

**STORY**

Ananias and Sapphira - Acts 4:31-5:11

**TEACHER PRAYER**

Almighty God, heavenly Father, by the work of Your Holy Spirit I have been brought to Jesus. I enjoy the unity of faith in the fellowship within the visible assembly of the church. Teach me to resist the traps set by Satan, the peer pressures of the world, and my own weak flesh with Your word. Day by day, keep me in a child-like faith that trusts the power of Your word for absolute security all the way Home. In Jesus' name. Amen.

**VOCABULARY**

*Levite* - One of the descendants of Levi (descendant of Leah, Jacob's wife), also the distinctive title of that portion of the tribe which was set apart for the service of the sanctuary subordinate to the priests. A Levite's period of service was from age 25—50, after which he became an overseer. The function of the tribe was to preserve the Law of Jehovah in all its integrity and purity.

**OUTER AIM**

Ananias and Sapphira lied to Peter and to the Holy Spirit.

\* We use terms such as the "visible assembly of believers", "visible congregation", "visible church on earth", etc, to distinguish them from the "Holy Christian Church" which is made up of all believers in heaven and on earth; they are known only to God who knows the hearts of all. (I know if I believe, but beyond that I only know of others who profess to believe. I take their word concerning their faith, but I cannot read another's heart. It may therefore happen that there are hypocrites in the visible Christian church on earth.)

**INNER AIM**

God, the Holy Spirit, gives us the power to be truthful in our dealings with one another.

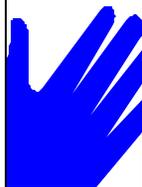
**BACKGROUND**

*(Rupprecht Bible History References Vol. 2, pp. 480-486)*

Every believing child of God confesses that despite the good he desires to do, he sins. The wages of sin is death. The Lord does not wish to have the sinner die, but to repent of his sin, believing that in Jesus he has forgiveness.

In our lesson, we are told about a husband and wife who posed as Christians, but lied to the Holy Spirit. They did not repent of their sin, believing in Jesus for the forgiveness of their sins. They, therefore, suffered instant death. This was a warning to the early church and to us of the fatal folly of a worship of God and a following of Jesus that is only a pretense.

- ▶ The Holy Spirit produced a unity of spirit and a boldness of witnessing among the early Christians.
- ▶ Their faith and unity were such that they shared all things in common.
- ▶ The people brought what they had, and this was distributed as each had need.
- ▶ This communal sharing was an expression of the oneness of faith of the believers.
- ▶ This "system" of care for one another in the church worked for a while, but did not last for long.
- ▶ Part of the reason for its short life is found in this record.
- ▶ Note that this was not an enforced "communism," but a love - prompted voluntary sharing with others in need.
- ▶ Joses (Barnabas) had set a good example of such Christian charity in the congregation.



- ▶ We are told that also Ananias and Sapphira sold their property and brought the money to the Apostles.
- ▶ They claimed that they were bringing the entire amount of money.
- ▶ Their sin was not that they kept back part of the money for Peter pointed out that the property and money always were theirs.
- ▶ But in pretending to bring the entire amount, they were lying, not just to the congregation, but to the Holy Spirit.
- ▶ Satan had turned their hearts to lie to the Holy Spirit.
- ▶ The consequences show that death is the wages of sin.

## **STUDENT PRAYER**

Lower: Holy Spirit, You have called me unto faith in Jesus. Keep me in that faith, by my use of God's word. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Upper: Holy Spirit, You have called me unto faith in Jesus and to be His witness. The devil, the world, and my flesh are against my listening to Your voice and following You. Keep me in the faith that trusts in Jesus and His word. Remind me of what my God has said, whenever I am tempted to sin. I ask this in the name of Jesus, my Savior. Amen.

## **PRESENTATION**

Tell the story with the same emotion and excitement as if you were there. Tell the story in your words, but be faithful to the account that God wrote in Acts 4:31—5:11.

## **APPLICATIONS**

1. Let us daily examine our hearts, that we do not fall into sins of unbelief or self-deception or hypocrisy. Lip service to God is a mockery of Him; He will not allow that. Being a Christian, means that the Holy Spirit has given us a heart that repents of sins and trusts in Jesus for forgiveness. Such a heart will ask the Holy Spirit to cause us to follow our Good Shepherd, faithfully listening to His voice.
2. To warn the believers that there can be hypocrites in the visible church\* on earth. In like manner, to warn against the fatal danger of lying to the Holy Spirit.
3. To remind us that the church on earth is made up of those who profess to believe. We are yet in our weak flesh, in a world of unbelieving peers, and subject to Satan who constantly seeks to devour us. All these we are to resist by clinging to our Savior in child-like faith, and to grow in our relationship with Jesus by using God's word, which is "our trusty shield and weapon."

## **PASSAGES**

These passages can be assigned as memory work or simply discussed in class as to how they fit the lesson.

### Lower

Proverbs 19:5b - He who speaks lies will not escape.

TLH #323, stanza 1: With broken heart and contrite sigh, A trembling sinner, Lord, I cry. Thy pardoning grace is rich and free, O God, be merciful to me!

### Middle any of the above and...

Ephesians 4:25a - Putting away lying, let each one of you speak truth with his neighbor.

TLH #323, stanza 2: I smote upon my troubled breast, With deep and conscious guilt opprest; Christ and His

cross my only plea, O God be merciful to me!

Upper any of the above and...

Matthew 15:8 - These people draw near to Me with their mouth, and honor Me with their lips, but their heart is far from Me.

TLH #323, stanzas 4 and 5: Nor alms nor deeds that I have done Can for a single sin atone. To Calvary alone I flee, O God be merciful to me!

And when, redeemed from sin and hell, with all the ransomed throng I dwell, My thankful song shall ever be, God has been merciful to me!

# Ananias and Sapphira

Acts 4:31-5:11



## The Story

The believers in the church in Jerusalem were like a big family. The believers were filled with the Holy Spirit. Each believer was filled with love for the others. They shared their possessions with those who were needy. Those who had land or houses sold them and brought the money to the apostles to give to those who were in need. Barnabas, a believer from the country of Cyprus, had land and sold it. He brought the money to the apostles to share with the needy.

Another man, named Ananias, and Sapphira, his wife, did not feel the same way that Barnabas felt. They sold some land, but they did not want to part with all that money. They wanted people to think they were giving everything for the Lord, but they decided to lie about it and to keep some of the money for themselves.

Ananias brought part of the money to the apostles and laid it before them.

Peter, through God's power, knew what was in Ananias's heart. He said to Ananias, "Why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit and keep back part of the price of the land for yourself? While it belonged to you, was it not your own? And after it was sold, was it not your own to use? Why have you planned this thing in your heart?"

You have not lied to men, but to God."

When Ananias heard these words, he fell down and died. Great fear came on all those who heard of these things. Some young men who were there rose up and wrapped Ananias in his robes, carried him out, and buried him.

About three hours later, Ananias's wife, Sapphira, came in, not knowing what had happened. Peter asked her, "Tell me, did you sell the land for this much?"

Sapphira answered, "Yes, for so much."

Then Peter said to her, "How is it that you have agreed together to test the Spirit of the Lord? Look, the feet of those who have buried your husband are at the door, and they will carry you out."

Immediately, Sapphira fell down at Peter's feet, struck dead by the power of God. The young men came in and found her dead. They carried her out and buried her by her husband.

Great fear came upon all the church and upon all who heard these things. They knew that God knows all things and has great power.

**Review** - Use these words to fill in the blanks.

lie      share      lie      lied      lie      lies

1. A \_\_\_\_\_ is saying something that is not true.
2. Ananias and Sapphira decided to \_\_\_\_\_ when they made believe that they had given all their money to the church.
3. God says it is a sin to \_\_\_\_\_.
4. God showed that He knows when people tell \_\_\_\_\_. He knows all things.
5. God caused Ananias and Sapphira to die when Peter told them that they had \_\_\_\_\_ to God.
6. God wants His children to \_\_\_\_\_ what they have with others because they love God.

## Talking to Jesus

Dear Jesus,

We thank You for giving Your life for our sins. We want to please God by not giving in to the devil when he tempts us to lie. Help us to show our love for You by always telling the truth. Please help us not to lie. Thank you, Jesus, for making us your children. Amen.

## Passages

**"He (*the devil*) is a liar and the father of it." John 8:44**

The devil wants us to lie.

### The Second Commandment

**You shall not take the name of the LORD your God in vain.**

God doesn't want His children to use the Name of the LORD their God in the wrong way.

**Activity One** - Cut out the words in the boxes at the bottom of the page and glue them below to make The Second Commandment.

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5 **your God**

1 **You shall**

4 **of the LORD**

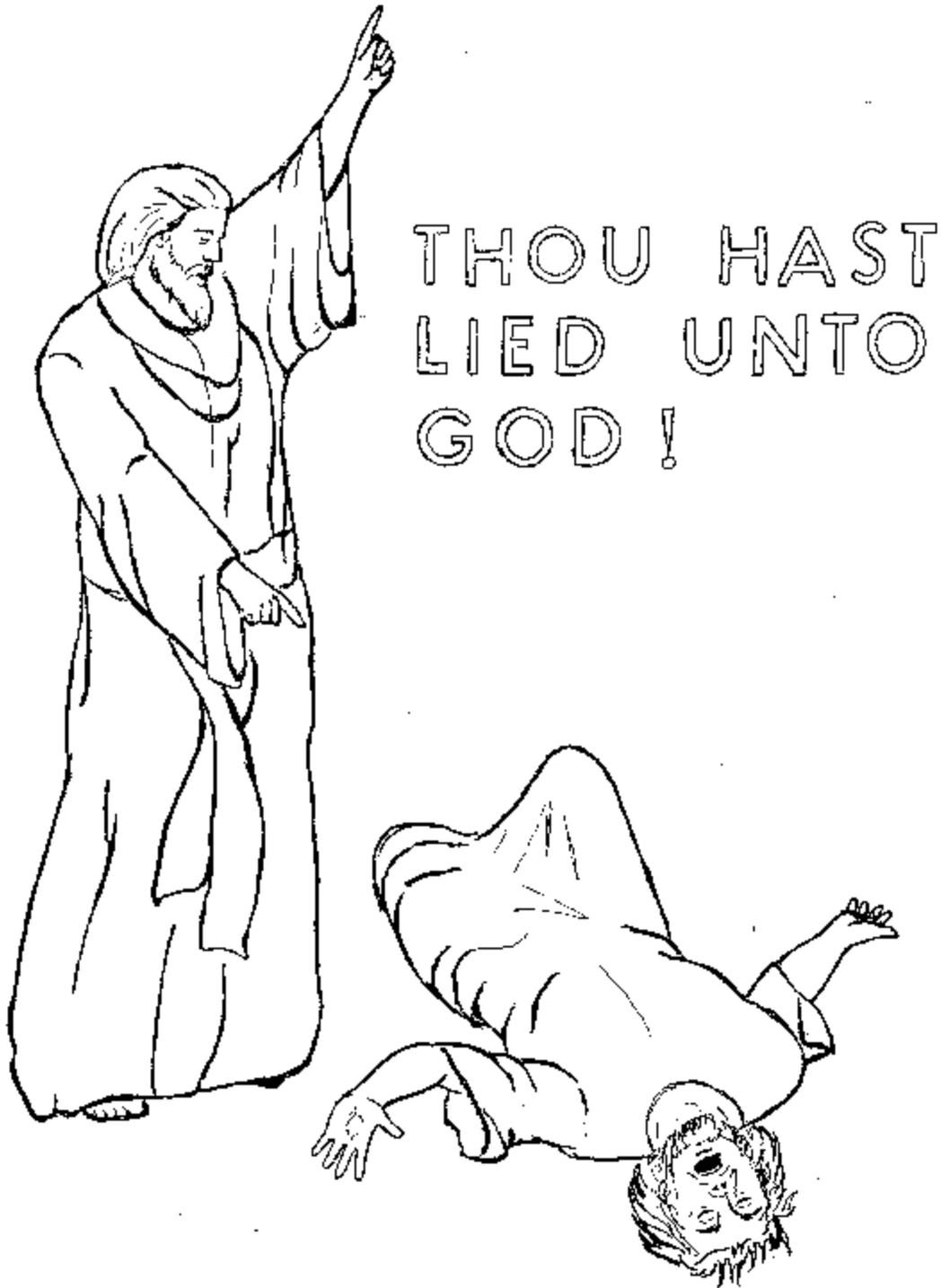
6 **in vain.**

2 **not take**

3 **the name**

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A certain man named Ananias, and Sapphira, his wife, did not feel the same way that Barnabas felt. They sold some land, but they did not want to part with all that money. They wanted people to think they were giving everything for the Lord, but they decided to lie about it and to keep some of the money for themselves.

Ananias brought part of the money to the apostles and laid it before them.

Peter, through God's power, knew what was in Ananias's heart. He said to Ananias, "Why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit and keep back part of the price of the land for yourself? While it belonged to you, was it not your own? And after it was sold, was it not your own to use? Why have you planned this thing in your

heart? You have not lied to men, but to God."

When Ananias heard these words, he fell down and died. Great fear came on all those who heard these things. Some young men who were there rose up and wrapped Ananias in his robes, carried him out, and buried him.

About three hours later Ananias's wife, Sapphira, came in, not knowing what had happened. Peter asked her, "Tell me, did you sell the land for this much?"

Sapphira answered, "Yes, for so much."

Then Peter said to her, "How is it that you have agreed together to test the Spirit of the Lord? Look, the feet of those who have buried your husband are at the door, and they will carry you out."

Immediately Sapphira fell down at Peter's feet, struck dead by the power of God. The young men came in and found her dead. They carried her out and buried her by her husband.

So great fear came upon all the church and upon all who heard these things. They knew that God knows all things and has great power.

**Review** - Use these words to fill in the blanks. You may use a word more than once.

Ananias	Sapphira	Peter	Andrew	repented
Paul	liar	hypocrite	sin	miracles
died	fear	lied/lies	lying	believers

1. In the picture for this lesson, color the apostle who received the money.  
What was his name? \_\_\_\_\_
2. In the picture for this lesson, color the man who is bringing the money to the apostle. What was his name? \_\_\_\_\_
3. What do we call someone who pretends to be something that he is not? \_\_\_\_\_
4. What is a person who pretends to be something else really doing?  
\_\_\_\_\_
5. Why is that a bad thing? \_\_\_\_\_
6. What happened to the man who was pretending to be something else?  
\_\_\_\_\_
7. What happened to the man's wife? \_\_\_\_\_
8. Why did that happen to them? \_\_\_\_\_
9. What feeling came over the people who heard about what happened?  
\_\_\_\_\_
10. Why would that be good? \_\_\_\_\_

## Passages

**"He (the devil) is a liar and the father of it." John 8:44**

Who wants people to lie?

**"He who speaks lies will not escape." Proverbs 19:5**

What will happen to a liar?

## The Second Commandment

You shall not take the name of the LORD your God in vain.

What does this mean?

We should fear and love God that we do not use His name to curse, swear, practice witchcraft, lie or deceive; but we should call upon His name in every trouble, pray, praise, and give thanks.

**Word Search** - Find these words  
in the puzzle.

ANANIAS	SHARE
SAPPHIRA	GOD
PETER	LOVE
HYPOCRITE	ADAM
LIE	REST
SATAN	APOSTLE
HOLY SPIRIT	CHRISTIAN
SIN	



**Hymn** TLH #323 v.1

With broken heart and contrite sigh,  
A trembling sinner, Lord, I cry.  
Thy pardoning grace is rich and free,  
O God, be merciful to me!

## Talking to Jesus

Dear Jesus,

We know that we are tempted to lie and hurt You every day. Please help us to show our love for Your great sacrifice by always telling the truth. Help us to show love for our neighbor by sharing what You have given us. Please be with us every day. Amen.

# Ananias and Sapphira

Acts 4:31-5:11



Does going to church for the sake of pleasing others please God?

Should we be concerned about why we attend church and why we are Christians?

## Prayer

Dear Heavenly Father, Send Your Holy Spirit among us today that through You we may come to a greater understanding and love for Your will. Lead us as we study Your word and learn why our number one goal in our lives is You. Through Jesus Christ, Your Son and our Savior. Amen

## The Story - Acts 4:31-5:11

{31} And when they had prayed, the place where they were assembled together was shaken; and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and they spoke the word of God with boldness.

{32} Now the multitude of those who believed were of one heart and one soul; neither did anyone say that any of the things he possessed was his own, but they had all things in common. {33} And with great power the apostles gave witness to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus. And great grace was upon them all. {34} Nor was there anyone among them who lacked; for all who were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought the proceeds of the things that were sold, {35} and laid them at the apostles' feet; and they distributed to each as anyone had need.

{36} And Joses, who was also named Barnabas by the apostles (which is translated Son of Encouragement), a Levite

of the country of Cyprus, {37} having land, sold it, and brought the money and laid it at the apostles' feet.

{5:1} But a certain man named Ananias, with Sapphira his wife, sold a possession. {2} And he kept back part of the proceeds, his wife also being aware of it, and brought a certain part and laid it at the apostles' feet.

{3} But Peter said, "Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit and keep back part of the price of the land for yourself? {4} "While it remained, was it not your own? And after it was sold, was it not in your own control? Why have you conceived this thing in your heart? You have not lied to men but to God."

{5} Then Ananias, hearing these words, fell down and breathed his last. So great fear came upon all those who heard these things. {6} And the young men arose



and wrapped him up, carried him out, and buried him.

{7} Now it was about three hours later when his wife came in, not knowing what had happened. {8} And Peter answered her, "Tell me whether you sold the land for so much?" She said, "Yes, for so much." {9} Then Peter said to her, "How is it that you have agreed together to test the Spirit of the Lord? Look, the feet of those who have

buried your husband are at the door, and they will carry you out."

{10} Then immediately she fell down at his feet and breathed her last. And the young men came in and found her dead, and carrying her out, buried her by her husband. {11} So great fear came upon all the church and upon all who heard these things.

## Recalling Details

1. Why did the members of the new Christian church sell their possessions and give to the those in need?
2. When Ananias and Sapphira sold their possession, what did they decide to do?
3. To whom did Ananias offer his gift?
4. What question did Peter ask Ananias about the gift?
5. How would Peter know about the total sale of Ananias and Sapphira's possession?
6. Why did Peter confront Ananias about this money?
7. According to Peter, to whom had Ananias lied?
8. A sin against God is punishable by what means?
9. Why hadn't Sapphira known about the events earlier in the day?
10. Why did Peter question Sapphira about the price of the possession?
11. The same end came to Sapphira as her husband, showing how serious lying is in God's eyes. What happened to Sapphira?
12. How did this young Christian congregation react to these two deaths?

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## Outer Aim

Ananias and Sapphira lied to Peter and to the Holy Spirit.

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## Discussion Questions

1. What can we do on our own to gain the wonderful blessings and love of our Heavenly Father?
2. Why will people who trust in the Lord above all things not die in their sins?
3. What was the price that was paid for the sins of the whole world?
4. Jesus death on the cross has taken care of all sin. How should we show our thankfulness for this wonderful gift life?

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## Inner Aim

God, the Holy Spirit, gives us the power to be truthful in our dealings with one another.

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## Passages

Proverbs 19:5b - A false witness will not go unpunished,  
and he who speaks lies will not escape.

Ephesians 4:22-24 - That you put off, concerning your former conduct, the old man which grows corrupt according to the deceitful lusts, and be renewed in the spirit of your mind, and that you put on the new man which was created according to God, in true righteousness and holiness.

Ephesians 4:25a - Therefore, putting away lying, "Let each one of you speak truth with his neighbor," for we are members of one another.

Matthew 15:8 - These people draw near to Me with their mouth, and honor Me with their lips, but their heart is far from Me.

1 Corinthians 13:4-8 - Love suffers long and is kind; love does not envy; love does not parade itself, is not puffed up; does not behave rudely, does not seek its own, is not provoked, thinks no evil; does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth; bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never fails. But whether there are prophecies, they will fail; whether there are tongues, they will cease; whether there is knowledge, it will vanish away.

## Hymn/Prayer

Read Hymn 416 as your closing prayer.

# Ananias and Sapphira

Acts 4:31-5:11



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## Prayer

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why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit and keep back part of the price of the land for yourself? {4} "While it remained, was it not your own? And after it was sold, was it not in your own control? Why have you conceived this thing in your heart? You have not lied to men but to God."

{5} Then Ananias, hearing these words, fell down and breathed his last. So great fear came upon all those who heard these things. {6} And the young men arose and wrapped him up, carried him out, and buried him.

{7} Now it was about three hours later when his wife came in, not knowing what had happened. {8} And Peter answered her, "Tell

me whether you sold the land for so much?" She said, "Yes, for so much." {9} Then Peter said to her, "How is it that you have agreed together to test the Spirit of the Lord? Look, the feet of those who have buried your husband are at the door, and they will carry you out."

{10} Then immediately she fell down at his feet and breathed her last. And the young men came in and found her dead, and carrying her out, buried her by her husband. {11} So great fear came upon all the church and upon all who heard these things.

## Recalling Details

1. As the assembly was studying God's Word and praying, what happened?
2. What caused the "shaking?"
3. About what event did the apostles preach?
4. Out of love for the Lord, what did Joses do?
5. What did the apostles do with the proceeds from the sale?
6. What was the motivation that drove Ananias and Sapphira to sell their land?
7. What encouraged this type of motivation among Ananias and Sapphira?
8. What impression did Ananias give to the apostles and those gathered when he brought in the gift and laid it before the apostles?
9. Why did Peter continue to question Ananias about his gift?
10. Peter pointed out to Ananias that when you lie to your fellow Christian you lie to \_\_\_\_\_.
11. Did Sapphira know what had happened to her husband?
12. As with Ananias, Peter questioned Sapphira about the sale of the land. Why?
13. Did Ananias and his wife Sapphira die because they didn't give everything to the Lord, or because they were deceitful toward the Lord?

## Outer Aim

**Ananias and Sapphira lied to Peter and to the Holy Spirit.**

## Discussion Questions

1. Why was it important that this young Christian congregation be taught this very important lesson so early in their Christian fellowship?
2. Early in the story we are told of the excitement that the Gospel brought to those who were members of this congregation. What caused the excitement? Does that excitement still occur in our Christian congregations today?
3. Satan looks for ways to turn us away from the truth of the Lord. Satan constantly seeks to devour us, especially when we think we are safe within the walls of our churches and congregations. Name several ways that he may use to distract us from the Gospel while gathering with our fellow Christians.
4. What name do we give to individuals who come to church and go through the outward motions of being Christians while gathered with Christians, yet alone, or in the world, they lie, cheat, steal, and live worldly lives?
5. Many times it becomes discouraging when we are caught in our lies and others are not. What does God promise about everyone who lies? See Proverbs 19:5b.
6. Lying is wrong. According to Ephesians 4:25, how should we speak to one another?
7. Ananias and Sapphira were bringing their worldly gifts to worship the Lord. They wanted to have their fellow Christians look at their gift, not why they gave it. Where does God look when we bring our gifts and talents to Him? See Matthew 15:8.
8. We daily sin and continually fall short of the Lord's will. What has God done for us that allows us to even allow us to approach Him with gifts?
9. How should the gift of the Savior motivate us in our giving to the Lord?
10. Why does the Lord accept the gifts of a cheerful giver?

## Inner Aim

**God, the Holy Spirit, gives us the power to be truthful in our dealings with one another.**

## Passages

**Proverbs 19:5b - A false witness will not go unpunished, and he who speaks lies will not escape.**

**Ephesians 4:25a - Therefore, putting away lying, "Let each one of you speak truth with his neighbor," for we are members of one another.**

**Matthew 15:8 - These people draw near to Me with their mouth, and honor Me with their lips, but their heart is far from Me.**

## Hymn

Study hymn 323 TLH. Notice how the hymn writer tells us how we are to approach the Lord.

## Prayer

Write a prayer that fits our story today. Be sure to include how we should come before the Lord and ask that He lead us in our daily struggle with our weak faith, our daily lives in this unbelieving world, and our daily fight from Satan who constantly seeks to devour us.