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# Oaks Early Risers Bible Class

**The Oaks Baptist Church**  
Grand Prairie, Texas

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## Responsive Love Acts 4:32-5:11

### Lesson Background and Introduction

From Acts we realize the church’s primary mission: to share the gospel “to the ends of the earth” (Acts 1:8). We learn that this imperative to preach the good news about Jesus must withstand ridicule (example: 2:13), doubters (example: 3:11-12), and even coordinated persecution (example: 4:1-3). Yet the first-century church in Jerusalem had its share of problems. It faced leadership succession issues (Acts 1:15-26). It had organizational challenges (6:1-6). The beloved fellowship even suffered from dishonesty concerning financial disclosure (Acts 5:1-11). While we may not understand exactly how the Spirit works in the church or what he is up to all the time, church business is serious business. Faith and fraud cannot coexist. For this reason, when we allow the Spirit to lead us, we will be genuine givers like Barnabas, not sly and deceitful like Ananias and Sapphira. Dishonesty within the church can destroy it entirely and must be dealt with severely. The very thought of doing a good deed to receive kudos and honors violates the spirit of charity. As Jesus taught, when we give for relief of the poor, it should be so private that our left hand doesn’t know about the money our right hand put in the offering basket (Matthew 6:3). This requires a delicate balance of being a witness at the same time (5:16). But when we yield our hearts to the Spirit, we know that he sees our deeds and blesses them (6:4).

*(Adapted from the NIV Standard Lesson Commentary)*

**The First Church** - The first church in Jerusalem had a beautiful, Spirit-filled attitude. Everyone looked out for one another. They saw their possessions as belonging to the Lord and shared them. No one went without what they needed. People sold their personal property and gave the income to the apostles to distribute to those in need.

**Dishonesty in the Church** - Luke held up one person as an example of notable giving: Joseph, also called Barnabas. Ananias and his wife Sapphira saw the accolades given to Barnabas and wanted the same praise, but they were dishonest. They sold property, but held back part of the money while acting as they had sacrificially given it all. Peter, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, confronted Ananias. Instead of praise, Peter uncovered his dishonesty. Peter said Satan worked in this man's heart. Ananias wanted public praise; instead, he got rebuked in front of everyone for lying to the Holy Spirit. The couple did not have to give their money to the church; they were free to do as they pleased. However, they were proud people wanting the praise of other Christians to inflate their spiritual ego.

**Refuse to Test God** - After Peter's rebuke, Ananias suddenly died. God likely allowed this tragedy to keep such impurity, scandal, and satanic activity from infiltrating the first church. Sadly, Sapphira was in partnership with her husband and told Peter the same story, so she also died. This is a grim reminder— do not play games with God. We should ask Him to search our motives and make sure that what we do for Him is truly for Him and not just for the praise of others.

*(Adapted from the Echoes Commentary)*

### FOOD FOR THOUGHT

**THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK:**

Real love originated with our Father, who gave us the gift of His Son

**COMMENT FOR THE WEEK:**

As we seek to show His love to others, we can follow the example of Christ, who laid down His life for us (1 John 3:16-18)

**SCRIPTURE FOR THE WEEK:**

7 [Love] bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. 8 Love never fails. But whether there are prophecies, they will fail; whether there are tongues, they will cease; whether there is knowledge, it will vanish away

(1 Cor 13:7-8 NKJV)

*(from "Our Daily Bread", Nov 26, 2013)*

**Series: Love For One Another**

**UNIT: Godly Love Among Believers**

**NEXT WEEK**

**Impartial Love**  
(James 2:1-13)

## NOTES AND CROSS-REFERENCES

### **Responsive Love through Generous Giving (Acts 4:32-37)**

#### *Needs identified (32-34)*

##### Identify other's troubles

- Identify lack of direction (Matt 20:6)
- Identify need to know God (Acts 17:22-23)
- Identify and help carry other's burdens (Gal 6:2)
- Identify and help the oppressed and share with the poor (Isa 58:6-7)
- Identify and bear with the failings of the weak (Rom 15:1)
- Identify and help those who need it (1 Thes 5:14)

##### Identify through compassion for others

- God has compassion on us so we can have compassion on others (2 Cor 1:3-4)
- As one of God's chosen people, we should have compassion (Col 3:12)
- We are commanded to be kind and compassionate (Eph 4:32)
- Showing compassion confirms we have wisdom from God (James 3:17)
- As a member of the body of Jesus, we should be sympathetic and compassionate (1 Pet 3:8)
- Compassion is one of the building blocks of maturity in the faith (2 Pet 1:5-8)

#### *Needs met (35)*

- Needs met through fear of the Lord (Ps 34:9)
- Needs met through walking righteously (Isa 33:15-16)
- Needs met through provisions by God (Jer 17:8)
- Needs met through God's glorious riches (Phil 4:19)
- Needs met through God's deliverance and protection (Ps 41:1-3)
- Needs met through God's favor (Ps 84:11)
- Needs met through God's grace (2 Cor 9:8)

#### *Encouragement given (36)*

- Encouragement by providing spiritual needs (1 Thess 3:10)
- Encouragement by praying for one another (Col 4:12).
- Encouragement by helping the weak and timid (1 Thess 5:14)
- Encouragement because God encourages us so that we can encourage others (2 Thess 2:16-17).
- Encouragement so that none are hardened by sin's deceitfulness (Heb 3:13).

#### *Resources administered (37)*

- Resources administered of all that is needed (2 Cor 9:8)
- Resources administered to do good works (Eph 2:10)
- Resources administered to be generous (2 Cor 9:11)
- Resources administered that come from God's hands (1 Chron 29:14)

### **Responsive Punishment for Selfish Giving (Acts 5:1-11)**

#### *Deceit planned (1-2)*

- Deceit planned that sometimes will backfire and cause harm (Est 5:14)
- Deceit planned even though there is a warning (Mic 2:1)
- Deceit planned always causes dissension (Prov 6:14)
- Those who plan deceit will not dwell in God's house (Ps 101:7)

#### *Deceit comes from Satan (3-4)*

- Satan started his deception in the garden (Gen 3:13)
- Satan deceives so that man will disobey God (1 Chron 21:1)
- Satan prowls around looking for someone to deceive (1 Peter 5:8)
- Satan is the father of deception (John 8:44)

#### *We must keep vows to God (5-11)*

- When making a vow, we must keep it (Eccl 5:4)
- We must never be slow about fulfilling our vows to God (Deut 23:21)
- We must keep our oaths even when it hurts (Ps 15:2-4)
- Never hastily or rashly give a vow (Prov 20:25)