

**Acts of the Holy Spirit - 6**  
**Spiritual Integrity – Week of Oct 23, 2016**  
**Bay Park Life Groups – Participant**

Rosemary M Dowsett is noted for saying: *If Acts were a novel it would be a blockbuster thriller!*<sup>1</sup> Acts 5 certainly doesn't disappoint – there's growth, miracles, arrests, authority clashes, and even two untimely deaths! The book of Acts is more than basic Church history; it's our vital link to understanding how God works across time, culture, and denomination. He even works in the face of resistance. Our prayer is that your time in Acts will deepen your experience of God's forever presence in your daily life.

Read Acts 5:1-11

1. Peter is clear – Ananias' sin is that of lying to God (vv 3&4).
  - a. What lie got you in the most trouble as a child?
  - b. Why is lying so harmful to the faith of believers and their witness?
  
2. With verse 3 in mind, which of these statements best describes you and why?
  - a. *I am rather nervous of talk about the devil and evil spirits.*
  - b. *I would like to be more discerning spiritually and sense God's presence more.*
  - c. *I am more conscious of the presence of Satan's activity than that of the Holy Spirit.*
  - d. *I am more conscious of the Holy Spirit's presence than of Satan.*
  - e. *I am not particularly conscious of either...or I am only aware on rare occasions.*

Read 5:12-16

3. Though Acts 5:1-11 makes for a very uncomfortable read, the fact remains that the consequences of Ananias and Sapphira's actions had a healthy impact on the church and their witness. Scripture tells us that *The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge and wisdom* - Proverbs 1:7, 10. What does the fear of the Lord look like for a follower of Jesus Christ? How can we cultivate a healthy appreciation for the holiness of God?
  
4. *What exactly does Luke mean when he tells us that "No one else dared join them?" He does not mean that new believers did not become part of the church, for verse 14 declares they did. He might mean that no one dared join them on his or her own authority or perhaps that no one dared antagonize them or prevent their meetings. Most likely this is a geographical reference. Many new believers became part of the congregation, but they did not meet in Solomon's Colonnade since that seemed to be the center of Sadducean attack.* (Kenneth Gangel<sup>2</sup>)

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<sup>1</sup> Todd C Penner, *Contextualizing Acts*, (Society of Bible Literature, 2003) p 319

<sup>2</sup> Gangel, K. O. (1998). *Acts* (Vol. 5, p. 76). Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers.

*On the one hand an awestruck reserve... on the other great missionary successes. This paradoxical situation has often recurred since then. The presence of the living God, whether manifest through preaching or miracles or both, is alarming to some and appealing to others. Some are frightened away, while others are drawn to faith. (John Stott<sup>3</sup>)*

Was there a time you when you kept your distance from Christians? What changed? How do you deal with people who keep a safe distance from you because of your faith?

5. Miracles are a hot topic that unfortunately doesn't get enough airtime. Here's your opportunity to dig deeper. With verses 15-16 in mind, what's your take on miracles then and now? Can you back your answer up with Scripture?

Read 5:17-20

6. In verse 17 we discover that the religious leaders were *filled with jealousy*. The Greek word for *filled* is the same one Luke uses to describe the filling of the Holy Spirit (cf 2:4, 4:8, 31). It would be easy to lob grenades at the religious leaders for their petty jealousies, but the truth is that jealousy is a common portal that Satan uses to spiritually derail us. Think of Ananias and Sapphira, two early churchgoers. Their lives unravelled when they became jealous of the honour and attention that Joseph, aka Barnabas, was getting. Look up Proverbs 14:30, 12:12 and Ecclesiastes 4:4. Has jealousy ever undermined God's work in your life? How has God given you victory over jealousy?
7. What's your take away for this week?

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<sup>3</sup> John Stott, *The Message of Acts*, (Intervarsity Press, 1990) p 113