

Study Hints for Discussion and Thinking Further ***International Bible Lessons***

Acts 4:32-5:11

Sunday September 13, 2015

L.G. Parkhurst, Jr.

Some Bible study groups or classes can further discussion by asking some or all of the **Questions for Discussion and Thinking Further** below. Others may want to send the bulletin size *International Bible Lesson* home with their students for further study in the coming week to encourage continuing Bible study. The *Study Hints for Discussion and Thinking Further* below are not actually intended to be *the answers* to the discussion questions. These indeed are “hints” a teacher may use to help students think through and discuss the questions in class.

Questions for Discussion and Thinking Further

1. Regarding church finances, how did the early Church in Jerusalem follow the example of Jesus and His disciples when He conducted ministry on earth?

They all shared from a common purse when money was given for the group of disciples and later the Church, so the needs of everyone were met and there was money for the needy too. Many of Jesus' followers and some in the early Church left their professions to follow Jesus. Some left their fishing and others left their tax collecting, so they needed the gifts that were given to Jesus and the Church in order to meet their needs.

2. What might you say to someone who asked you to do as the early church members did and give all of your possessions to their church or group to become a member?

If the “church” or group claimed to be Christian, I would say no, and explain this Bible lesson to them. The believers in the Church kept their personal property and cheerfully gave as the Holy Spirit led them, sometimes they sold their personal property to have money to give, and they could give any amount they wanted to give. They were forbidden to be hypocritical and lie to the Holy Spirit and the Church. Many cults require their members to give all of their possessions to the group, but this was not the way of Christ or the early Church.

3. Did Peter get rich and wear fancy robes as the leader of the apostles after people put money at his feet? Give a reason for your answer.

No. The money was given to the Church and Church giving was based on the needs of individual people. Peter did not need wealth or fancy robes. Peter had no money to give to the lame beggar, but he gave what he had and he healed the man in the name of Jesus Christ. The true believers in the Church loved God and others and they shared what they had. Peter was a good example to the Church, as well as Barnabas.

4. Read Malachi 3:3. Do you think this prophecy has been or was fulfilled? Give a reason for your answer.

Yes. Barnabas, whose real name was Joseph, who was from Cyprus, was a Levite. He was the first Levite mentioned by Luke to give money to the Church. He sold some of his property and made a righteous offering with his gift to the Church because of his faith in Jesus the Messiah. On the other hand, Ananias and Sapphira did not give a righteous offering to the Church, and Satan had filled the heart of Ananias (and perhaps Sapphira).

5. Why do you think Satan entered Ananias' heart?

Because he loved money and not God, Satan entered his heart and filled it so there was no longer any room for God and no love for God. Satan entered his heart and perhaps helped him acquire his money and property. Satan used Ananias' money to test the Holy Spirit through Ananias, and the Holy Spirit passed the test through Peter. Satan opposes the Church and the Holy Spirit, and Ananias had come to hate and despise God even though he was a "member" of the Church (see Jesus' words in Matthew 6:24).

— © Copyright 2015 L.G. Parkhurst, Jr

You may reprint or reproduce Study Hints for Thinking Further for not-for-profit use.