

## **Acts 4b – 5a**

4:32 – 5:11

32 Total unity – one in heart and mind. Are we there? Why or why not? If not, how do we get there? What is the difference between unity and uniformity? Total lack of selfishness! Is what you have yours or the Lord's? John 17:21-23; 1John 3:17

33 The Apostles' powerful testimony of the resurrection was an answer to prayer. Great grace is present when great threats are present. 1 Thessalonians 1:5

34-35 Because of 32b, there was no lack in the early church. Those who remained in Jerusalem to learn the Apostles doctrine did not have to return to their homeland for financing. People were moved to sell property to meet financial needs. They no longer saw their future in mere earthly possessions. Like Jesus, their kingdom was not of this world. Luke 12:33,34 This was not mandatory as Peter did not sell his home in Capernaum. Other churches did not operate in like manner. Those who felt led to do so did. The Apostles were in charge of the finances until the office of deacon was created in chapter 6. Laying something at ones feet meant to put them in charge of it. 2 Corinthians 8:20-21

36-37 An example is given of someone who sold their property. It is given here as an early introduction to Barnabas. We learn that he is a Levite and from the island of Cypress. He will later bring Saul/Paul to the Apostles and go on a missionary journey with him. Acts 9:27; 13:2,3

5:1-2 Then a negative example is given of someone who sold their property. Ananias and Sapphira. They pretended to do the same thing others had done. Together they agreed to withhold a portion of the money and donate the rest, but declare that it was the full price of the property. They wanted to appear as generous as those who gave all. Perhaps they were held in special honor.

3-4 We aren't told how Peter knew. The Holy Spirit may have revealed it to him. The problem wasn't withholding the money. Anyone was free to give all, some, or nothing. The problem was lying to God. The question of why is revealing. We lie to impress others, to appear better than we are, but we can't lie to God.

5-6 He dropped dead! In the Old Testament, Uzzah died for touching the Ark of the Covenant. Aaron's sons died for offering strange fire. In both of the Old Testament stories people were disobeying God and making light of sacred things. God was showing the early church that they were the temple, and that as

ministers of God we must be just as careful to walk in holiness. You couldn't put one over on God in either testament. Do you think people took the work of the church a little more seriously then?

7-8 Peter gave Sapphira a chance to come clean. She stuck with her lie.

9-10 Another question that should cause us to examine our hearts. How could you agree together to test the Spirit of the Lord? How can we lie to one another for the sake of looking good and expect God not to deal with us? At Peter's pronouncement she too dropped dead.

11 The church came to the realization that what they were doing was just as important as what the priests did in the Old Testament. God is just as serious about integrity and obedience now as He was back then. Do we think things have changed? I've seen church members afflicted with a heart attack right before a meeting they intended to disrupt. I've seen pastors who thought their sin was hidden exposed and their family torn apart. God still deals with sin. Jeremiah 32:40; 1Peter 1:17; 4:17

To test God means to do something we know is wrong and see if we can get away with it. Does this make God mean spirited? Or is it love that deals the blow when we stray, not only for our sake, but also for those who are watching? Revelation 15:4