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Unstoppable: The Book of Acts Trouble From Within

**4 Corners Church
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Two forces repeatedly threatened the early church:

- Persecution: opposition from outside the group, often a power struggle, integrity problem, or financial.
- Pollution: opposition from within the group, often a power struggle, integrity problem, or financial.

The way forward is the same in both instances: prayerful, bold, faithful leadership of self and others.

Barnabas: The Leader with Integrity

Acts 4:32-37 ³² Now the full number of those who believed were of one heart and soul, and no one said that any of the things that belonged to him was his own, but they had everything in common. ³³ And with great power the apostles were giving their testimony to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and great grace was upon them all. ³⁴ There was not a needy person among them, for as many as were owners of lands or houses sold them and brought the proceeds of what was sold ³⁵ and laid it at the apostles' feet, and it was distributed to each as any had need. ³⁶ Thus Joseph, who was also called by the apostles Barnabas (which means son of encouragement), a Levite, a native of Cyprus, ³⁷ sold a field that belonged to him and brought the money and laid it at the apostles' feet.

- Barnabas is introduced as an example of godly generosity.
- He is selfless and authentic.
- He becomes a key leader in the early church — trusted, humble, encouraging.

Ananias and Sapphira: Craving the Platform of Influence

Act 5:1-11 ¹ But a man named Ananias, with his wife Sapphira, sold a piece of property, ² and with his wife's knowledge he kept back for himself some of the proceeds and brought only a part of it and laid it at the apostles' feet. ³ But Peter said, "Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit and to keep back for yourself part of the proceeds of the land? ⁴ While it remained unsold, did it not remain your own? And after it was sold, was it not at your disposal? Why is it that you have contrived this deed in your heart? You have not lied to man but to God." ⁵ When Ananias heard these words, he fell down and breathed his last. And great fear came upon all who heard of it. ⁶ The young men rose and wrapped him up and carried him out and buried him.

⁷After an interval of about three hours his wife came in, not knowing what had happened. ⁸And Peter said to her, "Tell me whether you (plural) sold the land for so much." And she said, "Yes, for so much." ⁹But Peter said to her, "How is it that you have agreed together to test the Spirit of the Lord? Behold, the feet of those who have buried your husband are at the door, and they will carry you out." ¹⁰Immediately she fell down at his feet and breathed her last. When the young men came in they found her dead, and they carried her out and buried her beside her husband. ¹¹And great fear came upon the whole church and upon all who heard of these things.

- Their action mimics Barnabas externally, but with a corrupt motive.
- They wanted the **credit** of generosity without the **cost**.
- This was not about money—it was about lying to God.

Christian leadership and influence begins and ends with character.

Good Self-Leadership: The Strength of Integrity

- Barnabas didn't need recognition. He gave because he wanted to obey God's, further the mission of the church, help others.
- True spiritual leadership is marked by **private integrity**, not public applause.
- He becomes a partner to Paul, a disciple-maker, and a reconciler in conflict (Acts 9, 11, 15).
- **Ananias and Sapphira** led by **pretense**. They weren't forced to give (Acts 5:4), but they **chose to lie** for influence.
- They may have been great "leaders," but they were terrible Church leaders.
- God exposed the issue — to preserve and protect the witness and holiness of His church.

The Holiness of God and the Fear of the Lord

Acts 5:3-5 *Why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit...? You have not lied to man but to God.*

- Notice: Peter confronts. Good church leaders do not avoid confrontation of sin in church leadership.
- God is not casual about **holiness**.
- This was the foundation of the church. God was establishing a **holy people**.
- Just like Achan in Joshua 7, God exposes hidden sin early to protect His people.

Acts 5:11 *And great fear came upon the whole church and upon all who heard of these things.*

We've lost the fear of God in many churches today.

- We want His **power**, but not His **purity**.
- We want His **blessing**, but not His **correction**.
- This is not about perfection, it is about submission to Christ and a repentant heart.

Hebrews 4:13 *No creature is hidden from His sight, but all are naked and exposed to the eyes of Him to whom we must give account.*

Acts 5:12-16 ¹² Now many signs and wonders were regularly done among the people by the hands of the apostles. And they were all together in Solomon's Portico. ¹³ None of the rest dared join them, but the people held them in high esteem. ¹⁴ And more than ever believers were added to the Lord, multitudes of both men and women, ¹⁵ so that they even carried out the sick into the streets and laid them on cots and mats, that as Peter came by at least his shadow might fall on some of them. ¹⁶ The people also gathered from the towns around Jerusalem, bringing the sick and those afflicted with unclean spirits, and they were all healed.