'Look, the men whom you put in prison are standing in the temple and teaching the people!'"* Imagine what the high priest was thinking at that point!

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can have a personal relationship with Him. This is why Paul exhorts believers, *"Do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed"* (Ephesians 4:30a). We can cause Him grief by sinful words or attitudes.

An Earnest and Sober Faith

When God took the lives of this couple, how was the church impacted? Acts 5:11 states, *"Great fear came upon all the church and upon all who heard these things."*

The other believers had a new respect for God and His holiness. As a result, the Holy Spirit performed miracles among them (verses 12-16). The news spread; people came to faith in Christ by the thousands. Then, as is typical of non-believers when God begins to move among His people, the Sadducees became nervous. Again, they hauled the apostles into court for more questions and threats.

Refusing to Compromise

Because they would not stop preaching the Gospel, all of the apostles were thrown into prison. But at night, an angel released them, commanding them to go into the temple and *"speak to the people all the words of this life"* (Acts 5:20b). When the high priests

He charged them in Acts 5:28b: *"Did we not strictly command you not to teach in this name? And look, you have filled Jerusalem with your doctrine, and intend to bring this Man's blood on us!"*

The high priest and the council were seemingly concerned that the preaching of the Gospel would bring the guilt of Christ's blood upon their heads. Yet this conflicts with their earlier statement to Pontius Pilate when they demanded to have Jesus crucified and boldly said, *"His blood be on us and on our children"* (Matthew 27:25b).

Once again, the Sadducees charged the apostles to stop preaching; and once again, the apostles replied that they had to obey God rather than man. They let the Sadducees know what their priorities were.

What are your priorities? Are you compelled to obey God rather than man, or do you make compromises according to the dictates of this world? The person God uses is uncompromising. ↻

Note: This article was edited by permission and taken from the book, *The Man God Uses*, by Pastor Chuck Smith.