



## [Acts 5:1-10](#)

(1) Now a man named Ananias, together with his wife Sapphira, also sold a piece of property. (2) With 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. (3) Then 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? (4) Didn'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 to men but to God." (5) When Ananias heard this, he fell down and died. And great fear seized all who heard what had happened. (6) Then the young men came forward, wrapped up his body, and carried him out and buried him. (7) About three hours later his wife came in, not knowing what had happened. (8) Peter asked her, "Tell me, is this the price you and Ananias got for the land?" "Yes," she said, "that is the price." (9) Peter said to her, "How could you agree to test the Spirit of the Lord? Look! The feet of the men who buried your husband are at the door, and they will carry you out also." (10) At that moment she fell down at his feet and died. Then the young men came in and, finding her dead, carried her out and buried her beside her husband.

*New International Version*

We can perceive a mixed bag of Ananias and Sapphira's sins involved in this tragedy. [Acts 4:36-37](#) informs us of Barnabas' sacrificial gift for the well-being of the newly formed church. [Pride](#) and desire for acclaim motivated the couple to give a gift but without the honesty or sacrifice exhibited by Barnabas and others.

"Why has [Satan](#) filled your heart" (verse 3) is the equivalent of "Why have you dared?" They were free to give whatever percentage they set, for Peter says that the entire property sale price was under their control. Their [sin](#) lay in deceitfully alleging that the amount they gave was the whole of the sale price, when it was actually only a part. They deviously exaggerated their offering.

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Some think this judgment was harsh, but Peter did not. He spoke of the sin as inspired of Satan, and the passage makes clear that both Ananias and Sapphira were fully aware of what they were doing (verses 2, 9). Conscious deceit is spiritually disastrous because trust is completely violated. They should have known better.

[God](#) interpreted their action as tempting Him, seeing how much they could get away with. Their way of reaching their goals is so opposed to [the gospel](#) that God could not allow it to go unchallenged; it would have set the whole mission of the church off course. Honesty and integrity are the standard of God's way of life. Sin is no light thing with God.

These people were living behind a deceptive façade, one similar to the idea that, if one keeps the front windows clean, it does not matter how dirty the back ones are. They allowed themselves to become tools working to destroy the family relationship of trust within the church. God forcibly reminded them and us that He will not abide that.

We must treat one another with fairness and loving [kindness](#), or we will not be in His Family. Ananias and Sapphira are shocking reminders to us that we will not get away with deceitfully cheating or taking advantage of our brethren. God may not appear to be in the picture, but only the faithless have this blindness. The penalty will be paid—unless repented of, it is only a matter of time. Ananias and Sapphira paid quickly as a lesson to us.

— John W. Ritenbaugh

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