

# SMALL GROUP STUDY GUIDE

## NOV. 9/10 - ACTS 5 - ANANIAS & SAPPHIRA

### GETTING THINGS STARTED

What would you say your “all-time” favorite Bible verse or Bible story is?

- Why is it so profound for you?
- What attribute of God does it focus on? His love? His grace? His Sovereignty? His justice?

### READ TOGETHER

**Acts 4:32 - 5:11**

### BIG IDEA

**God is not to be trifled with.**

### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. This is a hard passage. This one makes you stop and say “Wait!?!... *what just happened!?*” As you read this passage, what questions do you bring to it? What would you want to ask God about this moment? What remains unsolved in your mind/understanding of this passage after Geoff’s message?
2. Why do you think this was recorded in scripture? What is God trying to say to us through this experience?
3. Geoff mentioned that “*Ananias and Sapphira were abusing the fellowship of the Early Church through their deception, thereby threatening the fledgling church’s unity and effectiveness. In that time the biggest danger to the church wasn’t persecution or poverty... it was lying, deception and hypocrisy*”. What do you think is the biggest danger to the church today? What do you think are the risk areas? What is the church guilty of in this culture that offends God’s holiness?
4. Geoff mentioned that we sometimes think of the Old Testament as the place where God is righteous judge, and look at the New Testament as when God “calms down” and concentrates on grace and forgiveness. Yet we know He is righteous judge, holy, forgiving and full of grace in both. He never changes.
  - What are some examples you can think of in the Old Testament of His grace? His forgiveness? His slowness to anger? Of His long suffering patience?
  - What are some examples you can think of in the New Testament of His justice and wrath? His holiness? That He is not to be trifled with?
5. Read Romans 6:23 & Psalm 103:8, 10
  - We deserve death. Geoff mentioned that what is surprising in our passage isn’t actually that these two people died due to their sin... but that we aren’t all dead because of our sin! It’s somewhat of a grim thought, yet remains true nonetheless. The second half of Romans 6:23 and Psalm 103:8, 10 is what leaves us feeling so thankful and grateful!
  - What does this do for our understanding of God? How does this help us understand our identity in Christ?

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6. Geoff mentioned that we ought to remember that “God is Holy”, “pursue holiness” and “watch our hearts” in response to this story in Acts. As we consider these three applications, he mentioned that *“If this becomes a moralistic message – where you buckle down and try harder, then I have failed to warn you of the pitfalls of this, and I have failed to help you understand the gift of the Holy Spirit”*. How are we to understand the pursuit of holiness in our lives, and the careful monitoring of our hearts in a Spirit-filled way, not a legalistic/moralistic way?
7. After wrestling with this verse, hearing the message and discussing it together, what are your convictions, thoughts or next steps **personally**, when it comes to:
  - Remembering God is Holy
  - Watching your Heart
  - Pursuing Holiness

## CHALLENGE

As you read Acts, or engage with whatever Bible reading/devotional plan you have... pay attention to the Holiness and love of God. Write down what you see, what you feel and what He speaks to you. You may want to look up scripture that deals specifically with these topics as well. Reading, praying and listening to God as you do this may help to show you how His Holiness and justice are in perfect harmony with His love and grace.

**Come next week to small group prepared to share insights on this!**

## PRAYER

- As a group, read Psalm 139:23-24
- Spend 2 minutes in silent, individual reflection and prayer – asking God to speak to you.
- As a group, pray. In prayer, share or ask for whatever you feel called to.
  - Do you need to confess something?
  - Do you need to thank God for something?
  - Do you need to ask for something?
  - Do you need to ask for, and receive, the Holy Spirit’s filling?
- When everyone has had opportunity to pray, the leader can close by praying out loud this Psalm: **Psalm 5:10-12**

## GREAT QUOTE

*“When God poured out his justice on Christ, he was not only destroying his Son, but destroying the barrier between himself and us. How amazing! The more God vented his holiness on Jesus, the more he was venting his love for us. On the cross, the holiness and love of God, otherwise in tension, were in complete, brilliant cooperation. The more his holiness expressed itself, the more his love was satisfied; the more his love expressed itself, the more his holiness was satisfied.”*

- Timothy Keller

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