

Dear Heavenly Father,

### *Praise*

Peter told the Jewish council, “The God of our fathers raised Jesus, whom you killed by hanging him on a tree. God exalted him at his right hand as Leader and Savior, to give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins” (Acts 5:30–31). I praise you today as the One who raised Christ from the dead and declared him to be a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek (Ps 110:4). You reconciled me to yourself through him, not counting my sins against me, but entrusted to me the message of reconciliation (2 Cor 5:18–19).

### *Today in Your Word*

Today you told me how you killed Ananias and Sapphira for lying to the Holy Spirit. This story contains so many important lessons: (1) Unity is the natural result of genuine faith. Luke said, “Those who believed were of one heart and soul” (Acts 4:32a). This is exactly what Jesus was talking about when he asked you to make the disciples “one even as we are one” (John 17:11). If there’s not unity in my family or my church, there’s either a lack of faith or a lack of love (or both). (2) Generosity flows from a heart of love and gratitude. Luke said, “No one said that any of the things that belonged to him was his own, but they had everything in common” (Acts 4:32b). This was not a criticism of owning private property; rather, it was a testament to the love the people had for each other. If I’m grateful for all you’ve done for me and truly love others, then I will use what I have to bless and serve my neighbor. (3) Sin is a deadly serious matter. Peter asked Ananias, “Why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit?” (Acts 5:3). When I sin, I’m rebelling against your precious Spirit, and although you are kind and forgiving, your patience is meant to lead me to repentance, not to embolden me to sin. Instead of asking, “Why such severe judgment on Ananias and Sapphira?” I should be saying in grateful praise, “Thank you for your great mercy to me!” (4) Fear is a vital part of worship. The dramatic deaths of Ananias and Sapphira caused great fear among the believers (Acts 5:5, 11, 13). Yet instead of harming the church, it helped: “more than ever believers were added to the Lord” (Acts 5:14). So often we mistakenly think that if we confront sin, people will turn away from you. But if done in the proper way (1 Tim 5:19–20), the opposite is true, for people are drawn to something that is real. The more your holiness is magnified, the more people realize their need to be holy. As John Newton wrote, “Tis grace that taught my heart to fear.” As my fear of you increases, so does my sense of love, because I understand more fully the riches of your grace to me in Jesus Christ.

### *Reflection*

Luke said the apostles rejoiced that they were counted worthy to suffer dishonor for the name of Christ (Acts 5:41). Is that my attitude? Am I grateful for the privilege of being persecuted by the world, or do I harbor a secret love for the approval of men?

### *Request*

Father, I say with the psalmist, “Search me, O God, and know my heart! Try me and know my thoughts! And see if there be any grievous way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting! (Ps 139:23–24). Oh God, I ask that you would instill a fear of you in my heart that will keep me from sin!

### *Thanksgiving*

Thank you for your mercy and grace! So many times I deserved to die for my sin, yet you’ve given me the chance to live a dedicated and consecrated life for you. Praise the Lord!

In Jesus’ name, Amen.

*Suggested Hymn: “[Do Everything for Jesus](#)” – Annie S. Hawks.*

*Meditation Verse: Acts 7:60.*