

# Dundonald Youth: Acts

Week 5: Unity & Purity!

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**Open in prayer:** Ask God to be with you, speaking to you through his word, helping you to trust Jesus Christ.

**RECAP Acts so far:** Jesus has died, risen, and returned to heaven, and is still alive and active! He's sent his Holy Spirit to empower the Apostles to be his witnesses... to the ends of the earth! As they do miracles, and preach, thousands are becoming Christians - but some (especially Jewish leaders) reject their teaching about Jesus and want to silence them... but God's word / Spirit / Son can't be stopped!

## Read Acts 4:32.

What do you think it means that all the believers were "one in heart and mind"? We might say 'they were totally on the same page'... they were completely **united** in their love for Jesus and wanting to follow him. They **think** and **feel** the same about 'where' they're going, 'how' they'll get there, 'why' they're living like this. It's the exact opposition of divided / competing / conflicting.

What practical outworking of this is described here? We're told that they weren't clenching tightly to 'their' individual possessions - they wanted to share and bring their resources together.

## Read Acts 4:33-35.

How do we see unity, and humility? 1) Unity around the message of the Apostles - Jesus is alive! Unity around how they live and their possessions - eg. if someone was in need, they voluntarily and happily contributed so it could be distributed to those in need. Humility because those helping others didn't lord it over them, or consider them indebted to them, or think they knew better than the *fishermen* leading the movement, they simply gave it to the apostles (anonymously?) to be distributed as they saw best.

## Read Acts 4:36-5:2.

What similarities and differences do you notice? They both sold something they owned (Barnabs = a field, A&S = property) willingly, and brought the money to the apostles. HOWEVER A&S deliberately kept some money for themselves, but (as we'll see) pretended that they were giving the full amount.

## Read Acts 5:3-6.

What happens? Why? Peter, a spirit filled apostle, knows what they have done. He calls it 'Satanic' and a 'lie to the Holy Spirit'. He explains that the property was theirs, the money was theirs, *they didn't have to give*, but they chose to lie to God (by trying to deceive God's people), and God's judgement is death. (The lack of proper burial ceremony shows they understand his death as God's judgement not 'natural') What do you make of this? What they did maybe doesn't seem *too* bad, but in v3 Peter points out this is a *heart problem* - using similar language as about **Judas** when he chose to betray Jesus. God is starting the 'Christian' movement, and in these early days he shows the seriousness of sin and deception.

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Read Acts 5:7-11.

What happens? Why? Sapphira doesn't know what's happened, and continues with the lie. Again Peter shows the God-ward direction of the offense of their actions, and God's judgement is again death, and the burial is unceremonious.

What do you make of this? It's shocking!!! So far everything in Acts has been *great* and *going really well* (!) and even in the face of persecution the church is growing and it's all good... until this shocking story?! It's scary. It's serious. It's a warning. It makes us stop and think about what just happened, and why, and what we're learning about God, and following him....

**NOW LISTEN TO THE TALK - Youth Bible Series: Acts 5**

- What is the grace and truth in today's passage? It's a serious truth to understand that God really does and will judge sin, and idolatry really isn't okay. It's a sobering truth to know that God sees through our best deception and knows our hearts... but it's wonderful good news to know the grace of God in the Lord Jesus! That though we AREN'T pure, Jesus was, and he died for the sins of all who put their faith in him! So we can be joyfull as we say sorry to God, and admit our idolatry and sin, knowing that he forgives us and Jesus has taken our punishment - and in heaven we will truly be the pure people of God! God gives us grace to keep going, and to become more and more like Jesus our Saviour as we live out this life, and look forward to the next!
  
- How does God want you to respond to today's passage? What has particularly struck you? What has God grabbed your attention on, that maybe you weren't thinking about before reading this passage? It might be the sobering truth and warnings, it might be the the wonderful grace and confidence?! How does what we've seen and learnt change us? How will we think / feel / live differently because of what we've read today?

**Pray:** Dundonald & Pathfinders would be a beautiful community, and we'd beware deceptive idolatry

**Listen/Sing:** Oh, How Good It Is - K&K Getty (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZILsLR3PH3Y>)

**Meditate:** John 1:14