

## **RIGHT AND WRONG WAY TO HELP**

**Acts 4:32-5:42**

### **PREPARATION FOR THE COMING OF THE SPIRIT 1:1-26**

Church's formation begins with the coming of the Holy Spirit.

Acts begins with preparation for His coming.

### **TESTIMONY IN JERUSALEM 2-8:3**

#### **Foundation of the Church 2-4:31**

**Its birth 2:1-47** Birth of the church on Pentecost

**Its growth 3-4:31**

The sign 3:1-7

The response 3:8-11

They are amazed by what they see.

The explanation 3:12-26

The results 4:1-31

Response from the leaders 4:1-22

Leaders reject the message and put them in prison.

Many people receive the message and trust Christ (4:4).

Leaders can only threaten and release them (4:21-22).

Response from the church 4:23-31

Apostles' report 4:23

Church's prayer 4:24-30

They recognize God's sovereignty and man's opposition.

They don't ask to be delivered.

They ask God for boldness to speak His word.

God's answer 4:31

Their prayer is answered exactly as they ask.

They speak the word with boldness.

### **ADMINISTRATION OF THE CHURCH 4:32-6:7**

As a result of this work of the Holy Spirit, the church evidences unity in their life and ministry (4:32-35).

The description of the life of the early church in Jerusalem is completed with incidents that demonstrate how daily administration was handled.

*Q.1. What are the circumstances behind the events described in this passage?*

### **Demonstration of love 4:32-5:11**

First incident deals with the demonstration of love through sharing.

### **Unifying results 4:32-35**

Church is suffering because of their faith in Christ. Baptized believers are cut off from families; many suffer economic loss. Therefore they share everything they have with one another.

*Q.2. What dramatic contrast does the author use to demonstrate the seriousness of Ananias and Sapphira's deception?*

### **Good example 4:36-37**

**Positive example of this sharing is Barnabas. He is already known for encouraging others.**

**He sells his property**

**and gives the proceeds to help people in need.**

**Bad example 5:1-11**

**Negative example of how NOT to give is Ananias and Sapphira.**

**They want credit for helping others,**

**but they don't want to pay the price.**

**They sell their property and keep part of the price for themselves.**

**They profess to give it all to the church.**

**They're accused by Peter and die.**

Q.3. *Do you believe they were saved? What evidence can you find in the passage?*

Q.4. *Why did God deal so drastically with them?*

The relationship of the early church is a family relationship.

Everyone contributes to the welfare of the whole family.

This relationship was a testimony to unbelievers.

=> *"By this shall all men know that you are my disciples".*

Ananias and Sapphira profess a love and responsibility for the family which they don't have.

**Their false profession would hurt the reputation of the church.**

**The judgment is a public sign that even in a period of grace you can't play games with God**

**(1 Cor. 11:27-32; 1 John 5:16-17)**

Frequently at the beginning of a new program, judgment on the first offender seems unduly harsh.

It establishes at the beginning the serious consequences of not conforming to the operating principles God has established for the period (cf. Nadab and Abihu—Num. 3:2-4).

Q.5. *Are we in danger of similar judgment?*

*Under what conditions?*

Q.6. *What principles do you see in Barnabas' life that we ought to imitate?*

Q.7. *What practical lessons can you find in the case of Ananias and Saffira that apply to the church today?*

### **Acceptance and opposition 5:12-42**

Q.8. *What were the results of the judgment on Ananias and Sapphira?*

**The results of God's judgment are beneficial.**

**The entire church is filled with fear (5:11).**

It teaches the importance of unity and love; and of mutual support.

**Judgment causes everyone to examine their faith.**

**Authority of the apostles is firmly established (5:12).**

**Professors are scared away.**

**Only true believers want to identify with the church (5:13).**

**The church grows rapidly (5:14).**

Purging brings new growth.

**Discipline => Purification => Growth**

Q.9. *What were the results of the apostles' ministry (5:12-18)?*  
 As a result of apostles' ministry, many trust Christ (5:12-16).

**The religious leaders become concerned about the effect of their ministry and arrest them (5:17-18).**

**God, however, demonstrates His support of their ministry by freeing them.**

**The religious leaders arrest them (5:18); God frees them (5:19)**

Q.10. *What does their release from prison accomplish (5:19-28)?*

**When they return to their ministry, it is apparent that the leaders can't stop them! (5:19-25)**

They have no power to control them.

**The leaders bring the apostles back for questioning (5:27-28).**

They ignore the sign and accuse the apostles of continuing to preach Jesus.

Q.11. *How do the apostles respond to authority (5:29-32)?*

**Peter responds: they continue to preach about Jesus, because God's authority is greater than man's authority. 5:29**

God's authority and power is greater than yours.

God has authenticated our message.

We merely report the things we have seen.

**God confirms the message and commissions them to preach it 5:30-32**

The conviction brought by Peter's answer angers them.  
**They want to kill the apostles (5:33).**

*What lessons should we learn from their example?*

Q.12. *What does Gamaliel contribute to the discussion (5:33-40)?*

**God uses Gamaliel, a leading teacher, to warn the religious leaders that they had better not try to destroy the apostles.**

**If God isn't in this, it will die without the main leader (5:34-39).**

**If the work is from God, they won't be able to stop it.**

**The council accepts Gamaliel's advice and releases the apostles after beating them and warning them to stop preaching about Jesus (5:40).**

Q.13. *How did the apostles react to the treatment they received (5:41-42)?*

**They went home and nursed their wounds! NOT!**

**They went home and prayed, asking God: "Why did this happen to us?!!" NOT!**

**They went home and obeyed the council's decision. NOT!**

**The apostles praise God that they're counted worthy to suffer for Him.**

**They continue to speak boldly about Jesus (5:41-42).**

Q.14. *What lessons should we learn from the example of the apostles in this situation?*

**IMPLICATIONS AND LESSONS FOR US?**