

SUNDAY, MAY 26 | The transaction, 2

3Then 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? 4Didn'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."

Our memory verse from Hebrews captures the work of the Holy Spirit in Peter perfectly. He reveals to Peter what was kept in secret and laid it bare for Ananias and Sapphira to give account before God. Their sin, though, has often tripped a lot of people up. I've had to explain how God was exactly wronged in their actions. So let's make sure we have a correct understanding of that before we move on.

This husband and wife, Ananias and Sapphira, owned property. They wanted to sell it and give the money to the church. This was common among what was happening and was really why they did it. However, they decided together that instead of giving all of the money from the sell of the property to the church they would keep some it for themselves. That wasn't the problem. The problem was, Satan had tempted them to keep that part a secret and for them to tell the apostles the money they were giving to the church was the WHOLE profit. There's the problem! They lied about how much they were giving. They didn't have to give all of the profit. They could've given whatever amount they chose. But because Satan tempted them they were weak, they gave into his temptation and fell into his trap. It cost them their lives.

Peter was given discernment by the Holy Spirit to know they had deceived them and God. This type of sin was intended to fool God, expecting he wouldn't discover it. Who did Peter say Ananias lied to? The Holy Spirit. Why did he make that distinction, you ask. I would love for you to know!

The Holy Spirit inspired the Word of God. He inspired the apostles. He was "sent" to us as our comforter and teacher. These are attributes and positions of a person. The Holy Spirit is an actual person. You cannot commit a sin against an attribute, but you can commit a sin and grieve the spirit of a person. The Holy Spirit is divine and able to search our hearts, detecting our dishonesty and hypocrisy. "The person of the Holy Spirit revealed to Peter this couple's dishonesty and hypocrisy.

The subtleties in Scripture can get overlooked because we have read them a thousand times. They seem "normal" and familiar, so we gloss over them. Please read scripture carefully and slowly, a few verses at a time. Asking, why did God put that there? These words and phrases are important. They will help you understand his Word and love. It will also help you explain details to those who need these subtleties of his character at an unexpected time. We don't always need them, but an atheist or other person may. "...but in your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect..." – 1 Peter 3:15.

Q. What other ways does the person of the Holy Spirit work in your life?

MEMORY VERSE Hebrews 4:13 – *"Nothing in all creation is hidden from God's sight. Everything is uncovered and laid bare before the eyes of him to whom we must give account."*