

## Week 8—Acts 4:32-5:11 (for Sunday, February 23)

Begin each day of your study by asking the LORD to speak to you through His Word.

### Day 1

1. Read Acts 4:32-5:11 and make note below of what most stands out to you or questions you may have.
2. Why would Luke place these two stories together? What would you say is the main point of this section?
3. What does this section teach us about generosity and how God works when the church is generous (notice especially v. 33)?

How do the verses below complement this?

Luke 12:32-34—

2 Corinthians 8:1-15—

2 Corinthians 9:1-15—

### Day 2

1. Read Acts 4:32-37. Do you think we enjoy the same “oneness of heart” today as a church that they did? Why or why not? How can we move closer to this in your opinion? How can you move closer to this?

2. Based on these verses do you think the church should take responsibility to care for *all* church members who cannot support themselves on a long-term basis? Why or why not? What do the verses below say about this?

2 Thessalonians 3:6-15—

1 Timothy 5:3-16—

3. In vv. 36-37 we are first introduced to Barnabas. What else do you know about him?

What do we learn about Barnabas from the following passages?

Acts 9:26-27—

Acts 13:1-4—

Who is a Barnabas in your life? Why? Who could *you* be a Barnabas to this week? How will you do that?

### *Day 3*

1. Acts 5:1-11. This is the first recorded sin in the New Testament church. Exactly what was Ananias & Sapphira's sin? What motivated them to do this? What did God teach the early believers by striking them dead? Is there a lesson for us here? If so, what?

2. Before reading the note below, why, in your opinion, does God judge so decisively in this case? How is this judgment similar to God's judgments on Nadab and Abihu (Leviticus 10:2), Achan (Joshua 7:25) and Uzzah (2 Samuel 6:7)? In other words, what makes these sins different? Do you have a hard time with that? Why or why not?

**Lied to the Spirit**—According to the NIV Study Bible: “If no dire consequences had followed this act of sin, the results among the believers would have been serious when the deceit became known. Not only would dishonesty appear profitable, but the conclusion that the Spirit could be deceived would follow. It was important to set the course properly at the outset in order to leave no doubt that God will not tolerate such hypocrisy and deceit.”

3. Why do you think God doesn't continue to strike people dead who lie to Him? Does this mean God doesn't take sin as seriously today (see Romans 6:23)?

#### Day 4

1. Read Acts 5:1-11. Did Ananias and Sapphira deceive others *because* of Satan (i.e. were they not responsible)? How is this similar to Judas in John 13:2? What does this tell us about temptation and how it works (cf. 1 Peter 5:8)?

2. What do we learn about Satan and his goals for the church from this passage? Do you believe that Satan is attacking the church today? How might he do this?

**Satan**—*Satan* literally means “deceiver or adversary.” His goal is to destroy what God has created and according to John Stott, “Where there is life and growth, Satan will attack. As soon as the Spirit came upon the church, Satan launched a ferocious counterattack. While it is true that his first and crudest tactic is physical violence, crushing the church by persecution, his second is even more cunning: moral corruption and compromise” (Stott, p. 27).

3. Take time to pray for the church today, that we may stand firm in moral integrity even in the face of increasing external challenges and pressures to compromise. Pray too for our brothers and sisters who face physical persecution around the world.

### Day 5

1. Read Acts 5:1-11. What does this story show us about the Holy Spirit?

2. In v. 11 we see the first mention of the word “church” in the New Testament. Before looking at the box below, how would you define “church” to someone?

**Church**—The Greek word for church is *ekklesia* which means “the assembly or gathering of God’s people.” Early on it was used to describe both the local assemblies of God’s people in a particular location and for the universal church that was spreading across the known world (see Acts 20:28).

3. How can you start to *be* the church instead of just *coming to* church this week?

### Conclusion

1. What most stood out to you as you studied Acts 4:32-5:11 this week? *Why* do you think this was the case?

2. What is the Holy Spirit prompting you to *do* as a result of this? Be prepared to share with your group!