

BOOK OF ACTS // WEEK 8

Jason Brinker - 10/29/23

GROWING TOGETHER

Tell of a time when you pretended to be something you were not. Halloween is an easy answer but think of a time other than that.

GROWING WITH GOD

Read [Acts 4:32-37](#), & [Acts 5:1-11](#) aloud and go over your sermon notes with one another. (Answer all or some of the questions)

Pastor Jason said “We are all guilty of pretending to be more spiritual, more generous, more committed than we actually are.” We are challenged to be authentic with God and with one another.

- **What do you think drives us as believers to pretend?**
- **Why is it sometimes easier to pretend to be on another level of spirituality and Christianity rather than facing reality of where our walk with God truly is?**
- **When interacting with others, what is the cost (to ourselves and/or others) of pretending?**
- **What would we gain by being authentic with God?**

“Wherever God is working - Satan is Scheming. Satan works primarily on two fronts: Persecution from the outside and Corruption on the inside. Satan understands that if he can’t stop you with fear then he’ll try to ruin your witness with fake”.

- **Why is Satan working so hard to come after us?**
- **Why is it so important to him to get in the way of God’s work in you and through you?**

Ananias and Sapphira, together, held their heart back from God. Pastor Jason shared with us that they could have had an incredible breakthrough in their relationship with God if they would have just been real and honest. They both knew that but they weren’t able to do so. Even though it would have been difficult at first, it would have ended up being liberating and rewarding.

- **Have you ever experienced a breakthrough in your walk with God because of your honesty with Him? If so, please share it.**
- **Even though God knows everything about us, our lives, our thoughts, and what’s in our hearts, why is it a challenge to be honest and bring our struggles to Him?**

James 5:16 instructs us to "...confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective". Pastor Jason encourages us to be real with others, to have someone you can be brutally honest with, someone that's going to pray for you, encourage you, and hold you accountable. This would be great if it were someone in the Life Group but it doesn't have to be.

- **Have you ever had someone like that in your life?**
- **What qualities and/or behaviors should a group or an individual possess to make you feel**
- **safe to confess something?**
- **Have you ever asked someone to be that person for you?**

Ananias and Sapphira allowed Satan to manipulate them with pretense - they wanted to pretend to be more transparent and authentic than they really were. Because of their hypocrisy, God saw fit to punish them in a very permanent way. As Pastor Jason said, they were interested in image over reality, appearance over substance, and reputation over character. How can you avoid this trap that Satan has laid out for you?

- **What's one thing you can do in the week ahead to be more authentic and real?**
- **What system(s)/safeguards do you have to put in place to make sure you don't fall back into the trap?**

GROWING IN OBEDIENCE & SCRIPTURE

Scripture provides us with so many examples of how we can live as authentic Christians. It instructs us on how to act, what to avoid, what to strive for, etc. Pastor Jason reminded us of two things Scripture does for us:

1. It warns us of pretending.
2. It challenges us to authenticity.

Pastor Jason also challenged us to do two very important things:

1. Confess what we would rather cover.
2. Have confidence in God's grace.

If there is someone in the group ready to take the next step of obedience towards Jesus and lay down and surrender their struggle through confession as instructed in James 5:16, help them by leading them through it with this prayer:

“God, I’ve been a fraud. I haven’t been following You. I haven’t put You first in my life and I’m tired of pretending. God, I surrender my life to You. I believe You sent your Son, Jesus, to die for my sins, I believe you raised Him from the dead, and I’m placing my faith in Him. His Grace is enough to cover all of my sins. Today, I want to really follow you. I surrender my life to You.

GROWING WITH CATALYST PEOPLE

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