

SATURDAY, MAY 25 | The transaction, 1

Acts 5:1-2 Now a man named Ananias, together with his wife Sapphira, also sold a piece of property. 2With 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.

At this time in church history everyone “who believed were of one heart and soul” and they shared all they had with each other. They made sure no one had any needs. Just before this passage, Joseph sold a field and brought the money to the apostles. Ananias and Sapphira decided to sell a piece of their property as well.

I love this picture of the community of believers. This couple shows us a weak link, though. They wanted to do what everyone else was doing but they were holding a part of themselves back. They wouldn't have committed the sin Satan was suggesting if there hadn't been a part of them already willing to do so. There's quite a few things to unpack here. They were jealous of the world's wealth, lacked trust in God's providence, tried to serve God and the world (money), were deceiving the apostles and tried to deceive the Holy Spirit. Boiling this down to wanting to look like a follower of Christ but not being a Christian.

I saw an interesting perspective I'd like to share with you. Ananias and Sapphira were being deceitful with their money. We can all list many ways to do that. What about more practical, or personal, ways that we may relate to? We don't know if the story would have read differently if the deception had been about the work they were doing. Instead of justly serving their masters, or bosses in our case, they had been dishonest (Colossians 3:22-24). Turn that around and they could have treated their employees harshly (Colossians 3:25).

Another angle would be to handle conflict dishonestly. Matthew 18:15-17 gives an outline of how to handle our disagreements in a way that honors each other and God. It's hard to say if deceiving the Christian community in these matters would have caused a similar threat to them. We don't read about any situations like these in Acts.

When we belong to the Christian community it brings a basic change in our viewpoint. Everything we do, all of our actions, are to show love to our neighbors as ourselves instead of making our social status, wealth and power our top goals.

These two verses don't tell us the whole story, but we see the intent of these two people's deception from the beginning. When our filter for all we do and say is love God and love others, it's easy to do everything we do as we work for the Lord!

Q. What are some of your insights that translate this account into today's circumstances?

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.”*