

# ACTS 5 — HOLINESS, POWER, AND PERSEVERANCE

## Big Picture

Acts 5 shows us that the Spirit-filled church is marked by both holiness and boldness. The chapter moves from internal corruption (Ananias and Sapphira) to external opposition (the Sanhedrin), demonstrating that God protects the purity of his people and empowers them to endure persecution. Grace does not eliminate accountability; it deepens it.

## Structure of the Chapter

1. 5:1–11 — Ananias and Sapphira: The Sin of Deception
2. 5:12–16 — Signs, Wonders, and Growing Influence
3. 5:17–32 — Arrest, Angelic Deliverance, and Apostolic Boldness
4. 5:33–42 — Gamaliel’s Counsel and Joyful Suffering

## Key Themes

1. **The Holiness of the Church (5:1–11).** The sin of Ananias and Sapphira was not withholding money but pretending total devotion while secretly reserving control. Peter makes clear that their deception was ultimately a lie to the Holy Spirit—and therefore to God. The early church is portrayed as sacred space. God’s presence among his people demands integrity. “Great fear” comes upon the church—a reverent awareness of God’s holiness. Questions to consider:
  - Where am I tempted toward performative spirituality?
  - Do my outward actions match my inward surrender?
2. **The Power of the Spirit (5:12–16).** Despite judgment within, the church continues to grow. Signs and wonders authenticate the apostles’ witness. Luke emphasizes unity, public presence, and increasing numbers. God purifies his church not to diminish it, but to strengthen its witness. Questions to consider:
  - How does holiness strengthen mission?
  - What kind of witness flows from authentic community?
3. **Obedience Over Fear (5:17–32).** The apostles are arrested again, but an angel releases them and commands them to keep preaching “the words of this Life.” When confronted, Peter responds: “We must obey God rather than men.” The resurrection is central to their proclamation, and so is the gift of the Spirit to those who obey. Questions to consider:
  - Where might obedience to God cost me something?

- Do I fear God more than I fear people?
4. **Joy in Suffering (5:33–42).** Gamaliel's measured counsel prevents immediate execution. The apostles are flogged—but they leave rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer dishonor for the Name. The chapter ends with daily, relentless proclamation: in the temple and from house to house.

## Questions to consider:

- How do I respond when faithfulness leads to hardship?
- Is my commitment to Christ circumstantial or steadfast?

## Major Takeaways

- The church is Spirit-indwelt and therefore holy.
- Hypocrisy weakens community; integrity strengthens mission.
- External opposition cannot stop a Spirit-empowered church.
- Obedience to God defines apostolic courage.
- Suffering for Christ is not failure—it is participation.

## Memory Verse

“We must obey God rather than men.” (Acts 5:29)

## Prayer Focus

Lord, purify my heart.

Give me courage to obey you without compromise.

Make our church a place of integrity, power, and bold witness.