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(Nobody Ever Tells Me Anything)

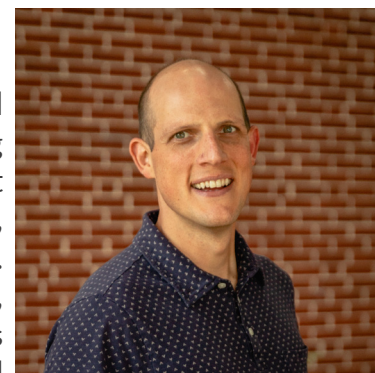


TBC TABERNACLE
BAPTIST CHURCH

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From our Pastor Staying Sensitive to the Spirit

Acts 5 contains a rather startling story. It details how a husband and wife lied to, and essentially stole from, the early church. Having been made alive by an outpouring of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:2-4), the earliest believers exhibited a deep commitment to generosity. Scripture says (Acts 4:34-35) seeing some make large contributions, a husband and wife named Ananias and Sapphira pretended to give a generous gift. They sold a piece of personal property, kept a portion of the proceeds for themselves, and then made a donation to the church, acting as if they gave all of the earnings they had received from the sale of the property (Acts 5:1-2). Knowing what had happened, Peter confronted the husband, saying, "...why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit and keep back part of the proceeds of the land?" (Acts 5:3).



Peter's rebuke provides a beneath-the-surface look at what transpires when we sin in a grievous way. Flagrant violations of God's Law actually require us to "lie to the Holy Spirit." From reading the account of Acts 5, it is interesting to note that neither Ananias nor his wife had yet to lie to the congregation verbally (Acts 5:8). However, they had already lied to the Holy Spirit. Their greedy act involved deceit toward God Himself.

How did Ananias and Sapphira's sin constitute lying against God? The reason is rather simple. When a believer is born again (John 3:3), he or she receives a portion of God's Spirit to live within his or her soul (Galatians 3:2). The Holy Spirit then works to convict believers of sin. Jesus said, "When he comes, he will convict the world about sin, righteousness, and judgment" (John 16:8). Even after salvation, the Holy Spirit continues such work in the lives of believers. James said, "The spirit he made to dwell in us envies intensely..." (James 4:5).

The Holy Spirit functions like an inner-governor or radar in our lives. When we are tempted to think, speak, or act in a way that dishonors God's character, He emits warning notifications in our souls. If you are a believer, surely you have experienced this aspect of His work? Do you know what it is like to experience the Spirit's promptings and nudges?

According to Peter's rebuke of Ananias, believers can be guilty of lying against the Spirit. Such takes place when we resist His work of conviction and instruction in our lives. The fate and consequences of such lying is disastrous. For Ananias and Sapphira, the result was immediate death. The Lord used their folly as an occasion for teaching a grave lesson to the church concerning the sin of resisting the Spirit (Acts 5:10-11). To our knowledge, the Lord doesn't strike believers dead nowadays for sins against the Spirit (Hebrews 2:3-4). He could (1 John 5:16), but we don't have the ability to decipher exactly when He works in such ways. However, we can be assured that all lying against the Spirit does result in a certain degree of spiritual death. The Bible warns believers about quenching and stifling the work of the Spirit (Ephesians 4:30; 1 Thessalonians 5:19).

As we turn our eyes to a new school year and a fall season full of ministry in our church, let's aim to be sensitive to the Spirit's work in our lives. May God give us grace to not shut down the Spirit's prompts. We should examine ourselves regularly to see if there is any habit or attitude that suppresses the Spirit's truth. Extra spiritual care should be given to root out any sin that has become a stronghold. We should erect boundaries and enlist accountability partners to insulate ourselves from temptations to sin against the Spirit.