

DON'T HOLD BACK

Once upon a time there were two Christians named Ananias and Sapphira who sold a material possession and brought the proceeds to the Church for the work of the Kingdom. The Spirit reveals through Peter that this couple had held back some of the money for themselves and lied about it. The problem wasn't with them retaining some of the proceeds to use for their own purposes. Their lie revealed that they were selfishly holding back from God.

Acts 5:1-11

1 But a man named Ananias, with his wife Sapphira, sold a piece of property, 2 and with his wife's knowledge, he kept back for himself some of the proceeds and brought only a part of it and laid it at the apostles' feet. 3 But Peter said, "Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit and to keep back for yourself part of the proceeds of the land? 4 While it remained unsold, did it not remain your own? And after it was sold, was it not at your disposal? Why is it that you have contrived this deed in your heart? You have not lied to man but to God." 5 When Ananias heard these words, he fell down and breathed his last. And great fear came upon all who heard of it. 6 The young men rose and wrapped him up and carried him out and buried him.

7 After an interval of about three hours his wife came in, not knowing what had happened. 8 And Peter said to her, "Tell me whether you sold the land for so much." And she said, "Yes, for so much." 9 But Peter said to her, "How is it that you have agreed together to test the Spirit of the Lord? Behold, the feet of those who have buried your husband are at the door, and they will carry you out." 10 Immediately she fell down at his feet and breathed her last. When the young men came in they found her dead, and they carried her out and buried her beside her husband. 11 And great fear came upon the whole church and upon all who heard of these things.

We find other places in scripture where people hold back from God or his people (Mark 10:17-31; Proverbs 11:26). Still, others hold on to control rather than having the whole-hearted faith to let God fully lead their lives. Similarly, the prophet Isaiah is instructed not to hold back part of God's message for his people (Isaiah 58:1) as it has been bestowed upon him as a servant of God. The unique and pointed story about Ananias and Sapphira reminds believers that this throttled type of spirit is unfaithful to God.

As we enter the season of Thanksgiving, we will have the opportunity to reflect deeply upon what the Lord has done for us. Gratitude involves a readiness to show appreciation and preparation to return that kindness. Like a possession, this thanks is something within our heart that we manage like currency. As we recount the uncountable mercies bestowed upon us and our gratitude wells up, may we not hold back our thanksgiving one bit, giving it all to God.

Psalm 9:1

I will give thanks to the Lord with my whole heart; I will recount all of your wonderful deeds.

May you find joy in presenting your thanksgiving to the Lord in whole-hearted worship. He is due everything!

Eyes Up,
Ryan