

HOW TO OVERCOME TEMPTATION OF THE DEVIL CASE STUDY OF ANANIAS AND HIS WIFE



The early church at Jerusalem were together and the Bible says that there was no one that lack anything because those that had properties like land, field, etc sold them and brought the money or proceeds from those sales to the feet of the Apostles.

Act 4:34-37 KJV 34 Neither was there any among them that lacked: for as many as were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought the prices of the things that were sold, 35 And laid them down at the apostles' feet: and distribution was made unto every man according as he had need. 36 And Joses, who by the apostles was surnamed Barnabas, (which is, being interpreted, The son of consolation,) a Levite, and of the country of Cyprus, 37 Having land, sold it, and brought the money, and laid it at the apostles' feet.

The Apostles in turn distributed to the needs of the people as the needs arose. The Bible even gave a good example of Jose who was surnamed Barbabas, he sold his property and brought the money made from it to the

Apostle. Such was the practise but in Chapter 5 the Bible recorded a negative twist to this wonderful welfare package of the early church.

Act 5:1-4 KJV 1 But a certain man named Ananias, with Sapphira his wife, sold a possession, 2 And kept back part of the price, his wife also being privy to it, and brought a certain part, and laid it at the apostles' feet. 3 But Peter said, Ananias, why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost, and to keep back part of the price of the land? 4 Whiles it remained, was it not thine own? and after it was sold, was it not in thine own power? why hast thou conceived this thing in thine heart? thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God.

Because others were doing it this couple also did the same thing but the Bible says they kept back part of the proceed from their sales. The Greek word used for "kept back" is "nosphizomai" and it means to to set apart, separate, divide, to set apart or separate for one's self, to purloin, embezzle, withdraw covertly and appropriate to one's own use.

They brought the money and laid it at the feet of the apostles just like the way others did. They pretended as if they had brought everything like others. But the unexpected happened. Peter asked the soul searching question from Ananias, he said why hath Satan filled thine heart?

The question is how did Peter knew that Ananias was faking it and telling lies? This can only be by the Spirit of revelation, the Holy Spirit. The Lord Jesus had said in the book of John that He the Holy Spirit will show us all things. Peter by the supernatural insight given by the Holy spirit was able to know the conspiracy of the couple. May our eyes be opened and may the gift of discerning of the spirit be at work in our lives.

The word "filled" there is "pleroo" and it means: to make full, to fill up, i.e. to fill to the full, to cause to abound, to furnish or supply liberally. It also means to control or influence and excite. In order words,

The verb which we translate to fill has been showed by many examples to signify, to instigate, excite, impel, etc., and it was a common belief, as well

among the heathens as among the Jews and Christians, that, when a man did evil, he was excited to it by the influence and malice of an evil spirit.

Satan actually took over the heart of Ananias,, Peter in this statement was putting it Ananias as to why he permitted the devil to use him. This tells us that the devil cannot do anything to us without our consent and cooperation.

Why hast thou put this thing in thy heart? Thou hast not lied to men, but to God. Here Peter brings together the influence of Satan, and the free agency of the tempted, just as he had, in former discourses, the free agency of men, and the purposes of God. He demands of Ananias, "Why has Satan filled thy heart to lie to the Holy Spirit," and, in the same breath, "Why hast thou put this thing in thy heart?" The existence and agency of the tempter are distinctly recognized, yet it is not Satan, but Ananias who is rebuked; and he is rebuked for doing the very thing that Satan had done, showing that he is as guilty as though Satan had no existence. Indeed, he is rebuked for what Satan had done.

The devil can bring suggestions, ideas, thoughts but he cannot force us to accept them, use them or live with them. Satan did not overpower Ananias but made suggestion to him by saying why are you going to laid down everything? Why will you and your wife lives on? Why don't you keep small aside for the rainy days? And on and so forth. One man of God says that you cannot stop birds from flying over your head but they don't have to build nest on your hair.

The book of James tells us the source of our temptation.

Jas 1:13-15 KJV 13 Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither temptation he any man: 14 But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. 15 Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death.

Bible made it clear that it is the lust in us that serve as bedrock for

temptation. When lust has conceived, it bring forth sin. God is not the one tempting us or allowing it in our lives to straightened us or makes us to be sharp.

So the onus lied on Ananias to resist the devil according to Jame 4: 7 and 1Pter 5:9. Ananias had ability to resist otherwise James would be asking us to do what God has not given us ability to do and that won't be fair. He also made us to know the resultant effects that if we resist, the devil will flee away from us. Obviously Ananias did not resist the devil and that was why Peter was asking him why did he allow the devil to fill his heart with deception?

How do you resist the devil?

- o We need to renew our mind with the word of God. Rom 12: 2
- o We need to fill our mind with the word of God and commit scriptures to memory.
- o We need to meditate on the word of God night and day Joshua 1: 8
- o Phil 4: 8 gives the list of what we should think on, if any thought or idea comes to our mind and they ae nor consistent with Phil 4: 8 then we should reject them and discard them. We should not dwell on them.
- o The Lord Jesus counter the temptation of the devil with the word of God in the scripture Luke 4. We too should be able to make use of the scripture to counter the negative suggestions and thoughts that comes from the Bible.

There was no need for Ananias to try to impress the congregation and after selling the property which is land, if he wanted to keep the whole money or release part of it, he was very free but self centeredness, greed and pride made the couple to do what they did. If he was a true believer he ought to know that nothing will be hidden from the Apostle.

