

INTRO

- Do you have any phobias?
- Besides property or a car, what's the most you've spent on something?

READ

Acts 4:32-5:11

Qu: what's your immediate reaction after reading this story?

REFLECT & RESPOND

This can be a difficult passage to appreciate as it can seem harsh and uncharacteristic of God, especially in the NT. However, as we've seen the external attack increase on the church, now Satan tries to attack from within.

We see 3 wars we as individuals and as a church community will face when it comes to faithfully following Jesus. What fills us flows out of us. Spirit-filled lives are evident by increased **boldness, generosity and fear of God.**

1. Boldness vs Timidness

A constant theme in Acts is how the Holy Spirit fills men and women with boldness in both Word and deed. But how exactly does the Spirit make us bold? We are made bold for God when we are secure and confident in his love for us through Jesus. Rom 8:15-16 says the Spirit drives out fear in us by assuring us as children of God.

Qu: what does boldness mean in general? What's different about Spirit-filled boldness?

2. Generosity vs Greed

Whilst the sin of Ananias and Sapphira isn't primarily about withholding money, it's no coincidence money is a central part to their downfall. Greed is a unique vice in that almost all of us are unaware of our own greed! And yet, Jesus warns us far more about greed than about sexual sin. Hmm...

Qu: what stops us and how can we grow in being a more radical, sacrificial and generous people with our money?

The more secure and confident and bold we are in God's love, grace and care for us, the more generous we become.

3. Fear of God vs Fear of Man

Fear of man means we give an inordinate respect and reverence for man's opinion and place in our lives over God's. And that can cause us to act one way before others, but live different behind closed doors. Ultimately, this is *the* issue for Ananias & Sapphira. And it was critical for the church to deal with the hypocrisy before it grew like a cancer.

We can fall into the same trap if we refuse to live honestly before God and one another. Perhaps because we don't see the immediate consequences of sin like they did, we forget God's Spirit is a HOLY Spirit. Do we overemphasize God's grace and forgiveness at the expense of God's holiness?

Qu: do you have someone with whom you are accountable, who knows your sins & struggles and helps you pursue honest repentance?

The good news is that Jesus is our antidote to timidness, greed, and fear of man. His grace, love, forgiveness, kindness, and holiness help us to live bold, generous lives with a healthy fear of God.

RESPOND & PRAY

- Pray for greater levels of boldness, generosity, and reverence for God