

12-28-25 Small Group Guide

Small Group Discussion Guide

"Living Without Lies: Lessons from the Early Church"

Acts 4:32-5:11

Opening Prayer (5 minutes)

Begin by asking God to open hearts and minds to His truth, and for courage to be honest with Him and one another during this discussion.

Ice Breaker (10 minutes)

Question: What's one thing you're hoping will be different in your life this coming year compared to last year?

Sermon Review (5 minutes)

Key Passage: Acts 4:32-5:11 - The story of the early church's generosity and the deception of Ananias and Sapphira.

Main Points:

The early church shared everything freely without compulsion

Ananias and Sapphira lied about their giving, wanting credit without full surrender

The issue wasn't what they gave, but that they lied to God

Money reveals what's really in our hearts

Discussion Questions (30-40 minutes)

Understanding the Text

Read Acts 4:32-37. What stands out to you about the early church's approach to possessions and community? What made this possible?

Read Acts 5:1-11. Why do you think the consequences were so severe for Ananias and Sapphira? What was their actual sin?

Peter told them their property was theirs to do with as they wished (Acts 5:4). What does this tell us about God's approach to our giving and possessions?

Personal Reflection

The pastor mentioned that "we're pretty good liars" and that lying comes naturally. In what areas of life are you most tempted to be dishonest or deceptive?

About money or possessions?

About your spiritual life?

About your struggles or weaknesses?

Honest moment: Have you ever tried to appear more spiritual or generous than you actually are? What was driving that desire?

The sermon asked: "Are we what everybody thinks we are, or are we not quite what everybody thinks they see?" How would you answer this for yourself?

Going Deeper

Strongholds Discussion: The pastor defined a stronghold as "a concrete mindset that's contrary to God's word."

What strongholds might you be holding onto?

What beliefs have you held simply because "that's the way I've always been"?

The early church was unified - "one in heart and mind" - to the point they didn't consider possessions their own.

What would it take for us to grow toward that kind of community?

What fears or barriers keep us from that level of trust and sharing?

The pastor mentioned that the devil "lies to us" and "infiltrates our hearts and minds."

Where do you see Satan's lies most active in your thought life?

What "divine weapons" (2 Corinthians 10:4-5) can we use to demolish these strongholds?

Application

Money and Honesty: The pastor listed several ways we lie about money:

Claiming we got more than we did

Saying "I don't have any" when asked for help

Exaggerating deals we got

Which of these (or other money-related deceptions) do you struggle with most?

Year-End Reflection: Looking back at this past year:

Where did you see God's faithfulness despite your shortcomings?

What do you wish you had done differently?

What lies do you wish you hadn't told?

Year-Ahead Vision: The pastor asked: "God, where could I put a smile on your face with my 2026?"

What is one specific way you want to honor God more fully this year?

What would it look like to "stretch yourself" spiritually in 2026?

Key Takeaways

God knows our hearts - We can't hide our true motives from Him

Honesty with God is foundational - If we're honest with God, we can be honest with others

It's not about earning salvation - It's about living freely in the salvation

we've received

Our possessions are ours to steward - God doesn't demand, but invites surrender

The devil battles us in our minds - We need spiritual weapons to fight spiritual battles

Church is where we slow down - To wash our minds with truth and refocus on God

Practical Applications

This Week's Challenge (Choose One or More):

1. Honesty Audit

Spend time in prayer asking God to reveal areas where you've been dishonest (with Him, yourself, or others)

Write down what He shows you

Confess it to God and, if appropriate, make things right with others

2. Financial Inventory

Review your giving from the past year

Ask yourself: "Have I been honest about my financial commitment to God?"

Pray about what God wants you to do with your finances in 2026

3. Stronghold Identification

Read 2 Corinthians 10:3-5 daily this week

Journal about one stronghold (wrong mindset) God is asking you to demolish

Find Scripture that directly addresses that stronghold

4. Generosity Step

Identify one practical way to be more generous this month (time, money, or resources)

Do it without telling anyone - just between you and God

5. Truth-Telling Practice

Commit to radical honesty this week in one specific area where you tend to exaggerate or deceive

Ask God for courage to be authentic

Closing Exercise (10 minutes)

Silent Reflection: Give everyone 3-5 minutes of silence to pray and ask God:

"How did my 2025 turn out, Lord?"

"What would make You thrilled with my 2026?"

Sharing (Optional): Invite anyone who feels comfortable to share one thing God spoke to them during this time.

Accountability Partners: Consider pairing up with someone in the group to check in with throughout the month about the practical application you chose.

Closing Prayer

Pray together, asking God to:

Give courage to live authentically

Reveal any areas of deception or pretending

Help each person surrender more fully to Him

Create genuine community where honesty and trust can grow

Guide each person into His specific plans for 2026

Additional Resources

Scripture for Further Study:

Lamentations 3:22-23 (God's mercies are new every morning)

Deuteronomy 8 (God gives ability to produce wealth)

John 8:32 (The truth will set you free)

Ephesians 4:25 (Put off falsehood, speak truthfully)

Questions for Personal Journaling:

What does surrender actually look like in my daily life?

Where am I still trying to blend in with the world instead of standing out as peculiar for God?

What would change if I truly believed everything I have belongs to God?

Leader Notes

This is a sensitive topic. Create a safe space where people can be honest without judgment

Be prepared to share your own struggles with honesty and surrender

Don't force anyone to share about their finances specifically

Emphasize grace - God's love isn't based on our performance

The goal isn't guilt, but freedom through truth

Have tissues available - the Holy Spirit may do some deep work