

WHY DID YOU LIE?

(Acts 5:3)

INTRODUCTION

One of the greatest tools Satan employs today is hypocrisy.

He has tried various methods to break down the church from outside; through persecution, confrontation, and other vices.

But one dangerous thing the devil can use to attack the church is the sin of deceit.

Deceit is dangerous because it comes from within. It is also deadly because it may come from those of high expectations or regard.

The church has been hurt far more by hypocrisy than by persecution.

Deceit is the mother of lying. When people lie today, the intent of their hearts was actually to deceive. But the big question is WHY DO PEOPLE LIE?

Truth is, people lie for so many reasons. And that is what we will find out in the passage today.

TEXTUAL ANALYSIS

The book of Acts tells us the story of the early church, and the early church believed in the Word of God.

They had all things in common and no one lacked anything. A man named Barnabas had sold a

piece of property and gave all the money to the disciples because there was a financial need in the church, ***Acts 4:36-37.***

It was a gift motivated by love and they glorified God in Heaven.

A couple, Ananias and Sapphira, saw what Barnabas had done, and they decided to sell their property.

But rather than giving all the money to the church, they decided to keep part of the money for themselves and let others think that they had given all; thus, getting credit for giving everything.

This was a premeditated lie and a pretended devotion. That is why Peter said to him: *Why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit?*

Peter did not accuse Ananias of lying to the church or to the apostles, but to the Holy Spirit Himself.

He continued: ***While it remained, was it not your own? And after it was sold, was it not in your own control?***

Peter freely acknowledged that the land and its value belonged to Ananias alone; he was completely free to do with it what he wanted.

WHY DID YOU LIE?

(Acts 5:3)

His crime was not in withholding the money, but in deceptively implying that he gave it all.

God did not command that they give it all. What we do not freely give, God neither needs nor wants.

WHY DID YOU LIE?

We have many reasons for lying. And I am sure Ananias and Sapphira had theirs too. But if we can address the reasons why we lie whether in church, at home, or our workplaces, then we can combat this sin of deceit.

RECOGNITION

People like to be recognized. But most times recognition is rooted in pride.

The feeling of being the topic of discussion is usually not a good one.

Ananias and Sapphira may have wanted the same recognition given to Barnabas.

When your motive for giving is recognition, then you will find yourself lying to the Holy Spirit.

That is why some Christians don't want to engage in church work that doesn't bring them to the pulpit.

In their heart they *say as far as it is behind the scenes, count me out!*

The weight of the pulpit is far greater than the sight that you seek. Service is not about glory but humility.

Nothing puts a person more out of the reach of Satan than genuine humility.

To serve or minister simply means you are willing to do the ground work while God receives the glory.

REPUTATION

Though the church was in its early stage, Ananias and Sapphira seemed to have a certain image they wanted to portray.

Maybe, people knew them not to be poor, so they had to live up to expectation.

One thing is to want to be recognized, another thing is to maintain a certain standard you may have set for yourself.

Setting standards is not wrong, but if the cost of maintaining such standards will conflict with your godly principles, then by all means, let it go.

Else, you will find yourself cooking up all sorts of lies, just to match up with the narrative.

WHY DID YOU LIE?

(Acts 5:3)

So, do not give because you always give. Or because people know you to always give.

Such that even when you don't have, or when you are not truly led to give, you finding yourself doing it in order to maintain the standard.

Sometimes, it becomes difficult for you to say no because you want to keep up with a certain standard.

You end up lying, deceiving, manipulating, and the Holy Spirit will not be happy with you.

This is very critical for men and women of God who minister to the saints.

We can create or allow the impression that we are people of Bible reading or prayer when we are not.

We can create or allow the impression that we have it all together when we do not.

We can exaggerate our spiritual accomplishments or effectiveness to appear something we are not.

It is too easy to be happy with the image of spirituality without the reality of spiritual life.

Sometimes you can be overwhelmed by life's challenges.

Do not let shame or the thought of what people will say

make you lie to the Holy Spirit in your ministration to God and the church.

Do not be boxed into being a robot when in actual sense, you too, have feelings.

It is okay if the standard is not met sometimes, if done in honesty of heart, God will restore you again, rather than lying to be full of the spirit when you are not.

LESSONS FROM ANANIAS AND SAPPHIRA

SACRIFICE

Many Christians today do not understand that the basis of giving is rooted in sacrifice. People want *the recognition* but don't want to *pay the sacrifice*.

People like to give but don't want to loose.

People like to help but don't want to be stressed.

We cannot take sacrifice out of giving.

Ananias and Sapphira must have thought of how much was going out from them, the amount the land amounted to, and the big *"loss"* it would be to them. And so they felt, *"this is too big to loose"*.

Meanwhile, that is the real essence of giving. You would

WHY DID YOU LIE?

(Acts 5:3)

have to loose something so precious to you.

That is why most of us don't still grow in our giving collectively and individually.

We cannot bear to think that a certain amount of my salary will be gone just like that.

So we give not as we are prospered but as we are comfortable.

You actually give out what you need not what you have. If Ananias and Sapphira had understood this, maybe they wouldn't have lied.

EVIL COMPANY

The Bible states that his wife was also aware of it. Clearly, both husband and wife were partners in the deception.

They both wanted the image of great generosity, without actually being remarkably generous.

When we talk of evil communication, we usually think more of the outside world, the misbelievers.

There is evil communication in the church too. It could be your marital partner. Some wives and husbands have bad foundations and evil thinking.

But sadly, the other partner yields and they both conspire to lie to the Holy Spirit in their giving, service, obedience, etc.

It could be your best friend in the church, it could be your ministry partner.

Do not consent to the evil plans that they sell to you.

Do not go into agreement without reading the terms and conditions.

Always pray before consenting, because it is in the place of prayer God will reveal to you whether you are about to vex the Holy Spirit or not.

CORRECTION/DISCIPLINE

The modern church may have abandoned certain key principles that maintained purity and holiness.

We now over think things before taking necessary steps.

Though, the action God took on Ananias and Sapphira leading to their death, most likely, must have been because the church was in the infancy stage.

But the principle is largely anchored in not letting a little leaven to leaven the whole lump, ***1 Corinthians 5:6, Galatians 5:9.***

Purity is costly and must be maintained as swiftly as possible.

WHY DID YOU LIE?

(Acts 5:3)

We only need to have one bad influence, and a whole lot of good will be undone.

We must stop petting bad influences/character when we notice them.

We are not saying we should be harsh or toxic in correction.

The message here is correction must be done as swiftly as possible IN LOVE.

In love tells us to be kind in approach. It tells us to be mature in approach. It tells us to be listeners in approach.

But the emphasis is, do not delay correction else it will leaven the whole lump.

Do not pretend *a devotion* greater than you have.

Do not let a hypocrite keep you away from Jesus Christ.

Let he who lied, lie no more!

May God bless these words in our hearts in Jesus Name. Amen.

CONCLUSION

Today, we must take this issue seriously and realize that our lies don't only affect ourselves and others, but also our relationship with God.

We must take pleasure in truthfulness, even when it brings less glory than the lie.

Sin among the saints is more serious than sin among the lost. Sin against the Holy Spirit is very serious.

Be on guard against hypocrisy in your life. Ask God to search your heart.