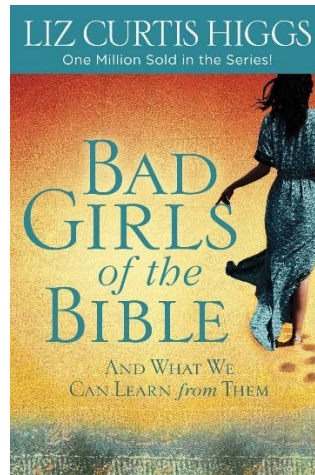


***Word by Word with Liz Curtis Higgs* on the Faith Radio Network**
Bible Study Guide for June 30-July 1, 2018 | Ananias and Sapphira
from ***Bad Girls of the Bible*** by Liz Curtis Higgs



1. In the first century, believers pooled their resources for the common good, as we read in Acts 4:32-35. Describe any instances where you've seen such selfless generosity work—within families, between neighbors, even among whole congregations. What *practical* reasons might you offer for *not* sharing everything with one another in your church family? And what *emotional* reasons might prevent you from sharing your material possessions and financial resources freely with other believers?
2. According to Luke 12:27-34, what does Jesus urge his followers to do, and why? How could we as God's church be more generous with one another? Now read 1 John 3:17-18. What steps do you need to take in your own life to move toward a more generous spirit and loosen your grasp on material things? How might the following verses encourage you: Psalm 112:5; Proverbs 11:25; 2 Corinthians 9:13?
3. Read Acts 5:1-11. Ananias and Sapphira's unsettling story prompts us to examine our own deceptive actions. Think of an instance in your life when you were less than truthful. Describe your mindset before, during, and after. How did you justify your actions at the time? And what was the outcome? What excuses do you suppose Ananias and Sapphira gave each other to justify their subterfuge? What are some practical ways you can prevent yourself from falling into an excuse-making mode when the temptation to lie strikes? And what do Psalm 34:13 and Ephesians 4:25 teach us on that subject?

4. Grace and forgiveness seem in short supply in this biblical story. Yet everything that happened had a purpose for their time and place—and for ours. Though Peter did not tell Sapphira what had happened to her husband, he did give her a chance to set the record straight about the price the couple paid for the land, as we see in Acts 5:7-8. Are Ananias and Sapphira each responsible for their own deaths? Why or why not? In what ways does Romans 1:20-21 aptly describe Ananias and Sapphira’s foolishness?

5. Acts 5:12-16 tell us about the growth of the church after this startling incident. Does the positive outcome help you reconcile Ananias and Sapphira’s story of swift and terrible judgment with your understanding of a God who forgives? How might Ezekiel 18:32 and Ephesians 1:7 ease your concerns? Why do you think it was important for this couple to be punished for conspiring to “test the Spirit of the Lord” (Acts 5:9) in the early days of the first-century church?

6. What’s the most important lesson you’ve learned from the cautionary tale of Ananias and Sapphira?