

# **AWARENESS.SKILLS.KNOWLEDGE.**

## **Intergenerational Women's Ministry**

St. Matthew AME Church

Reverend Melvin E. Wilson, Pastor|Teacher

28 January 2023

This month provides an overview of how her

**S**piritual Gifts

**P**ersonality (Presence/Perspective)

**E**xperiences (Positions/Protection)

**C**ares/Passions

**I**nterest

**A**bilities

**L**ife Talents

contributes to her special God-given purpose; equipping her to **minister to all God's children.**



“The man I met, and fell in love with, and whom I continue to love, is the man you all knew through his work, he is a kind man ... and a wonderful husband, father and friend.” Camille Cosby

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**All Women of the Bible by Herbert Lockyer –**

**Sapphira: The Woman Who Dropped Dead**

**Pages 152-155 (Acts 5:1-11)**

## **AWARENESS**

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*“Yes,” she said, “that is the price.”* Acts 5:8b (NIV)

### **Name Meaning and Family Connection**

- Sapphira (sa-fi-ra), Hebrew name that means jewel, sapphire, signifying “beautiful” or “pleasant.”
- We do not know their, her and her husband, genealogy but given insight of their greed and deceit.
- Interesting we do not know anything about Sapphira herself without the mention of her husband and that the two were satanically inspired and were in agreement to lie against God in the Spirit which was the first gross act of disobedience within the newly formed Christian church, hence the justification of the severe punishment inflicted.
- Satan sought to ruin God's original creation through the disobedience of earth's first pair, Adam and Eve.
- In Chapter 4 we note the early members realized the necessity of being one in Christ Jesus, but Satan strikes at such a spiritual unity not from without but within by two of its members might have wrecked the church.
- Some blamed Sapphira as they did Eve in tempting Adam into sin and Jezebel causing Ahab to perpetrate his crimes against Israel. But the word says they “agreed together”.

### **Discipleship**

- The tragedy of the agreed decision is that both were professed Christians who had turned away from Judaism and had associated themselves with the newly formed Christian community.
- This deception took place after the Pentecost and for two of Christ's own followers to try and deceive the Omniscient Spirit was indeed a sin unto death.

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### **Disposal**

- The days in which Sapphira and her husband lived were days of a voluntary Christian communism in the primitive church where there was no compulsory abandonment of property or community goods. “And all that believed were together, and had all things common; And sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all men, as every man had need.” Acts 2:44-45 (NIV)
- Such voluntary forsaking of property for the sake of the cause of Christ was common after the descent of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost.
- The compact was to place everything in one common fund and thus demonstrating the willingness to follow the Master's call, to forsake all and follow Him.

### **Deceit**

- After seeing the reception when Barnabas sold all and surrendered all, Sapphira and her husband, not wanting to be thought of as selfish, wanted to be included.
- They sold their land and bought Peter “a certain portion” of the proceeds knowing they were not bound by any rule of the church to sell their land and make a gift of any size.
- They wanted to give an impression that their all was on the altar when it was not and thus became guilty of sacrilege in the attempt to the reputation of saintliness with the reality of sacrifice.
- There was an effort to serve God and mammon (wealth regarded as an evil influence or false object of worship and devotion).
- Their deceit was the provision that came in trying to represent themselves as completely sacrificial and the part that was offered was as if it were the entire proceeds.
- There was an attempt to cheat or deceive the Holy Spirit.
- Ananias and Sapphira felt no one knew how much money their land brought and dishonesty became a deliberate lie. Falsehood and hypocrisy rather than greed were the sins which they were so severely punished for.
- They tempted the Omniscient Spirit but agreeing to practice deception on men in whom He manifestly dwelt in an extraordinary manner. The house meant much to Jesus.

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### **Death**

- Judgment, swift and severe, overtook the two conspirators whose sudden death was a signal proof of God's anger on their Judas like hypocrisy.
- Because the Church had just been established as a divine institution which its Founder was to use for the extension of His cause in the world, it was necessary to condemn, on its first appearance by a visible, divine judgment, the particular form of even, corruption.
- Sapphira was not present during the three hours when her husband was brought face to face with his sin of deception, dropped dead and was wrapped up in his winding-sheet and buried.
- The Apostle's question, "tell me whether ye sold the land for so much?" gave Sapphira an opportunity to tell the truth and repent of her share in the deceit.
- She lied, heard the judgment of her husband and that in having shared in his crime, she must now share in his condemnation.
- The effect of this horrible experience in the early days of the church was immediate. A sense of awe and dread came upon the community of believers.
- Honor in the church cannot be bought by money. How we sin when we sing, "My all is on the alter", yet do not ring all the tithes into the storehouse!

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### **BLESSINGS OVERFLOW!!!**

**February 25, 2023 – Woman Taken In Adultery**

**Pages 239-242; John 8:1-11; Deuteronomy 17:5-6**

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## **SKILL**

### **Step Twenty-Three: Fellowship (Influence of Others)**

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<sup>1</sup>Satan convinced them that misrepresenting the gift was unimportant, so long as they gave the gift ([Acts 5:3](#)). So **lesson #1** – do not lie about your good deeds to make them seem better than they are. Agree? Disagree?

**Lesson #2** – do not go along with your spouse in wrongdoing. [Acts 5:2](#) says that Ananias did this thing with “his wife’s full knowledge”. She knew how much they got for the land, she knew they were keeping a portion for themselves, and she knew Ananias was going to present the gift to the apostles as though it were the whole thing. Ananias did the actual handing over of the gift. He was her husband and the head of her household. **This did NOT give her an out for participating in this.** Submission to your husband does not mean going along with him in sinful behavior, ever. Agree? Disagree?

**Lesson #3** – when you have done something wrong, and someone asks you straight out if the lie is true, **TELL THE TRUTH.** Peter gave Sapphira an opportunity to repent of the sin she had participated in. She had a chance to confess the lie. The implication of the text is that she would not have died had she told the truth to Peter. Instead, Sapphira, held to the lie and she lost her life. Agree? Disagree?

**Lesson #4** – be very careful with your heart. [Mark 7:17-23](#) records Jesus teaching about what defiles a man. He says that it is what comes OUT of the heart that defiles us. **Somewhere in Sapphira’s heart there was room to allow for this lie to be told.** Maybe there was envy over Barnabas and the appreciation the apostles showed for him ([Acts 4:36-37](#)). Maybe they begrudged sharing their property and were not cheerful about giving it up to the group ([2 Cor. 9:7](#)). Maybe they did not trust that God would provide for them ([Mt. 6:25-32](#)), so they had to hold on to a part of the sale. I do not know. But Peter said that Satan had a part in it ([Acts 5:3](#)) and he is the father of liars ([Jn. 8:44](#)).

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.thediligentwoman.com/lessons-from-sapphira/>

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Peter said that the deed was “conceived” in their hearts ([Acts 5:4](#)). Somewhere a desire for something gave way to sin ([James 1:14-15](#)). Agree? Disagree?

**Lesson #5** – do not assume that you will do right when surrounded by Christians. Don't misunderstand, we are very much to choose to be with like-minded people ([Mk. 3:31-35](#); [1 Cor. 15:33](#)). This is exactly what was going on in our context. People who were of one mind were choosing to spend their time together. Ananias and Sapphira were a part of that group. Being a part of the group, participating in the sharing and teaching did NOT guarantee they would do what was right. Do not presume that good people will not care what you do to be a part of them. It is not enough to say you are a Christian. It is not enough to place yourself among Christians. **It must be a walk that you choose with every breath that you take** ([Gal. 5:16-18](#); [22-26](#); [Rom. 12:1-2](#)). It must be guided by faith that comes from the hearing of God's word ([Rom. 10:17](#)). It must be a faith that works ([James 2:14-26](#); [Titus 2:11-14](#)). Sapphira had done this. She heard the word, and she was obedient to it ([Acts 2:38, 41](#); [Rom. 1:5](#); [Rom. 6:3-7](#)) and put on Christ ([Gal. 3:27](#)). But she had left off part of her armor ([Eph. 6:10-17](#)). **Being among those in the church, being married to a fellow believer, being in the presence of the apostles – those things meant nothing to the protection of Sapphira's soul if she didn't first protect it herself** ([Phil. 2:12-13](#); [Ps. 119:2](#); [Prov. 4:4](#); [Phil. 4:6-7](#)). Agree? Disagree?

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**Lesson #6** – a lie will lose you heaven as surely as murder will, unless you repent ([Acts 2:38](#); [Acts 8:22](#); [Rom. 2:4](#); [2 Cor. 7:10](#)). **Sin is sin – all are equal in that the result will be the same, separation from God.** Do not be deceived ([1 Cor. 6:9-11](#); [Gal. 6:7](#); [1 Tim. 1:8-11](#); [Rev. 21:7-8](#))! Agree? Disagree?

It seems a bit extreme that God struck Ananias and Sapphira dead for their sin. God judged them but others learned from what happened ([Acts 5:11](#)). The seriousness of what they had done was made quite clear. **Our job is to learn the lesson, not to question God about His methods** ([Rom. 1:16-17](#); [Eph. 1:3-14](#); [Eph. 1:18-23](#); [Eph. 3:20-21](#)). Agree? Disagree?

Sapphira – with such a pretty name you would hope that she was attached to something lovely. She may have been before, but we will not know because this is the one thing she

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is known for now. That's a lesson in and of itself; consider your actions and think "Is this the one thing I want to be known for from now on?" Even those closest to us can lead us astray, we have to be careful. **Know what is right and hold to it, no matter what those around you are doing. We will each give an answer for what we do (1 Pet. 1:17; Rev. 22:12-15).** Learn from Sapphira's misstep, and like David, go forward making the right choices. Agree? Disagree?

## **KNOWLEDGE**

Dear (insert your name) \_\_\_\_\_;

Today I engaged in a conversation on how attempts to deceive God, and others, can get in the way of God using me (skills, character, priorities) as an Ambassador of Christ and that I must be aware of tools Satan will use to keep me from fully serving Him in mind, spirit and heart. Because of what I heard, shared, learned, witnessed, thought about, I want to remember most

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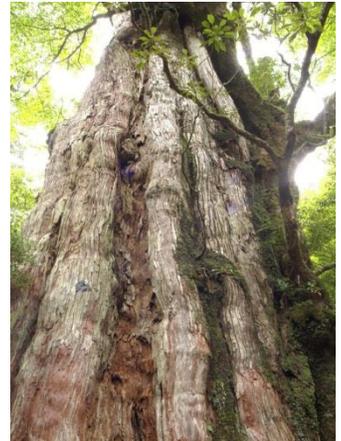
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Blessings Overflow,

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