

Transforming Daily
“ . . . you have not lied to men but to God . . . ”
Acts 5:4

Have you ever heard of “giving with strings attached?” Or maybe you have heard of “keeping up with the Jones’?” Irrespective of the colloquialism, the point regarding giving, especially when it has something to do with God and the church, it better be done with the right motive and attitude, or not at all. In this passage of Scripture, the end result of mismotive in giving literally cost Ananias and Sapphira everything they had; which included their lives.

In order to understand the story more fully, you have to read the preceding verses of chapter four. There was a spiritual awakening of sorts. The Holy Spirit was moving in and on the hearts of believers in such a way as to draw them to give to God on behalf of other believers. There was no requirement or law regarding this spontaneous spiritual movement. The people just pledged (implied) and gave (laid it at the apostles’ feet). Apparently Ananias and Sapphira pledged to do the same as the others were doing (probably caught up in the euphoria of the moment), but when it came time to fulfill their pledge they reneged on it. Instead of giving all that they said they would give, they held back a portion of it.

Before we are too harsh on Ananias and Sapphira, let’s be sure we are not guilty of the same violation to some degree. For instance, take church attendance. A believer joins a church according to the full expectation of attendance and participation as God allows, and the next thing you know, the believer is only giving one hour a week (if that) to whatever it is that will cost him or her the littlest time and money (oops! I quit devotionalizing and went to meddling). What about money? Notice I didn’t use the word tithe. Giving to the church should be far greater than the tithe (but at least the tithe). What about the use of spiritual and physical gifts and abilities? Are they used to the fullest in the church (music, teaching, money management, conseling, etc.), or do they only go to the highest bidder (your job)?

Many Christians (including myself) have reneged on a promise to God concerning a commitment (whether time, talent or tithe) and unlike Ananias and Sapphira, have lived to tell about it. We have been given multiple second opportunities to grow in the beauty and knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ, or not. It is our choice. What will it be? However remember this. Whatever it is you say that you will do and don’t do, you have not lied to men but to God.