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## THE FEAR OF GOD – ACTS 5:1-11

### GETTING STARTED

“A God-fearing man” isn’t a phrase that gets used very often anymore, but it used to be a more common way of referring to those who strictly followed a Christian conduct. But why is the fear of God and faith so connected? Shouldn’t we not fear God if we are following Him? Doesn’t the Bible refer to God as our friend? For this reason the story of Ananias and Sapphira is all the more challenging for us. Not because its difficult to understand, but because we don’t like it. The idea that God, especially in the New Testament, would put someone to death for what seems like a minor sin feels unjustified. The fact that the end result of the passage is that there was great fear also seems counter-intuitive for many of us who have been in the church for a while. But as we look closer at the nature of our sin and who God is, we realize that fearing God is exactly the right response of faith!

### READ THE TEXT: ACTS 5:1-11

1 But a man named Ananias, with his wife Sapphira, sold a piece of property, 2 and with his wife’s knowledge he kept back for himself some of the proceeds and brought only a part of it and laid it at the apostles’ feet. 3 But Peter said, “Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit and to keep back for yourself part of the proceeds of the land? 4 While it remained unsold, did it not remain your own? And after it was sold, was it not at your disposal? Why is it that you have contrived this deed in your heart?



You have not lied to man but to God.” 5 When Ananias heard these words, he fell down and breathed his last. And great fear came upon all who heard of it. 6 The young men rose and wrapped him up and carried him out and buried him.

7 After an interval of about three hours his wife came in, not knowing what had happened. 8 And Peter said to her, “Tell me whether you sold the land for so much.” And she said, “Yes, for so much.” 9 But Peter said to her, “How is it that you have agreed together to test the Spirit of the Lord? Behold, the feet of those who have buried your husband are at the door, and they will carry you out.” 10 Immediately she fell down at his feet and breathed her last. When the young men came in they found her dead, and they carried her out and buried her beside her husband. 11 And great fear came upon the whole church and upon all who heard of these things.

## UNDERSTAND THE TEXT

1. Read vs 3 and 4. What does this tell us about the Holy Spirit? What does it tell us about the nature of the church?
2. In vs 9, Peter says that Sapphira is testing the Lord, what is meant by this phrase? Look up Luke 4:12 and Malachi 3:9-10 and compare how “testing” is being used.

*[Extra verses for studying this passage: Matthew 6:2, Psalm 51:4, Romans 14:23, Luke 12:4-5, 1 Timothy 5:20, 1 Corinthians 11:28-30, Romans 2:4, Psalm 31:19, Psalm 103:11]*

## APPLY THE TEXT

3. In light of the good news of Jesus, how should the fear of God work itself out in our lives? How does it help us with the fight against sin? Does it change how we approach God?
4. How should a proper understanding of sin impact our evangelism? How does a proper understanding of the consequence of sin motivate our evangelism?

## SHARE & PRAY



1. As we study the book of Acts, think carefully about 1 or 2 people that you would like to actively share the gospel with. Share them with your life group and hold one another accountable in prayer and support.
2. In light of Acts 5:1-11 let us pray that thank God for his overwhelming forgiveness of our sin, his mercy and grace towards us that we didn't earn and let us be bold to announce the good news of Jesus!

