

# GROWTH + GROUPS

NAVIGATE LIFE TOGETHER

## Maranatha Chapel Sermon Based Study Guide SB 09.13.2020

### PURITY AND POWER – ACTS 4:23-5:16

#### Receiving the Message and Relating to the Study

What insights, principles, or observations stood out to you from this week's message? Discuss with your group.

Without purity, there is no power. The person who is in right relationship with God is to live a life of purity (2 Tim. 2:21-22). In simple terms, purity means “not dirty,” or “freedom from contamination.” However, real purity comes as a result of believing the Lord Jesus died in our place to ransom us from impurity. This belief evolves into a deep hunger and thirst for righteousness that is pleasing to God. The result is a pure heart that has removed the old and makes way for the new. A new way, where we are filled with the power of the Holy Spirit. A super natural power promoting caution, discernment, and good choices while preventing corruption in thought, word, and deed. A power providing a fully dimensioned, miracle-manifesting, and character-purifying “Christ-likeness” in us. We should long for this super natural power of the Holy Spirit as displayed in Acts 5:12-16, yet to achieve this, we must first strive for the purity demonstrated in Acts 5:1-11. Let's get into our study.

As your group time begins, use this section to introduce the topic of discussion.

1. What struck you most or spoke to you from Pastor Ray's message this last weekend?
2. What do you think the process of purity look like?
3. What does the power of the Holy Spirit look like?

#### Digging Deeper in God's Word: Life Lessons

##### HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ ACTS 4:32-5:2

The early church demonstrated the beauty of generosity and the power of honesty. Barnabas, effected by the power of the Holy Spirit, sold his land and laid the proceeds at the apostles' feet. However, when the power of God is at work, Satan is on hand to counterfeit, corrupt, and contend that work. Where there is real spiritual power, hypocrisy will be readily exposed. Ananias and Sapphira followed Barnaba's example and sold a possession, but they kept back a portion of the proceeds for themselves. Although the church did not require anyone to sell or give anything, they sold their property and gave of their own free will.

1. Barnabas means “son of encouragement”. The loving action Barnabas took surely encouraged others in the church. What are some loving actions you could take to encourage the church and each other today?
2. In the early church people gave of their own resources. From these resources, people's needs were met. God was then able to bless those who gave and replenish with more to share. Scripture says, “it is more blessed to give, than to receive” (Acts 20:35). Are there times in your life when you were able to give to someone in need? How did this make you feel?

##### HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ ACTS 5:3-4

God required purity in the early church. Here, Peter receives a “Word of Knowledge” or divine information regarding the truth Ananias had to withhold a portion of the profit. Peter asked, “Why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit and keep part of the price of the land for yourself?” Peter brought attention to the sin that was rooted in hypocrisy (pretending to be holy, but holding back). Ananias not only lied to the church, he lied to the Holy Spirit.

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3. Peter received a “Word of Knowledge”. This divine knowledge may be available to those in close fellowship in the Lord. Have you ever received a “Word of Knowledge”? What are some ways you might be more open to receive “Words of Knowledge” (Ps. 25:14)?
4. Satan cannot fill or control believers, but he can do much damage to hearts open to temptation. Satan is constantly plotting ways to destroy the work of God by dividing, disgracing, discouraging, and destroying the people of God. Christians must remain vigilant and alert (1 Pet. 5:8). What are some tangible ways Christians can remain vigilant and alert?
5. Ananias lied to the Holy Spirit. God is holy; His Son is holy; the Holy Spirit is holy. God's holiness stands apart, by itself, unique, unapproachable, incomprehensible, and unobtainable to all of His creatures. That is God's standard, and “in Him is no darkness at all” (1 John 1:5). It is the work of the Holy Spirit to set us apart to God. What does it mean to be set apart to God?

### HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ ACTS 5:5-11

Ananias and Sapphira, hearing the words of Peter, fell down and breathed their last and “great fear” immediately came upon all the church and all who heard these things. Fear came upon the church in verse 11. Interesting, this is the first mention of the church in the Book of Acts. Fear is mentioned 435 times in the Old Testament and 146 times in the New Testament. **Fear can have several meanings.** It can be associated with emotions of terror and anxiety, which is a natural response when one's security or general welfare is at stake. It can also mean an attitude of respect and submission to someone in authority. When God is the object of fear, it can be any one of these senses to include terror, honor, and submission. There is also an additional sense of worship associate with the fear of God.

6. In verse 11, the type of fear that came upon the church is that of trembling. Why do you think a trembling fear came upon the church? Do you see evidence of trembling fear in the church today? Why or why not?
7. For believers, fear of God is typically associated with respect, reverence, and awe. Knowing God's wrath has been satisfied in Christ relieves the believer from the fear of condemnation, but not from accountability to a holy God (2 Cor. 5:10-11, 7:1; 1 Tim. 5:20; 1 Pet. 1:17). Do you see evidence of reverent fear in the church today? Why or why not?

### HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ ACTS 5:12-16

8. The church was in one accord at Solomons Porch and miracles were taking place. Scripture says “how good and how pleasant it is For brethren to dwell together in unity” (Psalms 133:1). Unity was our church's word of the year for 2019. Describe what unity look like in the church?
9. The expectation of early Christians was for miracles to take place. People were laid on beds with the hope Peter's shadow might fall on them for healing. We know shadows do not heal; it is the Lord Jesus who heals. When the people believed, the shadow triggered their faith, and through the Holy Spirit ALL were healed.

Describe a time when you have seen the power of deliverance and/or healing in the church.

### Applying God's Word

What did you learn from this study and how does this personally speak to you? Discuss with your group.

The power of the Holy Spirit came through the purity of the church. Death was the ultimate earthly punishment for sin as demonstrated by Ananias and Sapphira. Consider others in the Bible people who have died as a result of sin (1 Cor. 10:1-13). All these deaths often occurred at a time of new beginnings for God's people. In Acts 5, a new standard of holiness and purity was instilled in the new church. The sin of Ananias and Sapphira would most assuredly reduce the level of casual commitment to the church and the result was a fresh outpouring of the Holy Spirit's super natural power. Many signs and wonders followed and believers increased by the multitudes.

1. The power of the Holy Spirit came through the purity of the church. What impurities in your life are hindering the Holy Spirit's work in your life?

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2. We are at a time for a fresh outpouring of the Holy Spirit. What are some actions you can take to encourage a fresh out pouring of the Holy Spirit and bring the multitudes to the Lord?

### **PRAYER**

Lord, your Word says the pure in heart will be blessed. Please create a pure heart in me and renew a steadfast spirit within me. Do not cast me from your presence or take your Holy Spirit from me. Restore to me the joy of your salvation and grant me a willing spirit, to sustain me.

*“Therefore if anyone cleanses himself from the latter, he will be a vessel for honor, sanctified and useful for the Master, prepared for every good work. Flee also youthful lusts; but pursue righteousness, faith, love, peace with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart” (2 Timothy 2:21-22).*