



## Following Your Heart

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***Among them that lacked, for as many as were possessors of land or houses sold them, and brought the prices of the things that were sold And laid them down at the Apostles feet and distribution was made unto every man according as he had need.***

**- Acts 4: 34-35-**

### Lessons We Can Learn from Sapphira

I believe there are four important lessons we can learn from Sapphira:

1. Each of us is responsible for our actions. “Fear of man will prove to be a snare” ([Proverbs 29:25](#)) teaches us that we must be more concerned for God’s glory than our own or anyone else’s. In following Ananias in this sin, Sapphira showed that her heart wasn’t fully God’s.
2. Loving your neighbor as yourself puts their needs before yours. That was the theme of everyone giving what they had and gathering it together for

the work of the gospel. Evidently, Sapphira's heart told her that "some" was "enough."

3. We need to check in with God daily to confess sins that we may have thought were small or insignificant and ask the Holy Spirit to show us the truth in those matters.

4. If you find yourself less concerned about your actions and time spent with God, consider that you may have missed out on the message of Jesus' sacrifice for you. When faced with [the cross](#), it's harder to be willfully sinful—especially when someone must point out that you are listening to Satan instead of the Holy Spirit.

God sees all, knows all, and is sovereign over all. That can be the greatest news to a believer but the absolute worst news to someone "lukewarm" or cold in their faith.

Matthew 16:26

Matthew 6:33

Mark 8:36

This portrait of the early church as an unselfish community is captivating and inspiring. It presents a challenge for many followers of the Anointed One who want to show sacrificially their love to Him and His church. Many today wonder how to translate this into a modern culture shaped by consumerism and self-interest, but no translation is necessary. These problems weren't foreign to the early community. In contrast to the generosity and sincerity of some like Barnabas, Luke now explains that others gave not out of love, but out of a desire to be honored by the community.

**5** Once a man named Ananias, with his wife Sapphira fully cooperating, *committed fraud*. He sold some property <sup>2</sup> and kept some of the proceeds, but he pretended to make a full donation to the Lord's emissaries.<sup>[a]</sup>

**Peter:** <sup>3</sup> Ananias, have you allowed Satan to influence your lies to the Holy Spirit and hold back some of the money? <sup>4</sup> Look, it was your property before you sold it, and the money was all yours after you sold it. Why have you concocted this scheme in your heart? You weren't just lying to us; you were lying to God.

<sup>5</sup> Ananias heard these words and immediately dropped to the ground, dead; fear overcame all those who heard of the incident. <sup>6</sup> Some young men came, wrapped the

body, and buried it immediately. <sup>7</sup> About three hours had passed when Sapphira arrived. She had no idea what had happened.

**Peter:** <sup>8</sup> Did you sell the land for such-and-such a price?

**Sapphira:** Yes, that was the price.

**Peter:** <sup>9</sup> Why did the two of you conspire to test the Spirit of the Lord? Do you hear those footsteps outside? Those are the young men who just buried your husband, and now they will carry you out as well.

<sup>10</sup> She—*like her husband*—immediately fell dead at Peter's feet. The young men came in and carried her corpse outside and buried it beside her husband. <sup>11</sup> The whole church was terrified by this story, as were others who heard it.

In these formative days, God sends some strong messages about His work in the church: the power to heal, the beauty of life in the Spirit, and His hatred for arrogant religion. If God does not rebuke the married couple who chooses to make a show of their supposed generosity, then Christianity might drift in the wrong direction. While the Jewish leaders are using religion as a means to gain power and increase their reputations, the teachings of Jesus lead down a path toward the kingdom of God rather than toward human advancement. God chooses to expose these bad motives quickly, so that the church can give out of pure motives rather than out of a desire to appear righteous.