

CALVARY CHAPEL COSTA MESA

– COMMUNITY GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE –

Studies in the Book of Acts “Purity and Power” – Acts 5:1-16

FELLOWSHIP

We’ve probably all had a funny moment when we were standing next to someone who jokingly lied, or misrepresented something, and someone said, “Excuse me while I take a step away, I don’t want to catch any of the lightning about to fall on you.” While its pretty safe to assume that none of us have actually ever seen someone struck by God on the spot for lying, the idea has always been a part of our cultural history. This story about Ananias and Sapphira has influenced the conscience of western Christianity through the centuries. Couched in the midst of the excitement of the new church, the infraction and swift correction is shocking and unsettling. After withstanding the sneers and threats of the public, what could possibly go wrong with this new movement that appeared to have everything going its way? The moral of this story is that the most dangerous attacks come from within. Measured by God’s response, the seriousness of the sin is plain. As a side, for any skeptic who justifies their unbelief because the God of the New Testament is different from the God of the Old Testament, or that they can’t believe because the Bible depicts a God of wrath and a God of love at the same time, this story is for them. The issue is not wrath or love, but holiness and purity. This story in Acts is reminiscent of Joshua 7. Just as God was birthing his church in Acts, the book of Joshua records God establishing His new called out people, Israel. The sin of Achan was a stain on the whole community, as God declared that *the Israelites had acted unfaithfully, and that His anger burned against the nation*. Both stories were new ventures requiring a pure reliance on God. The missions were from God, and would be dependent on the miraculous. The victories and growth were a testimony to God. Therefore, each communities’ devotion to God was to remain pure in light of the display of His power. Its true that sin and failure are inevitable with God’s people, but His provision is redemption. This too is a witness to God’s mercy, love and commitment. The tragedy in these kind of situations is the failure to follow God’s instructions and plans that *weave the miraculous into our weakness*. When the church has not been proactive in dealing with sin, it has suffered in its mission. Progress in the kingdom is dependent on the spiritual health of its church. Confession fosters this health, concealment threatens it.

READ & DISCUSS

Read out loud together as a group Acts 5:1-16. Discuss those areas that can be applied, and meditate on the amazing result of the story in verse fourteen and following:

Acts 5:14. And believers were increasingly added to the Lord, multitudes of both men and women.

- As each judgement fell, Luke records, “So great fear came upon all the church and upon all who heard these things.” *What does it mean to fear God? What are some of the wrong ways to fear Him? What does the Bible say regarding the fear of God? How can one cultivate a healthy fear of God? How often should a believer be self-reviewing their reverence for God? What can one do if they feel that their attention to God has been waning?*
- Church discipline was so important that even Jesus addressed it. **Read Matthew 18:15-17.** *What is the purpose of church discipline? How does the practice of it directly relate to the power of the church to accomplish its calling? Why does purity “thwart” the works of the devil? Why is integrity important to the message of the Gospel? How has the reputation of the church, whether good or bad, affected your conversations or witness for Christ?*
- The stories of abuse continue to rack up in the news almost everyday. As victims hear the testimonies of others, they become emboldened to finally share their stories. *What should be the church’s response to the failures of Hollywood or government leaders? How should they address the sins of church leaders?*

PRAY



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Based on Pastor Brian Brodersen’s message from December 3, 2017.

Watch: <https://cccm.com/teaching/the-spirit-the-church-and-the-world/video/power-and-purity/>