

SEQUIM COMMUNITY CHURCH
WOMEN OF THE BIBLE

Sapphira

Sapphira had no way of knowing just how much hung on her answer. That's because she couldn't see the body of her husband, who'd already been struck dead by God for lying to the Holy Spirit. "Yes," she answered, "that's the amount." She too fell to the floor and died. Sapphira and her husband paid for their misguided priorities with the lives.

Small Group Opener:

How do you define commitment? _____

MAIN BIBLE STUDY:

Read Acts 4:32-5:11 and answer the following questions.

1. Read Acts 4:32-35 for an eye-opening look at the early church. How does the idea of believers pooling their resources for the common good strike you? _____

- Good idea or bad idea? _____ Why? _____

- Describe any instances where you've seen such selfless generosity work in your own corner of the world, maybe between neighbors or within families, if not in whole congregations.

- What practical reasons might you offer for not sharing everything with one another in your church family? _____

- And what emotional reasons might prevent you from sharing your material possessions and financial resources freely with others? _____

2. Now read Acts 5:1-2. What do you think motivated Ananias and Sapphira to give their money to the apostles? _____

• Why do you think they kept some for themselves? _____

3. Read Acts 5:3-4. What excuses do you suppose Ananias and Sapphira gave each other to justify their subterfuge? _____

• It seems that money wasn't the real problem. What key word appears in both verses, clearly pointing to Ananias' sin? _____

4. Grace and forgiveness seem in short supply in this biblical story. Read Acts 5:7-10. Do you think Peter should have told Sapphira what had happened to her husband before she was asked the fateful question? _____ Why or why not? _____

5. Read Acts 5:8 carefully. What indication do we have that Sapphira may have been given the chance to set the record straight here? _____

6. Read Acts 5:5 and Acts 5:11. What outcome is recorded in both of these verses? _____

7. What does Acts 5:14 tell us about the growth of the church after this memorable incident?

Going Further - Additional study

1. According to Luke 12:33-34, what does Jesus urge His followers to do? _____

Why? _____

• How do you know what others treasure in life? _____

2. Now read I John 3:17-18. How do these verses describe how true love is expressed?

3. Read Acts 2:44-45. How could we as God's church be more loving - specifically, more generous - with one another? _____

4. Read Philippians 3:7-9. How could the needs of your heart be met in a more godly fashion, rather than through public recognition of giving? _____

5. The following verses address the virtues of generosity. Note the benefits that are mentioned in each.

- Psalm 112:5 _____
- Proverbs 11:25 _____
- 2 Corinthians 9:13 _____

6. Read Luke 12:15. Part of Sapphira's problem was a case of "keeping up with the Joneses." How can we resist that natural-but-not-nice drive to play "me too" - in both what we conspicuously give away and what we covertly keep? _____

7. Proverbs 23:5 perfectly describes our modern stock market woes. If you've ever lost money - in unexpected ways - how did you first respond? _____

- Has your perspective about this experience changed over time? _____
- Is there a practical lesson learned that you can identify? _____

8. In our materialistic culture what do the advice do we find in the following verses about our financial resources?

- I Timothy 6:17 _____
- I Timothy 6:18 _____
- I Timothy 6:19 _____

9. Read 2 Corinthians 9:6-7. The next time the offering plate comes by in worship, what biblical truth do you need to have clearly in mind when we choose how much to give? _____
