

January 10, 2021
Christ Chapel Of Bandera
Sunday Morning Adult Bible Study

Not needed to follow this writing/lesson is a referenced Study Guide. An attempt has been made where anybody with a Bible will find easy reading.

Sunday, January 10, 2021. The Gospel Project; Adult Daily Discipleship Guide ESV; Volume 10, Number 2; Winter 2020-21; Living Generously.

C. S. Lewis Quote:

Every Christian is to become a little Christ. The whole purpose of becoming a Christian is simply nothing else.

Opening Prayer:

In class: Ask an attendee to open with a word of prayer.

On WEB site: Creator, Ruler of all, the one True God; we love You, worship You, and You only. Your created seeks to act, do, and think in ways pleasing to You. Please step into our lives, our hearts, become our very reason for being. Thank you for hearing our prayers. Thank you for your mercy and grace. Thank you for your amazing love. WE put our trust in You. Through Jesus Christ we pray. Amen.

Disclaimer:

I am not seminary trained. Other than being a Christian, I do not claim any special relationship with God. Therefore, feel free to disagree with anything and everything I write/say.

The Lesson:

Using the Bible translation of your choice, read Acts 4:32-35.

Questions for thought:

Is this an indication that communalism is the proper way to live or that Christians should take care of one another?

What would happen if all Christians today went and sold all they had to help the poor?

Would all Christians then be poor?

Biblically, are Christians today allowed to own private property? Are Christians today allowed to own private businesses?

Is it a sin to be rich?

Is it a sin not to share whatever blessings the Lord gives you?

Does Acts 4:32-35 indicate that the prosperity doctrine is true, that “the more you give to God, the more God will give to you?”

The Study Guide says on page 62 in “Voices from the Church”:

A lack of generosity refuses to acknowledge that your assets are not really yours, but God’s. ~Timothy Keller

The Study Guide goes on to say in the last two paragraphs of page 62:

Generosity is Gospel 101. The Father sent His only Son, who subsequently sent us the Holy Spirit, so that we might be adopted into God's family and inherit all the riches of heaven. These first Christians were merely responding to the gift they'd been given. Before Christ, they may have seen their possessions as all they had; after Christ, they saw their salvation as all they needed. Everything else was expendable for the advancement of God's kingdom and the renewal of all things. After all, everything is His anyway.

Our calling is the same. We're called to be generous not merely for cultural pleasantries or to make someone smile; we're called to be generous because God has been generous with us, and nothing we have is ours – it all belongs to God.

Using the Bible translation of your choice, read Acts 4:36-5:2.

Questions for thought:

What is the importance of pointing out Joseph, also called Barnabas by the apostles, was a Levite? (He was of the priestly tribe)

Was this indication that the Levite was giving up his position as a Hebrew priest in favor of following Jesus Christ?

Were Levites supposed to own land in the first place?

Could this Barnabas be the same Barnabas who was identified as an apostle in Acts 14:14, the man who was sometimes with Paul? (Possible but not sure. No where else in the Bible is there a Barnabas also called Joseph)

Could Ananias have sold the property and kept some of the money for himself?

How, what should Ananias have done differently?

Who else knew Ananias was keeping some of the money for himself? (The wife of Ananias, 5:2)

The Study Guide on page 59, the first paragraph after the Bible quote says:

At the end of Acts 4, Barnabas sold a field and gave the proceeds to the apostles. The author then used the word "but" to indicate a juxtaposition: "*But*" Ananias and Sapphira sold a piece of property. In verse 2 we start to see the reason for the "but" – deception. It's not that they decided to give a portion of the proceeds and keep some of the money for themselves. That wouldn't have been a sin necessarily. However, Luke's wording – "with his wife's knowledge" – sets the stage for their dishonesty: not everyone was suppose to know.

The Study Guide continues with the first two paragraphs on page 63:

Applying the concept of sacrificial generosity is difficult. Christians can reasonably disagree about these applications. But again, we cannot argue with the command to be not only generous but *sacrificially* generous. In Scripture, the rich ruler (Luke 18:18-23) and the poor widow (Luke 21:1-4) are juxtaposed not because of their level of income but because of their *hearts*.

Jesus told the rich ruler to sell everything not because he was too rich but because the ruler loved his riches too much. The widow, on the other hand, had nothing, so her gift was especially sacrificial. We see that generosity isn't a mathematical calculation – it's a posture of heart.

For application to today, the Study Guide says on page 59 in the middle of the last paragraph:

As God's people, we are to live honest lives, open for all to see. The early church held everything in common to help fulfill one another's needs. They ate together regularly. They worshiped together. Nothing was hidden.

Using the Bible translation of your choice, read Acts 5:3-11.

Questions for thought:

Were Ananias and Sapphira under compulsion to sell the land?

Were Ananias and Sapphira under compulsion to give all the money from the sale to the Apostles?

Why would Ananias and Sapphira lie and say they had given the entire sale amount to the Apostles?

The Bible says to whom did Ananias and Sapphira lie? (The Holy Spirit, Acts 5:3; To God, Acts 5:4)

Is this an indication that the Holy Spirit and God are one?

Do not answer a loud; have you ever tried to lie to God?

Can anyone hide the truth from God?

If a Christian has accepted the hope, grace, and mercy available through Jesus Christ, but yet sins in some way, has that Christian in affect just lied to God?

Today, whose responsibility is it to watch over a congregation to keep deceivers out? (Pastor, Elders)

Is it an easy, pleasant work?

Even if done correctly, might a Pastor or Elder be criticized for doing his job?

Other than a biblical reason, is there any other reason a Pastor or Elder should ask someone to leave the flock?

What biblical passage gives direction for church discipline? (Matt 18:15-17)

Is there any other biblically approved method for church discipline to be used by a Pastor or Elder?

What is a Pastor or Elder to do if a party involved in church discipline refuses to follow Matt 18:15-17?

On page 63, the second to the last paragraph, the Study Guide says:

It is easy to read this story and be afraid that God might strike you dead if you aren't generous enough. That's not what's going on here; this was a desire for the appearance of sacrificial giving and deceit to accomplish the look. God was not a passive character in this story; rather, He was an active participant. The Holy Spirit was among them, so the couple lied not only to the church but also to God himself.

The Study Guide also says on page 60, the last two paragraphs:

The Book of Acts flows smoothly to this point; God has provided victory after victory for the church, even through persecution! But then He punishes two people in the church with death for being a little deceptive and greedy? Yes, they didn't revere God or respect the family of faith. They dishonored the Savior and lied to the Holy Spirit.

God led Peter to shine a light on Ananias and Sapphira's deceit so the church could root out unrepentant sin in its midst. The result was a just punishment for their sin, but also a benefit for the church – they greatly feared the Lord. We are accountable to God, our Creator and Savior, and we ought to revere Him just as the early church did in light of those events.

Using the Bible translation of your choice, read Acts 5:12-16.

Questions for thought:

In verse 13, who is the “none of the rest” and who is the “them”?
If a person A holds person B in high esteem, why wouldn't person A associate with person B?
Why would a person fear another person that has integrity?
Do all people held in high esteem have integrity?

The Study Guide says on page 64, the first two paragraphs:

Immediately following the deaths of Ananias and Sapphira, the church once again saw increasing numbers of converts. It is no surprise that God's removal of the toxic couple from the church's midst was part of a spiritual revival. With Ananias and Sapphira in the church, they potentially could have ruined the whole mission.

God's mission is not wholly dependent on us. It's *His* mission running on *His* power. Salvation is *His* alone to offer. However, we see in Acts time and time again that our participation in the mission really does matter. It is a mystery why God would include us in His mission, but the fact is we know he does. As we seek to join God in His mission to save sinners and make all things new, we can rejoice that salvation does not depend on us and that God will clear the way.

Using the Bible translation of your choice, read Acts 5:17-42.

Questions for thought:

Again, disciples were being arrested for preaching the Gospel of whom? (Jesus)
After being arrested, imprisoned, and miraculously released, what did the disciples do? (Teach publicly in the Temple, v. 21)
In verse 26, why did the captain with the officers of the Temple want to re-arrest the disciples without violence? (They feared the people)
In verse 29, whom did the disciples say they must obey? (God)
Today, are Christians sometimes called intolerant?
Christians of today must obey whom? (God)
To what type of things should the Christians of today show intolerance? (The same things to which God shows intolerance)
Gamaliel the Pharisee knew that if the actions of the apostles were of men, they would be what? (Overthrown, v. 38)
But if the actions of the apostles were of God, to oppose the apostles would be to what? (Oppose God, v. 39)
Why would the apostles rejoice over being flogged? (They had been considered worthy to suffer shame for Jesus' name, v. 41)
Do you think, in America, Christians of today will keep right on teaching and preaching Jesus as the Christ, when faced with adversity?

The Study Guide says on page 64, the last four paragraphs:

The apostles' boldness here is remarkable, but not surprising. We might marvel at their faith, and in some sense we should. But we should note two things.

First, they were not standing firm in the face of imprisonment and beatings in their own power. They reminded their hearers every single time that their ministry was tethered to God and His Gospel.

Second, their entire lives as Christians had been marked by suffering and opposition. They saw their Messiah crucified, raised from the dead, and later ascend into heaven. What could a human court do to them?

Though our trials and sufferings may vary in degree and consistency, the apostles show us that God's people cannot be shaken by mere mortals. We stand in the powerful, death-defeating name of Jesus.

Thank you for allowing me to worship the Lord with you today.

Joe Huth