



## Study 4—No Fooling with God

### Acts 4:32-5:11

Often, even though we have good intentions, it's hard to help one another through times of need. For one thing, we tend to be so proud and independent that we hate to admit we need help. Also, our social security system provides a reasonable "safety net," so we rarely see anyone starve to death. But is that enough to justify the fact that we so rarely seem to get involved in helping meet the needs of others – even when they're Christian brothers and sisters?

How would you identify the point at which a fellow Christian's **NEED** was serious enough that you should help?

**Can you identify a time when you...**

- \* should have offered help but didn't
- \* offered help and it was rejected
- \* offered help and it was accepted

In the early days of the church, there were many acts of incredible generosity. There were also incredible acts of insincerity, just as there are today!

**Read Acts 4:32-35**

1. From verse 32, what is the starting point for Christian sharing?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
2. What attitude did these first Christians have to their possessions?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
3. What is the continuing focus of the Apostles' ministry?

INTERESTING... the focus of the apostles was ALWAYS on preaching Christ! The growth of the church, and the growth of practical Christian caring, should always come from the preaching of the gospel!

4. Why were there no needy Christians?

5. How big would someone else's need have to be to prompt YOU to sell your house or land to help them?

How much WOULD you be prepared to give up to help someone in need?

### **ATTITUDE COUNTS!**

As usual with Christian giving, your attitude as a giver counts far more than the numbers on the cheque! Read **Acts 4:36 to 5:11** for a case study of two givers...

a) Barnabas

What does Barnabas do, and why?

b) Ananias and Sapphira

What do Ananias and Sapphira do?

What do you think is their motive?

Was it wrong for them to with-hold some of the money?

What's the essence of their sin?



### **PUTTING IT TOGETHER...**

1. From what Peter says, do we HAVE TO sell our property and give?

2. What do you see as the biggest difference between Barnabas and Ananias and Sapphira?

3. Do you think God's action is unduly harsh? Why, or why not?

What effect did God's action have...

on the church?

on the wider community (v11-14)

### **WHAT ABOUT US?**

In striking down Ananias and Sapphira, God left the church with an enduring lesson! But have we learned from it? How easy it is to do our good deeds for the sake of appearances, rather than from the heart!

Can you think of examples where this has been the case?

How can we encourage one another to be more caring and generous, yet at the same time sincere?

From what you've seen in this passage, what sort of people should Christians strive to be?



Come one - Come all to the

### **BBQ & BOCCE BONAZA!!!!**

If you like People, Food and Fun then you'll love the LateChurch BBQ & Bocce Tournament on next weekend, Saturday 10 March.

If you think Bocce is a type of cheese then you seriously need to come.