

Acts 4:31-5:2 (New International Version)

³¹After they prayed, the place where they were meeting was shaken. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke the word of God boldly.

³²All the believers were one in heart and mind. No one claimed that any of his possessions was his own, but they shared everything they had. ³³With great power the apostles continued to testify to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and much grace was upon them all. ³⁴There were no needy persons among them. For from time to time those who owned lands or houses sold them, brought the money from the sales ³⁵and put it at the apostles' feet, and it was distributed to anyone as he had need.

³⁶Joseph, a Levite from Cyprus, whom the apostles called Barnabas (which means Son of Encouragement), ³⁷sold a field he owned and brought the money and put it at the apostles' feet.

Acts 5: ¹Now a man named Ananias, together with his wife Sapphira, also sold a piece of property. ²With 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.

OASIS: A Life-Sharing Community, Acts 4: 31-5:2

Possible starter question: What are some of the good things that our LIFE Community has shared? (i.e. food, experiences, activities, food, etc.)

Transitional comment: Now, let's see what we can learn from the early Christians. This is not a long section, but it is wonderfully provocative, challenging and instructive.

- Pray for the Holy Spirit to lead your study (if you haven't already prayed)

Read and Overview observations:

- Let's listen as someone reads our passage aloud.
- Now take several minutes by yourself to study this passage. Look for repeated words and ideas. Note major contrasts.

(Possibly share for several minutes about repeated words and ideas, and key contrasts.)

First section (vs. 31):

- O Let's look at the context: What has been happening in the prior chapters of Acts?
It's okay to glance back!
(n.b. place: Jerusalem; time: soon after Pentecost, which was only 50 days after the crucifixion and resurrection; what: Peter has preached twice; lame beggar has been healed; Peter and John have been arrested and released)
- O What have the Christians just been doing? Then what happens?
 - I If you had been one of these early Christians, what sort of an impression would that experience have made on you? Why?

Second section (v. 32-35):

- O What are some repeated words and ideas in this paragraph?
- O What do you observe about the attitude and values of the believers?
 - I What do you think it means that "much grace was upon them"?
What might that have looked like in their lives and relationships?
- O What actions did they undertake?
 - I What motivated them?
- O It can be helpful to note that such behavior wasn't required. What indicates such? (consider the phrase "time to time"—and the evidence that believers didn't sell everything)
 - A Which attitudes do you want to develop more deeply or more fully?
 - A Which actions do you want to imitate or build into your life?

Third section (4:36-5:2):

O Compare the example of Joseph with that of Ananias and Sapphira?

- I What does this say about each of them?
- I What early church reality does it reveal?

Summary

I Based on our study, what do you admire about life in the early church?

Prayer together: for one another individually and collectively to reflect wisely and lovingly the same type of radical devotion to our Lord Jesus.

Text is on other page or www.Biblegateway.com

- a. BIG idea: A life-sharing community is reflected in shared purposes, possessions and goodness.
- b. Key verse/idea: Acts 4: 32: **“All the believers were one in heart and mind.”**
- c. KEY: O = Observation; I = Interpretation; A = Application (or C = Challenge).

Advice to study leaders:

- d. Complement your OIA questions with “process questions” (what else? what more? What do others of you see/think?).
- e. Determine the core questions you’ll ask (know which ones to skip if pressed for time).
- f. Always reword questions in words are comfortable for you (and, if the question doesn’t make sense to you, then discard it.)
- g. When you ask questions, give people ample time to think and respond. How long do you wait? Take your time; don’t rush people but encourage their participation. And avoid answering your own questions!
- h. Timing/pacing: allocate your time and move forward gently, with a steady pace.
- i. Application: Pace the study to conclude with “difference making” application.
- j. Secondary texts—use other texts very sparingly, even if they are relevant. Otherwise, other texts will push you more into the “teacher role,” rather than that of facilitator. It also can cause some people to feel distracted or de-powered.
- k. If you are utilizing this “on-line” study and not part of the OASIS course, I recommend that you get the 1-volume commentary entitled New Bible Commentary, Revised (21st Century Edition, IVP). It is well worth the \$40.