



Pretending or Contending

Acts 4:32-37 (NIV)

All the believers were one in heart and mind. No one claimed that any of their possessions was their own, but they shared everything they had. ³³ With great power the apostles continued to testify to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus. And God's grace was so powerfully at work in them all ³⁴ that there were no needy persons among them. For from time to time those who owned land or houses sold them, brought the money from the sales ³⁵ and put it at the apostles' feet, and it was distributed to anyone who had need. ³⁶ Joseph, a Levite from Cyprus, whom the apostles called Barnabas (which means "son of encouragement"), ³⁷ sold a field he owned and brought the money and put it at the apostles' feet.

Acts 5:1-11 (NIV)

Now a man named Ananias, together with his wife Sapphira, also sold a piece of property. ² With his wife's full knowledge he kept back part of the money for himself, but brought the rest and put it at the apostles' feet. ³ Then Peter said, "Ananias, how is it that Satan has so filled your heart that you have lied to the Holy Spirit and have kept for yourself some of the money you received for the land? ⁴ Didn't it belong to you before it was sold? And after it was sold, wasn't the money at your disposal? What made you think of doing such a thing? You have not lied just to human beings but to God." ⁵ When Ananias heard this, he fell down and died. And great fear seized all who heard what had happened. ⁶ Then some young men came forward, wrapped up his body, and carried him out and buried him. ⁷ About three hours later his wife came in, not knowing what had happened.

⁸ Peter asked her, "Tell me, is this the price you and Ananias got for the land?" "Yes," she said, "that is the price." ⁹ Peter said to her, "How could you conspire to test the Spirit of the Lord? Listen! The feet of the men who buried your husband are at the door, and they will carry you out also." ¹⁰ At that moment she fell down at his feet and died. Then the young men came in and, finding her dead, carried her out and buried her beside her husband. ¹¹ Great fear seized the whole church and all who heard about these events.

I. Barnabas the Contender

Why did Barnabas do what he did?

- Gospel transformation reveals itself in a loosening grip on our stuff and a tightening grip on people.

II. Ananias and Sapphira the Pretenders

Why did Ananias and Sapphira do what they did?

- Pretenders live like owners, not stewards.
- Pretenders are more concerned with the praise of man than the praise of God!
- You need not just to fan away the smoke; you need to put out the fire!
- Pretending is deadly.

Why did God strike them dead?

- Miracles in Acts were a kick start to the movement!
- The miracles of Acts were glimpses into eternity.
- God loves His church and is jealous over it.
- The greatest threat to the church has always been inside and not outside.