7.5 Group Leader Guide

Acts 4:32-5:11 | James Savage
Main Idea: The Gospel calls us to live with integrity, not image. When we stop pretending and bring our whole selves into the light, we discover the freedom and grace Jesus offers.

Group Leader Notes

This week's message explores one of the most challenging passages in Acts—the story of Ananias and Sapphira. While this passage can initially seem to be about generosity or God's judgment, James helps us see that the deeper issue is hypocrisy: the temptation to project an image of spiritual maturity while hiding what is really happening in our hearts.

This conversation may lead people to share areas of struggle, shame or hidden sin. Create a safe environment where honesty is celebrated and confidentiality is honored. Remind your group that confession isn't about earning God's love—it's a response to the grace we've already received through Jesus.

Icebreaker

Tell us about a time when something looked much better on the outside than it actually was.

OR What's one thing people often assume about you that isn't actually true?

Read Together

Acts 4:32-5:11

Message Recap

The early church was marked by extraordinary generosity because they had been transformed by the Gospel. Their shared life wasn't motivated by obligation but by hearts that had been "wrecked by the Gospel of Jesus."

Then Luke introduces Ananias and Sapphira. Their problem wasn't that they kept part of the money - they were free to do that. Their sin was pretending to be something they weren't. They wanted the appearance of surrender without actually surrendering.

James challenged us to recognize that this story is ultimately about the pressure to live a double life. Jesus has little patience for hypocrisy because hypocrisy is the opposite of the Gospel. The Gospel invites us into truth, confession and freedom - not performance and pretending.

Discussion Questions

1. What stood out to you most from this week's message?

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2. Before this message, what did you think the story of Ananias and Sapphira was about? Did your perspective change?

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3. James said this story isn't primarily about money, it's about hypocrisy and "the pressure to live a double life."

Why do you think so many people (including Christians) feel pressure to manage appearances instead of living honestly?

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4. Jesus had strong words for hypocrisy because it keeps us from experiencing freedom.

Where do you think people today are most tempted to present an image instead of their authentic selves?

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5. One of the most memorable lines from the message was:

"You don't have two lives to live. You have one."

What does that statement challenge or encourage in you?

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6. James contrasted hypocrisy with the Gospel:

- Hypocrisy says, "I have no option but to lie."
- The Gospel says, "The truth will set you free."
- Hypocrisy says, "My sin is too great."
- The Gospel says, "The grace of Jesus is greater."
- Hypocrisy says, "Keep it concealed."
- The Gospel says, "Confession."

Which of those contrasts resonates with you most today? Why?

Application

Why do you think confession is often so difficult?
What fears keep people from bringing things into the light?
Before the Gospel reaches Middle Tennessee, has it reached your own heart?
What would it look like for the Gospel to reach a deeper place in your life this week?
Is there an area where you've been more concerned with appearance than authenticity?
Is there something you've been carrying alone that needs to be brought into the light?
What's one practical step toward honesty, confession or accountability you can take this week?

Encourage group members to identify one trusted person they can invite into that conversation if appropriate.

Prayer

Close your time by praying together:

Thank Jesus that His grace is greater than our sin and that we don't have to hide from Him. Ask the Holy Spirit to reveal any areas of hypocrisy, give courage to walk in honesty, and help each person experience the freedom that comes through confession, repentance and the forgiveness found in Christ. Pray that your group would become a community where authenticity is welcomed, grace is abundant, and people help one another find and follow Jesus.