



Ananias and Sapphira

Probably the most vivid examples of the consequences of lying to the Holy Spirit are Ananias and Sapphira. Lying to the Holy Spirit is performing what outwardly appears to be a good work or divine good, but has been done deceitfully with sinful motivation.

Ananias and Sapphira were two believers in the early Church who let their sin natures control them. Their sin natures had a trend toward asceticism and they acted from their area of strength. This was a sin inside of the church committed by believers. It was sin motivated by approbation lust (desire to be noticed, appreciated). They desired to duplicate the feat of Barnabas who had sold a piece of property and had given the whole price to the Lord's work in Jerusalem.

Ananias and Sapphira were competing with Barnabas. Such competition was unnecessary. They were playing "spiritual king of the mountain." Behind their lust for flattery and praise was envy and jealousy, which is the basis of the sin. Ananias and Sapphira sold a piece of property also, and gave part of the proceeds to the Lord's work, but they intimated that they gave the entire price.

There was nothing wrong with keeping back part of the price of such a sale. There is no biblical regulation as to how much a believer should give. The sin was in telling the lie, the mental attitude sins behind it, envy, jealousy, and the desire behind it - approbation lust. 1 Cor. 16:2.

"On the first day of every week each one of you is to put aside and save, as he may prosper, so that no collections be made when I come." (1 Corinthians 16:2, NASB)

They lied because they wanted the church to think that they had duplicated the giving of Barnabas. In lying to the church, they had lied to the Holy Spirit. Behind everything was approbation lust which is one of the believer's greatest enemies. It causes the believer to serve in the energy of the flesh and to produce human good instead of divine good. They failed to serve as unto the Lord. Col. 3:17.

"Whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks through Him to God the Father." (Colossians 3:17, NASB)

Their production from the old sin nature from its area of strength will be considered wood, hay and stubble at the Judgment Seat of Christ. The Lord judged Ananias and Sapphira severely by the "sin unto death." The significance of this severe discipline by God was the protection of the early Church from this type of activity - human works motivated by approbation lust. See category on [The Sin Unto Death](#).

"But a man named Ananias, with his wife Sapphira, sold a piece of property, and kept back some of the price for himself, with his wife's full knowledge, and bringing a portion of it, he laid it at the apostles' feet. But Peter said, "Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit and to keep back some of the price of the land? "While it remained unsold, did it not remain your own? And after it was sold, was it not under your control? Why is it that you have conceived this deed in your heart? You have not lied to men but to God." And as he heard these words, Ananias fell down and breathed his last; and great fear came over all who heard of it." (Acts 5:1-5, NASB)

It was a sin inside of the church committed by believers. It was not a sin of omission nor in the giving. It was a sin motivated by approbation lust. They desired to duplicate the giving of Barnabas. It was a sin of competition.

"Now there elapsed an interval of about three hours, and his wife came in, not knowing what had



happened. And Peter responded to her, “Tell me whether you sold the land for such and such a price?” And she said, “Yes, that was the price.” Then Peter said to her, “Why is it that you have agreed together to put the Spirit of the Lord to the test? Behold, the feet of those who have buried your husband are at the door, and they will carry you out as well.” And immediately she fell at his feet and breathed her last, and the young men came in and found her dead, and they carried her out and buried her beside her husband.” (Acts 5:7-10, NASB)