

THE DAMAGE OF LYING IN THE FAMILY

GOLDEN TEXT

“Do not lie to each other, since you have taken off your old self with its practices”. (Colossians 3:9)

USEFUL PRACTICE

A lie may even bring forth flowers, but it does not bear good fruit.

SCRIPTURE READING

Acts 5:1-11

1 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.

LESSON OBJECTIVES

- I) **To investigate** the nature of the "conversion " of Ananias and Sapphira;
- II) **To reflect** on the problem of lying in the family;
- III) **To expose** the biblical advice on how to protect the family from lies and hypocrisy.

INTRODUCTION

The story of Ananias and Sapphira was negatively marked by the lie that the couple told at the beginning of the Church. Throughout the history of the post-Pentecost church, in the book of Acts, a loving sense of sharing concerning the poor dominated the Spirit-filled church. In order for the those in need to have their needs met, some of the new converts, who had possessions, sold their land or houses and brought the money from the sales and put it at the apostles' feet, and it was distributed to anyone who had need.

In this context, the couple, Ananias and Sapphira, allowed themselves to be dominated by envy and the desire to attract the attention of others.

Therefore, they lied to the apostles and the church. In this lesson, we will study the danger that lying brings to the Christian family. In addition to spiritual tragedies, it also brings about family tragedies.

I – A SUSPECT CONVERSION

1. Why a suspect conversion? Because the couple's attitudes did not reveal the life transformation that is achieved through the power of the Gospel (Rom. 1:16). Although attracted to the church's practice, and sympathetic to the cause of the Gospel, Ananias and Sapphira did not correspond to the work of regeneration of the Holy Spirit, that is, they were not genuinely transformed (John 3:3-7). It is important to emphasize that, at the beginning of the Pentecost movement, Ananias and Sapphira joined the local church, becoming a part of it. However, the old nature revealed itself in the couple's hypocrisy, greed and lies.

2. Fellowship in the church of Acts. In the Book of Acts, it is clear that one of the characteristics of the early days of the church, among other things, was "fellowship" (Acts 2:42). Those who converted to Christ at that time, coming from the large group of almost three thousand new Christians, had everything in common, because the Holy Spirit produced generous and voluntary love in the hearts of those Christians. Mutual help was the hallmark of that church, as its members sold their properties and brought all the money they received to the apostles' feet. That money was intended to help the poorest ones in Jerusalem (Acts 4:34, 35). An example of this "spirit" in the first church was a man named Barnabas. He sold his land and gave all the money, voluntarily, to meet the needs of needy Christians (Acts 4:36, 37).

3. Ananias and Sapphira's envy and hypocrisy. When they saw the generous selflessness of Barnabas, Ananias and Sapphira filled their hearts with envy. Instead of acting generously, they nurtured a carnal feeling, plotting a plan to impress the apostles and the church (Acts 5:1, 2). The plan was as follows: to sell a piece of property and take the money as an offering to the church, but keep part of it for themselves and give the other part as being the full amount. Ananias and Sapphira pretended to give all the money to the church. It is very sad when hypocrisy and deception enter the heart of man. Even more tragic when this reality happens within the Christian family. We must keep watch, the Devil acts to break up the unity of the Spirit in the life of the family.

4. When lies and deception fill the hearts. Spirit-filled, incisive, and with spiritual authority, the apostle Peter said to Ananias, "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? 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" (Acts 5:3,4). The apostle Peter also dealt with the wife of Ananias, without her knowing that her husband had fallen dead in the presence of all: "How could you conspire to test the Spirit of the Lord?" (Acts 5:9a). Therefore, we see that lies and deception dominated the couple's heart as they tried to deceive the church and, consequently, the apostles' leadership. By trying to deceive the local leaders of the first church, they actually lied to the Holy Spirit (Acts 5:3), turning directly against God (Acts 5:4).

II - THE PROBLEM WITH LYING WITHIN THE FAMILY

1. The lie produced within the family. Ananias and Sapphira thought they could take advantage of the ignorance of the church's people under the trick of hiding the truth about the sale of the property, lying in order to draw attention to themselves (Acts 5:1). This is about people who claim to be Christians, but who maintain old habits of worldly life.

The Holy Spirit is saddened when, within the family, husband, wife, sons and daughters, or other members, turn lying into their way of life. Therefore, the apostle Paul urges not to lie to each other (Col. 3:9).

2. Those who use lies are dominated by the power of the flesh. In Galatians, the apostle Paul writes that the flesh desires are contrary to the Spirit, and the latter what is contrary to the flesh so that we are not to do whatever it wants, that is, Christians are expected to crucify their flesh with its respective passions, that is, vices of the soul; thus, we must live dominated by the Spirit (Gal. 5:17, 24, 25). Every lie, however naive it may seem, has its source in the Devil, who is its father (John 8:44, 45). If it dominates the believer, it means that he is no longer in the Spirit but in the flesh (cf. Rom. 8:1; 13:14).

III - PROTECTING THE FAMILY FROM LIES AND HYPOCRISY

1. Beware of moral defects at home. When certain moral defects are allowed, such as practicing lies, deception and hypocrisy within a home, this family is doomed to failure. Similar to what happened to Ananias and Sapphira, in the Old Testament, we read the story of an Israelite family that had Achan as its head. Dominated by greed and hypocrisy, he stole certain objects from the city of Jericho, considered cursed and that, therefore, Israel should not take as spoils. This sin of disobedience brought a curse upon all the people. The Lord's anger burned against Achan and all his family (Josh 7:1).

2. We need to act against hypocrisy and lies. No one is free from getting

dominated by the same hypocrisies and lies that were found in the couple Ananias and Sapphira. Therefore, the Bible teaches us that we should not exchange the truth of God for a lie, as people dominated by sin (Rom 1:25). It is up to the servants of God to examine themselves before Him against hypocrisy (Matt. 7:3, 5). Yes, the direct consequence of lying is hypocrisy. These two vices are carnal works that can tear a family apart.

3. Don't let the Enemy work in the family. Verse 3 says, “Ananias, how is it that Satan has so filled your heart [...]”. It is indisputable that Satan acts actively on Earth and especially against the families of the Church of Christ. He works against this important institution, attacking its members. Unfortunately, like Ananias, there are many who allow Satan to fill their hearts to destabilize the family. Therefore, it is up to us to pray and watch (Matt. 26:41). Then we can do what the Bible says: “Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.” (James 4:7).

CONCLUSION

As with Ananias and Sapphira, who were punished by the Lord with instant death, family members who practice lies can experience very serious consequences because of this practice. The Bible says that the Church is the pillar and foundation of the truth (1 Tim. 3:15). Therefore, although, at first, it may seem difficult, the path of the truth is always the best one.