

## Acts 5: It's Not About the Money!

Meet my Friend, "Consequence"

I have to confess, one of my greatest character defects growing up was lying. I would lie about everything, even if telling the truth wouldn't have gotten me in trouble. I don't know why I lied but it became so prevalent I started to believe some lies as truth! That's when you know you're in trouble.

In fifth grade it was common when you failed a test to have it signed by your parents. I was never fully on board with this idea because I didn't think it was fair for my parents to endorse something they didn't earn. I earned the "F" fair and square, so I should be the one to sign it... See? You're looking into my fifth-grade mind. I never thought the whole purpose was accountability for me to my parents. All I knew was, I bring home an "F," I get a consequence. Around my house my dad's 42" leather belt was nicknamed "Consequence."

On one particular occasion I failed yet another test. Mortified to have another personal encounter with "Consequence," I signed my mom's signature on my test. By fifth grade I had mastered my mom's signature, while still-to-this-day, I could never copy my Dad's. There was only one problem: The Holy Spirit had convicted me of this sin, which led me to erase the signature and turn it in. There was only one more problem: The teacher saw that my "mom" had signed the test, but then erased her signature, so what does any good teacher who loves for their students to meet Consequence do? They call the parent.

My mom and I had a come to Jesus meeting that afternoon and she was so confused why she signed it (the signature was that good), yet I erased it. I never told her the truth. That day, I met Consequence's friends: Reminder, Reprimand, and Admonish.

Better for me to meet those friends verses the friend Ananias and Sapphira meet...

DEATH!

Lying and Selfishness

Now, I've heard Acts 5:1-11 preached many times, shoot, I've even preached it myself, but there's just one problem I hear over and over again. People think this story is about the money! This story is not about the money, this story is about lying and selfishness. Do you want to know how we know the story isn't about the money? Take the money out of the story and replace it with fruit or livestock. Now we're going Old Testament. It's not about the money, it's about the heart. It's about the difference between why Cain's offering was rejected but Able's was accepted (Gen. 4:3-5). Cain brought "some of his crops," while Able brought "the best portion of his firstborn lambs." Regardless of what you bring, if you say you brought the whole thing but are holding back some for yourself, you're lying and selfish. God doesn't look favorably on this attitude of heart. Proverbs 15:8 reads, "The Lord detests the sacrifice of the wicked..."

Look at the evidence of lying over and over again in the story:

- (v. 2) He brought part of the money to the apostles, claiming it was the full amount.
- (v. 3) 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.

I appreciate the clarity Peter gives to Ananias:

- (v. 4) 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!

Then after Ananias dies, Peter calls in his wife, Sapphira. What's interesting to me in the passage is Peter doesn't give her a chance to come up with the rest of the money, he gives her the chance to tell the truth! Because again, It's not about the money!

- (v. 8) Peter asked her, "Was this the price you and your husband received for your land?" "Yes," she replied, "that was the price." (Hint: SHE LIED!)

#### The Lesson I Learned

At a young age I had to learn the consequence of lying. No, not getting a belt across the backside, but rather the seed Satan planted in my heart. I had to learn that while, yes, I was lying to mom, I was really lying to God through the Holy Spirit.

I hope today we will all think twice about lying and telling half-truths. You may think you're getting away with it, but the reality is, "the young men are standing at the door..." Except this door is the one attached to your heart.