

The Truthful Life

Ray Schwartz

Acts 5:1-11

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SETTING THE SCENE

- » Share an experience with the group where someone promised to give you something (or actually gave it to you) only to “take it back”. How did that make you feel? Have you ever done that to someone else? Explain the circumstances. How does that apply to the story from the sermon this morning?
- » Share a time in your life when you felt cheated. Explain the circumstances and how it made you feel. Why do you think being cheated makes us feel so badly? In what ways do you think we cheat God? How do you think that makes Him “feel”?

THE STUDY

- » Share your overall thoughts and impressions from the sermon this morning. What things stand out to you? What did you learn? Where did God most challenge you? What questions do you still have about the passage or the sermon?
- » Read **ACTS 4:36-5:11** out loud as a group. What is your initial reaction to this story and how the events unfolded? Do you think Peter was too harsh on Ananias & Sapphira (after all, they did bring some of the money to the apostles)? How do you feel about how God responded to their offering? Why do you think Peter and God both reacted so strongly? Do you see this same sort of thing happening today? Why or why not?
- » In the sermon, Ray outlined the differences between a deceptive and a truthful life. How do you feel about “little white lies”? Are they okay as long as your trying to spare someone’s feelings or are they always wrong? Is there ever a time when it’s okay to bend the truth? Explain your answer.
- » What do you think was the core issue with Ananias & Sapphira’s deception in this story? What parallels do we have to this story in your own life or in the church (in general)?
- » Ray indicated that **A Deceptive Life Will...**
 1. Appear to be Righteous (Matthew 6:1)
*What were Ananias & Sapphira really hoping to get out of their offering to the apostles?
In what ways do we try and appear righteous today? Be specific, how have you done this yourself?*
 2. Conspire to Do Evil (James 1:13-15)
*How did Ananias & Sapphira conspire together to pull off their “master plan”? What does that say about their motives?
Share a personal example of a time when you (or someone you know) served out of selfish reasons (doing a good thing for the wrong reason).*
 3. Face the Consequences of God’s Holiness (Acts 5:5-11)
*Why do you think the consequences for Ananias & Sapphira were so serious? What was at stake for the early church?
How do we “lie to God” in our daily lives? Share an example if you have one (and are brave enough to do so).*
- » On the flip-side, Ray taught us that **A Truthful Life Will...**
 1. Act Transparently (1 John 1:6-7)
*How did the early church respond to this event? Do you think that was the whole reason for God’s actions here?
How do you need to act more transparently in your spiritual life?*
 2. Watch Faith Win Over Fear (Proverbs 14:26)
*What were Ananias & Sapphira afraid might happen if they “came clean” and admitted they only shared part of their sale?
Do you want to be more like Barnabas or Ananias & Sapphira? Why and how?*
 3. Give God the Credit (Matthew 5:16)
*What might God have done if Ananias & Sapphira had been truthful instead of deceitful in their giving?
What do you need to give God credit for in your life (that you haven’t done yet)?*

APPLICATION

- » Place an “X” on the line below to indicate where you think you are (spiritually) on the “Deceptive versus Truthful” scale (take the lessons from this morning into account as you answer):

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Liar, Liar! Middle of the Road Angelic

As a group, discuss how each of you can move up this scale (be specific).

- » Which of the three attributes of a deceptive life do you most struggle with or need to work on? Which of the attributes of the truthful life do you need to work on (and which comes easiest for you)?
- » If you can (and want to), share with the group what you wrote on the Prayer Wall this morning. Ask the group to help you pay for the thing you have been holding back from God. Get together in groups of 3-4 and spend some time praying specifically for these things.
- » It’s critical to be truthful, transparent, and have the right motives within the LifeGroup setting. As a group, honestly discuss how you think you’re doing as group. What do you need to improve? How do you do that?
- » What questions or thoughts do you still have that you need to share with the group?

PREPARING FOR NEXT WEEK

- » Up next week: **ACTS 5:12-16**. Read this passage and share your initial thoughts on your first reading of the passage. What do you think are the key themes and/or ideas in these five verses? What is the lesson that Luke is trying to convey?
- » Do you see this kind of healing ministry and power in the church today? Why or why not? Why do you think we tend to be skeptical of miraculous healing in our culture? Do you think that affects how often these healings occur?
- » What kind of reputation did the early church have by this time in the book? Why do you think this was the case? What kind of reputation does the church have today? Why? How can we change our perception in society?
- » Bring your thoughts and questions with you next Sunday...

CARING COMMUNITY

- » **SHARE** with the group how God has been speaking into your life or challenging you this past week (this may be as a result of the sermon or something in your personal journey). Is there anything from this week’s LifeGroup discussion you need to work on?
- » Are there any **NEEDS** you have coming up in your life that the group can help you with (this may include spiritual needs, life needs, pretty much anything...)
- » **PRAY** for one another. Share your requests and praises with one another. Write them down here. If you commit to praying, please be sure you do it...