

Discussion Questions

May 12, 2024

Acts 5:1-11 Instagram Christianity



1. Read Acts 5:1-11

Why do you think Ananias and Saphira lied about their gift?

How does Ananias & Saphira's giving compare to that of Barnabas?

At a core level, what is wrong about their understanding of God & His desire for those who follow Him?

2. Read the passages below and discuss - Why is hypocrisy condemned so harshly in scripture?

Matthew 15:7-9

1 John 4:20

Matthew 23:27-28

Titus 1:16

3. In what areas are you most prone towards "Instagram Christianity," or "impression management" in wanting to give others a false impression about your own life and spirituality?

4. In this passage, we see the extreme response of God to addressing the cancer of sin and hypocrisy in the church. Why does God do that? What are the impacts upon a church body when hearts grow calloused towards sin?

How can we as Christians make sense of passages like this, or Uzzah, or Lot's wife; where God's judgment is so swift and can feel so harsh and "ungracious?"

5. How do we walk out the tension of addressing sin and pursuing holiness, while also loving people well (including ourselves) who are wrestling with sin & shame and/or condemnation?

6. Read the following quote by Pete Scazzero in Emotionally Healthy Discipleship and discuss it with your group.

Much of discipleship in the church today is the spiritual equivalent of cladding.

On the surface, everything looks like the real thing. Our people are upbeat and optimistic, filled with faith that Jesus will get them through crises and valleys. They are uplifted spiritually through moving worship experiences and dazzling messages. We highlight infectious testimonies. We see to it that our small groups and weekend gatherings are warm and welcoming and that there is a sense we are growing into the new things God wants to do in our midst.

The problem is that none of this is the heavy, load-bearing stone of Jesus's way of discipleship. It appears to be the real thing that will endure severe storms and the test of time, but it is not. Yes, our people participate in worship, listen attentively to sermons, and attend small groups. They often serve faithfully in various ministries and give financially. And yet, their transformation in Christ remains at the level of cladding, a thin veneer on a life that has yet to be touched beneath the surface.

7. How can we practically take steps to combat hypocrisy and impression management in our lives today and be more authentic in our faith?

Acts 5:1–11 (NLT)

But there was a certain man named Ananias who, with his wife, Sapphira, sold some property. He brought part of the money to the apostles, claiming it was the full amount. With his wife's consent, he kept the rest.

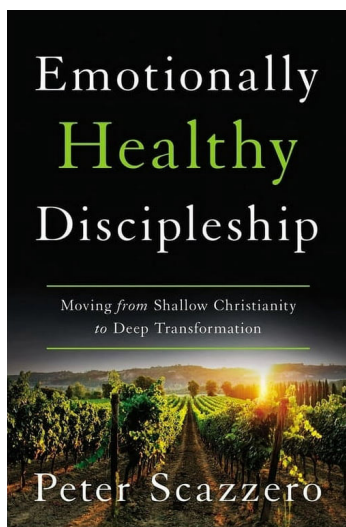
Then Peter said, "Ananias, why have you let Satan fill your heart? You lied to the Holy Spirit, and you kept some of the money for yourself. The property was yours to sell or not sell, as you wished. And after selling it, the money was also yours to give away. How could you do a thing like this? You weren't lying to us but to God!"

As soon as Ananias heard these words, he fell to the floor and died. Everyone who heard about it was terrified. Then some young men got up, wrapped him in a sheet, and took him out and buried him.

About three hours later his wife came in, not knowing what had happened. Peter asked her, "Was this the price you and your husband received for your land?" "Yes," she replied, "that was the price."

And Peter said, "How could the two of you even think of conspiring to test the Spirit of the Lord like this? The young men who buried your husband are just outside the door, and they will carry you out, too."

Instantly, she fell to the floor and died. When the young men came in and saw that she was dead, they carried her out and buried her beside her husband. Great fear gripped the entire church and everyone else who heard what had happened.

**Pete Scazzero - Emotionally Healthy Discipleship**

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Jesus describes the Pharisees in Matthew 23 as....

- *They do everything to be seen by others (vs 5)*
- *They love the place of honor at banquets, the front seats in the synagogues, greetings in the marketplaces, and to be called 'Rabbi' by people. (vs 6-7)*
- *Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You clean the outside of the cup and dish, but inside they are full of greed and self-indulgence. (vs 25)*
- *Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You are like whitewashed tombs, which look beautiful on the outside but on the inside are full of the bones of the dead and everything unclean. (vs 27)*

Acts 5:11 (NLT)

Great fear gripped the entire church and everyone else who heard what had happened.

Acts 5:14-15 (NLT)

Yet more and more people believed and were brought to the Lord - crowds of both men and women.