

BIG QUESTION UNDER INVESTIGATION

We're in... Unit 12: God's People Live for Him

Unit 12 Big Question and Answer and Song:

"How Should God's People Live?

They Should Live Like Jesus!" *PFI ESV Songs 12, Tracks 3,4*

Unit 12 Bible Verse and Song:

Ephesians 5:1-2
"Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children. And walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God."

PFI ESV Songs 12, Track 5

BIBLE TRUTH

*We're learning... Bible Truth 10:
God's People Say "No" to Temptation*

Temptation is thinking about doing something wrong. It isn't wrong to be tempted, but it is wrong to say "yes" to temptation and go ahead and do what you are tempted to do. That is sinning. All of God's people are tempted to do wrong. Sin in their hearts whispers to them to disobey God. Sin in the world around them looks attractive to them. Even Satan works to tempt God's people to forget God's good ways and to sin. Jesus, God's very own Son, was tempted to sin in every way as we are, but He never sinned. Sometimes Often it's very hard to say "no" to temptation. God promises to always provide His people a way out of temptation without sinning. He gives them His Word to remind them of Himself, His good commands and His power to help them. He gives them the Holy Spirit to work in their hearts and help them to turn away from tempting sin. But even when God's people do give into temptation and sin, He graciously forgives them through Jesus. Praise God for being so merciful!

BIBLE VERSE

How do I know this is true? The Bible tells me so!

Bible Truth 10 Bible Verse: 1 Corinthians 10:13

"No temptation has overtaken you that is not common to man. God is faithful, and he will not let you be tempted beyond your ability, but with the temptation he will also provide the way of escape, that you may be able to endure it."

CASE STORY

Acts 4:32-5:14

Our story is: The Case of the Tricky Givers.

As you listen to the story, see if you can figure out:

1. Who were the Tricky Givers?
2. How were they tricky? What temptation did they give in to that made them tricky...and how could they have avoided giving into it?

This story takes place in New Testament times, not long after Jesus rose from the dead and went to heaven.

Things would never be the same in Jerusalem after Jesus died on the cross and rose from the dead! The Holy Spirit had filled the hearts of Jesus' disciples and helped them to act powerfully and boldly in Jesus' name. What amazing works they did! How powerfully they preached! What miraculous healings and amazing works they did! What suffering they joyfully endured for Jesus' sake! And how wonderful the love the Christians showed to God and to each other!

"The things these followers of Jesus do are amazing," many in Jerusalem exclaimed. "Only God could do things like this!" So many repented of their sins and put their trust in Jesus, too.

One man who became a Christian was a rich Levite named Joseph of Cyprus. The Lord gave Joseph the gifts of preaching and generosity. He was such a blessing to the young church in Jerusalem, that the apostles nicknamed Joseph "Barnabas," meaning "Encouraging Son."

As our story opens, we find Joseph in the marketplace, selling some land to a businessman.

"It's a deal," Joseph said to the man. "This silver is a fair price for my field. Thank you," Joseph told him.

Joseph carried off the bag of silver with joy. This money would take care of the widows and other poor people in the church. He was thankful that he had a field to sell to help them out.

Joseph entered the place where the church was meeting, took the bag of silver and laid it at the apostles' feet. "I sold a field today. Here's the money I received for it. I'm giving it to you to use to care for the needy," he told them.

The apostles took it gratefully and all whole church was encouraged by Joseph's gift. Other rich believers saw what Joseph did and wanted to sell their fields and houses to help others, too. No one in the church would be in need because of the generous gifts the Holy Spirit

prompted the richer believers to give.

Word of how the Christians treated each other spread throughout Jerusalem. Once more, people were amazed. "Only God could work in people to do things like this!" many thought. And many repented of their sins and put their trust in Jesus, too.

But generous gifts like Joseph's didn't only encourage others to want to do good deeds. Sometimes they became temptations to do bad things, as a rich couple named Ananias and Sapphira were to find out.

"Next time there is a need among the poor and widows, let's sell one of our fields and give the money to the apostles," Ananias and Sapphira agreed. They had watched how Joseph and other rich Christians had sold houses and fields and laid the money at the apostles' feet. They had seen the honor and gratefulness that the apostles as well as the poor had shown the rich believers for their kind gifts and they decided they wanted to be part of that, too.

It was not long before new needs requiring more money were shared with the believers. "This is our chance," Ananias Sapphira decided. Down to the market place they went. Before long they had found a buyer. With a quick exchange of silver shekels for property, the deal was done.

"What a lot of money we got for our field!" Ananias and Sapphira exclaimed, looking at the bulging bag of coins. "This will more than meet the needs of the widows and poor," they said. "Perhaps we don't need to give it all away to the poor of the church," they began to think. "After all, it really is such a lot of money."

The more they thought about all that money, the more hesitant they were to give it all away. Satan used their thoughts about the money to begin to tempt them to sin: "But think how much grander it would be to say to the apostles in front of everyone else that we are giving all of the money we got, just like Joseph of Cyprus did? Isn't that the kind of honor and respect you are hungry for?" they began to think.

"What harm would it do to keep some of this money for ourselves?" The apostles and other believers don't have to know we didn't give the church all of it, " they persuaded themselves. They were being tempted to lie to the Christians so that they might enjoy the honor of giving all money without really doing it. They could have cried out to God to provide a way out the temptation, but they didn't. Ananias gave into the temptation, removed some

of the silver from the pouch and left for the church meeting.

Sapphira had stood by her husband, watching what he was doing. She could have chosen to warn him, but she did not. She gave into temptation, too, as she watched him leave.

Ananias took his money and presented in to the apostles just as he had seen Joseph and the others do. How he must have been looking forward to their words' of praise. But instead of praise, Ananias received a rebuke. The Lord, through His Holy Spirit, had told Peter the truth about Ananias' gift and the sin in his heart: "Ananias, how is it that Satan has so filled your heart that you have lied to the Holy Spirit and have kept for yourself some of the money you received for the land?" Peter asked him. 'Didn't it belong to you before it was sold? And after it was sold, wasn't the money at your disposal? What made you think of doing such a thing? You have not lied to men but to God.' When Ananias heard this, he fell down and died." (Acts 3-5, NIV 1984) One thing was clear: sin was a very big deal to God! Especially in these first days of the church, God was making that very clear. He hated it and you can't hide it from Him. He wanted His people to say "no him" to temptation and stay pure from sin. He promised to always make a way out of temptation for them, if they would but ask Him.

Young men wrapped up Ananias' body, carried him out and buried him. The church was in shock at what had happened, but this wasn't the end! Three hours later, Sapphira joined the church meeting, not knowing what had happened to Ananias.

"Tell me, Sapphira, is this the price you and Ananias got for the land?" Peter asked her.

Would she say "no" to temptation or give in to it? Would she ask God to show her the way to stand up under it? No. she would not. Sapphira hardened her heart to what was right, just like Ananias had.

"Yes," she lied to Peter, "that's the price."

Peter said to her, "How could you agree to test the Spirit of the Lord? Look! The feet of the men who buried your husband are at the door, and they will carry you out also."

Sapphira fell down and died at Peter's feet. Then the young men carried her out and buried her beside her husband.

Great fear seized the whole church and all who heard what had happened. It was clear to those who heard about Ananias and Sapphira's death that Jesus was indeed alive

and at work in His Church. Ananias and Sapphira had thought they could fool the believers and even God the Holy Spirit, Himself, by gathering with them and mimicking their good works. They—and all of Jerusalem with them—knew without a doubt that nothing could be hidden from God. He knew the sin that Ananias and Sapphira had given into. They were really just hungry for the honor of men.

Some saw what had happened to Ananias and Sapphira and were too scared to join the Christians. But God uses everything for the good of His people, even this terrible judgment on Ananias and Sapphira! Many others repented of their sins and trusted in Jesus as their Savior. In Jesus, the perfect Savior, there was forgiveness of sins for the worst of sinners.

God's People Say "No" to Temptation
Our Bible Verse is: 1 Corinthians 10:13

"No temptation has overtaken you that is not common to man. God is faithful, and he will not let you be tempted beyond your ability, but with the temptation he will also provide the way of escape, that you may be able to endure it."

How swift the Lord was to punish Ananias for his sinful plan to get honor from others by lying to them and to God! We certainly can understand why the church and the people of Jerusalem were afraid when they saw what happened to Ananias and Sapphira.

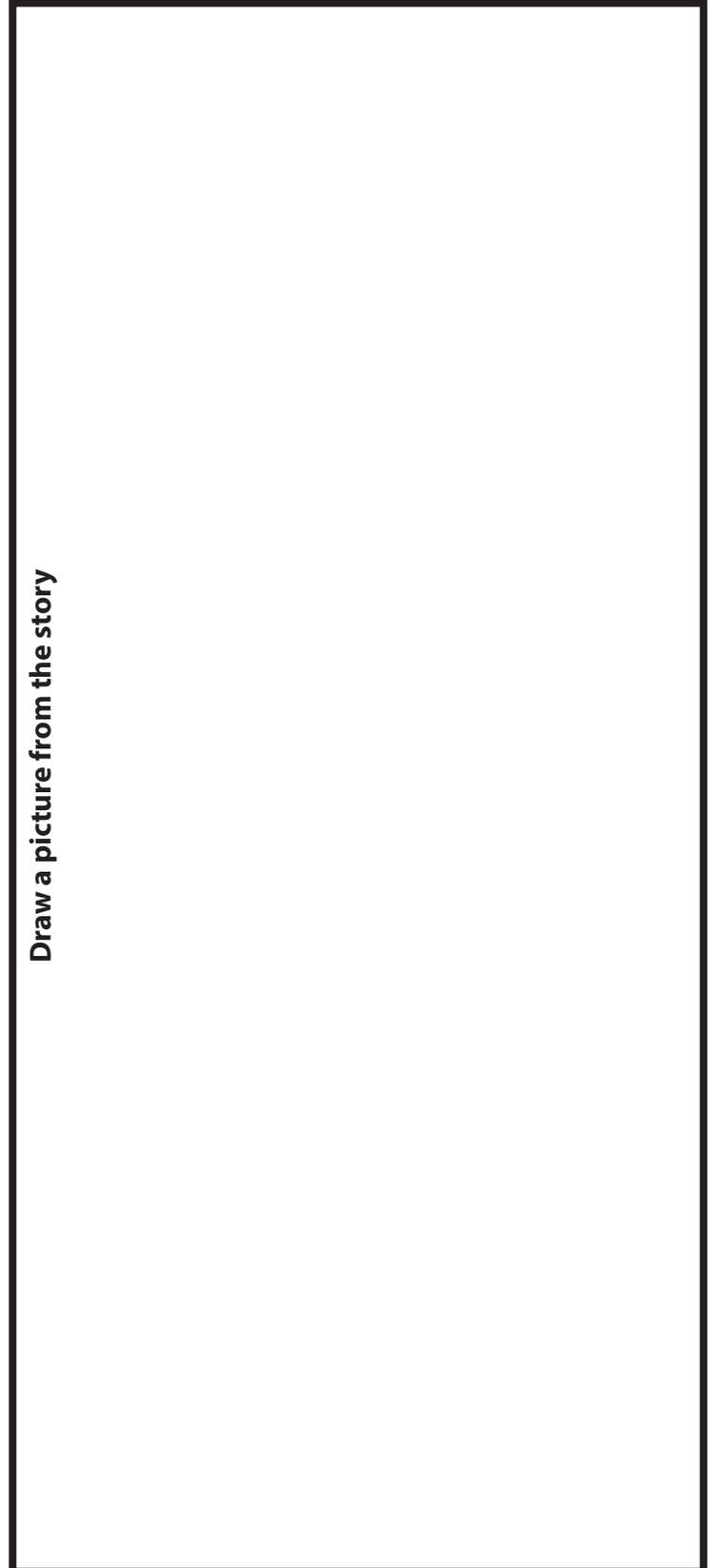
There is much we don't understand about God and His ways. But we know that God hates sin. And, since Adam and Eve first rebelled against God, we have all been sinners deserving His punishment for our sins. Yet God is so merciful and patient that rarely do we ever see Him immediately punish humans so quickly for their sins as with Ananias and Sapphira. We could fear God like some did in Jerusalem that day, for His quick and mighty judgment of them. Or, like so many others did when they heard, we can confess our sins to Him, turn and trust in His for forgiveness and salvation.

Let's praise our holy God who hates sin. We can praise Him for His promises to never allow any of His people to face more temptation than they can bear, and to always provide a way out of temptation so they can stand up under it.

Let's ask Him to help us to turn away from our sins and

trust in Jesus as our Savior. Let's ask Him to help us to remember what a big deal sin is to Him. Let's ask Him to work in our hearts when we face temptation that we would not harden them and give in to sin, but would turn to Him for help to stand up under it.

Draw a picture from the story



SOME QUESTIONS FOR YOU

1. A Question about the Bible Truth, True or False:

Being tempted to do wrong is a sin.

Answer: False. It is a sin to give into temptation, not to be tempted.

2. Crack the Case Questions:

a. Who were the Tricky Givers?

Answer: Ananias and Sapphira.

b. How were they tricky? What temptation did they give in to that made them tricky...and how could they have avoided giving into it? Why did God punish them the way that He did?

Answer: They were tricky because they acted like they gave the church all the money they made on the sale of their land, instead of just part of it. They gave into the temptation of wanting the honor of others more than being honest before God. They could have cried out to God and asked for Him to show them the way out of their temptation. In the early days of the church, God many times acted in big ways of blessing and of punishment that He rarely choses to act in today. One reason He did this was to provide special encouragement to grow and to discipline His church in the especially early days as it was being formed.

3. Fill in the missing words from the Bible Verse:

1 Corinthians 10:13

"No ___ has overtaken you that is not common to man. God is ____, and he will not let you be tempted beyond your ability, but with the temptation he will also ___ the way of escape, that you may be able to endure it."

Answers: temptation; faithful; provide.

AN ACTS PRAYER FROM OUR STORY

A=Adoration, C=Confession, T=Thanksgiving, S=Supplication

A God, we praise You for being the Holy God who is perfectly good and hates sin.

C God, we confess that many times we, like Ananias and Sapphira are tempted to sin. We need Your help to fight sin! We need Your forgiveness! We need a Savior!

T God, we thank You for promising to help Your people out of temptation when they face it.

S God, work in our hearts! Help us to us to confess our sins—even our secret sins-- turn away from them and trust Jesus as our own Savior. Help us, by Your Holy Spirit, to turn away from temptation. Show us a way out of it that we might glorify You and do the good things You want us to do.

BIBLE TRUTH HYMN

Sweet Hour of Prayer

PFI ESV Songs 12, Track 34

Verse 1

Sweet hour of prayer, sweet hour of prayer,
That calls me from a world of care
And bids me at my Father's throne
Make all my wants and wishes known!
In seasons of distress and grief,
My soul has often found relief,
And oft escaped the tempter's snare
By thy return, sweet hour of prayer.

Words: William Walford Music: William B. Bradbury

God's people know that they don't have the strength to face the hard things of this world alone. Many sad things, many scary things, many tempting things may come their way. When they do, it is easy to feel overwhelmed. The temptation to turn away from God and do things their own way may be strong. But, God's people know who to go to receive the strength they need. They pray to their Heavenly Father who loves them so much! They tell Him all their problems. They ask for His help. He comforts them and gives them what they need to keep trusting in Him and to turn away from the temptation to sin.

BIBLE VERSE SONG

No Temptation

PFI ESV Songs 12, Track 35

No temptation has overtaken you,
That is not,
Common to man,
God is faithful,
He will not let you be,
Tempted beyond,
Your ability,
But with the temptation
He will also provide,
The way of escape,
So that you might be able to endure it.
First Corinthians Chapter Ten, verse thirteen.

Words: 1 Corinthians 10:13 ESV Music: Constance Dever ©2011

God's people will face temptations to sin every day. Their temptations are common to man--that is, they will be tempted to sin against God, just like every human. But, God's people can be encouraged that God is always there to help them say "no." He promises that will never let them be tempted more than they can bear. With any temptation they face, He promises to be with them. He promises to provide a way of escape so they can endure the temptation with sinning. How good, merciful and powerful is the LORD!