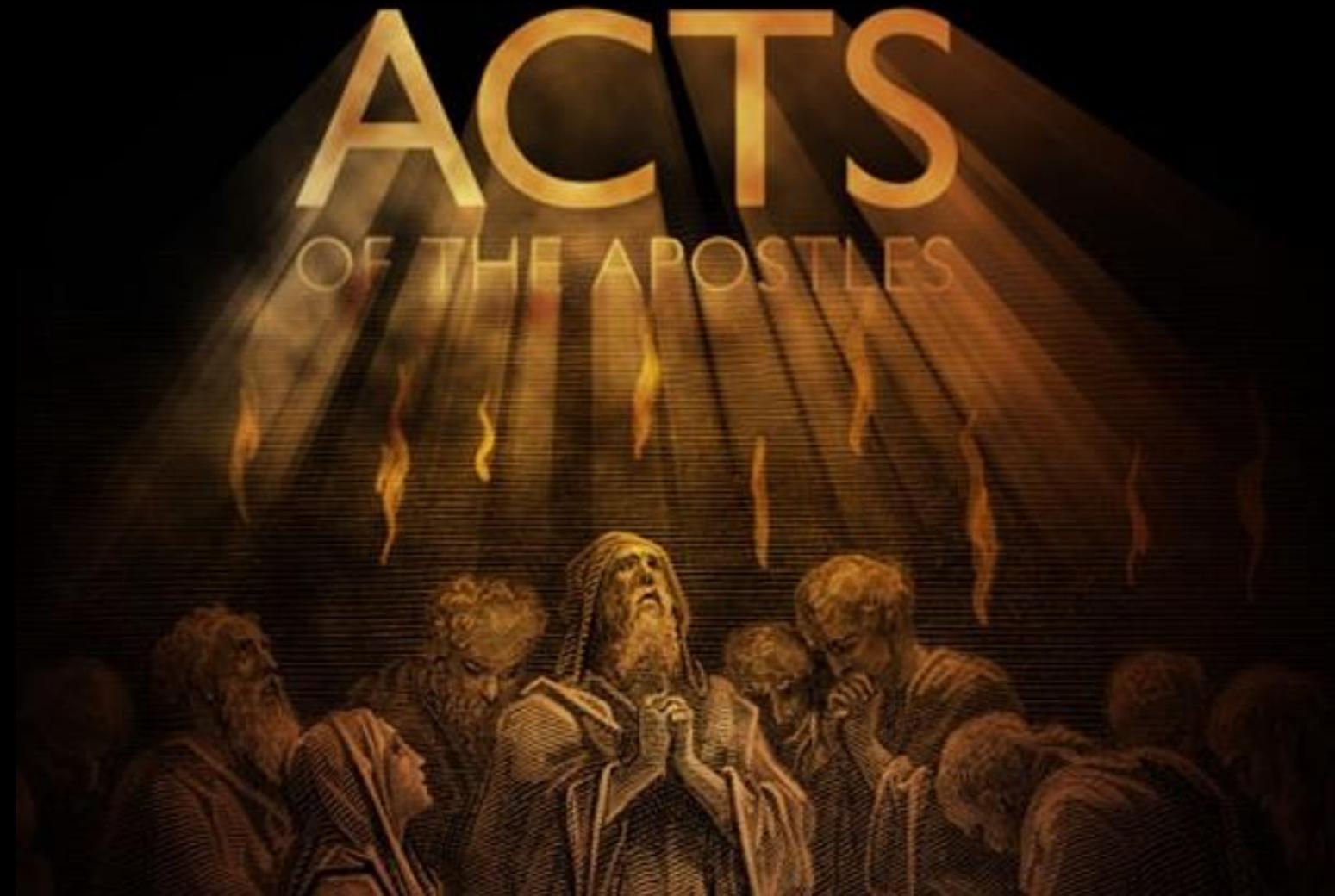
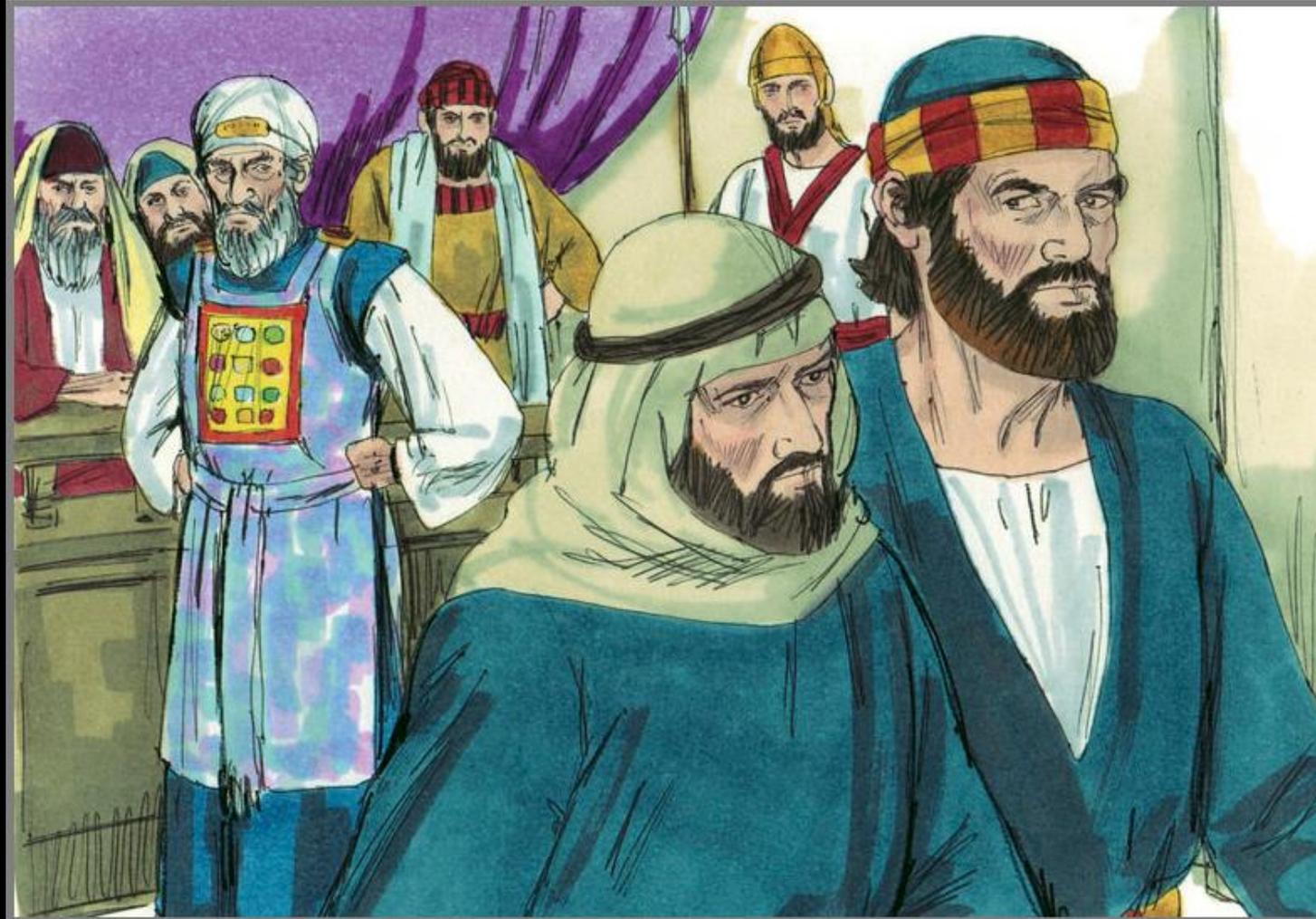


Week 2: Acts 4-5

Missing out on the Mission.



When they (*Peter & John*) were released, they went to their friends and reported what the chief priests and the elders had said to them. (4:23)

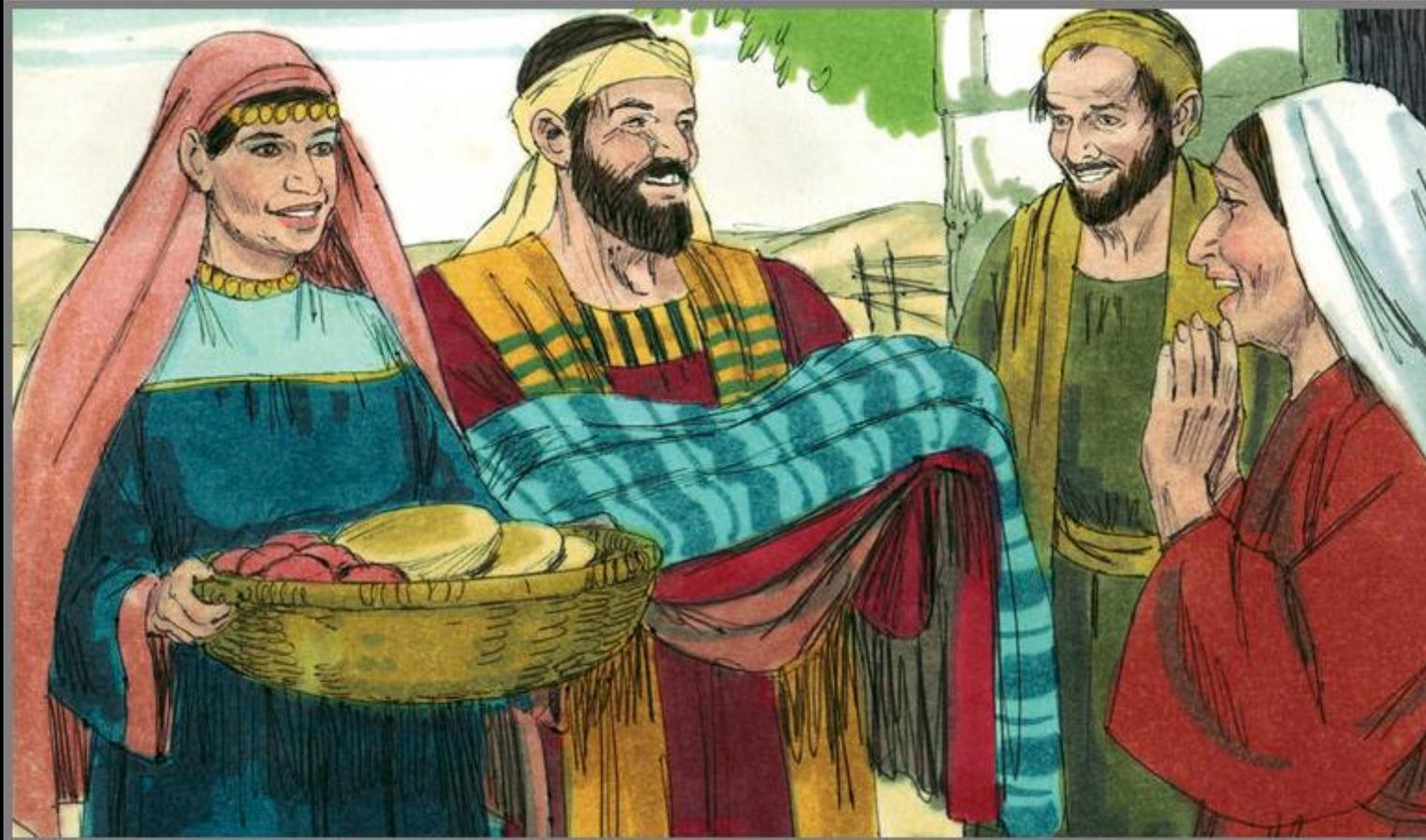


They lifted their voices together
to God and said...

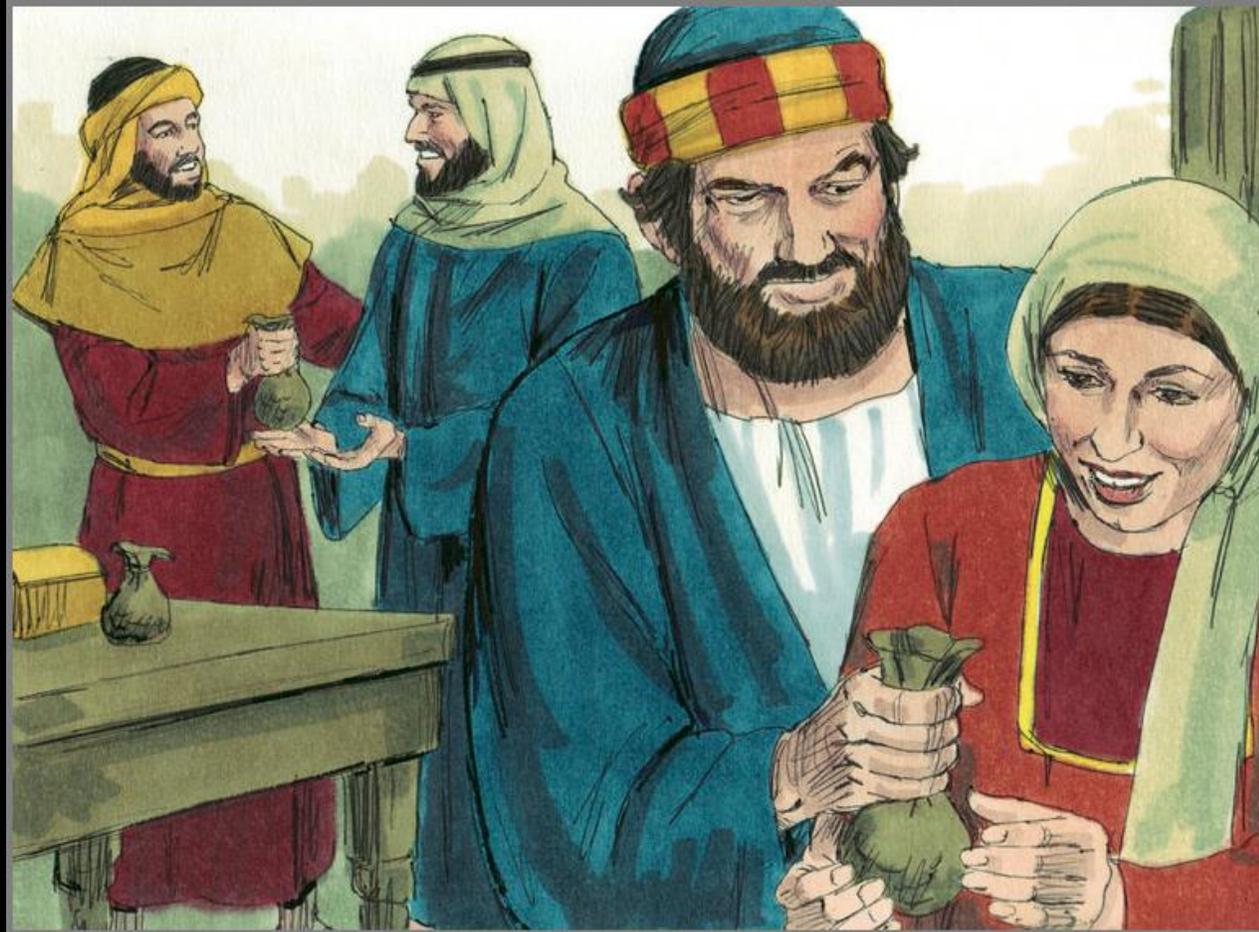


‘Lord, look upon their threats and grant to your servants to continue to speak your word with all boldness, while you stretch out your hand to heal, and signs and wonders are performed through the name of your holy servant Jesus.’ And when they had prayed, the place in which they were gathered together was shaken, and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and continued to speak the word of God with boldness. (4:24, 29-31)

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. And with great power the apostles were giving their testimony to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and great grace was upon them all. (4:32-33)



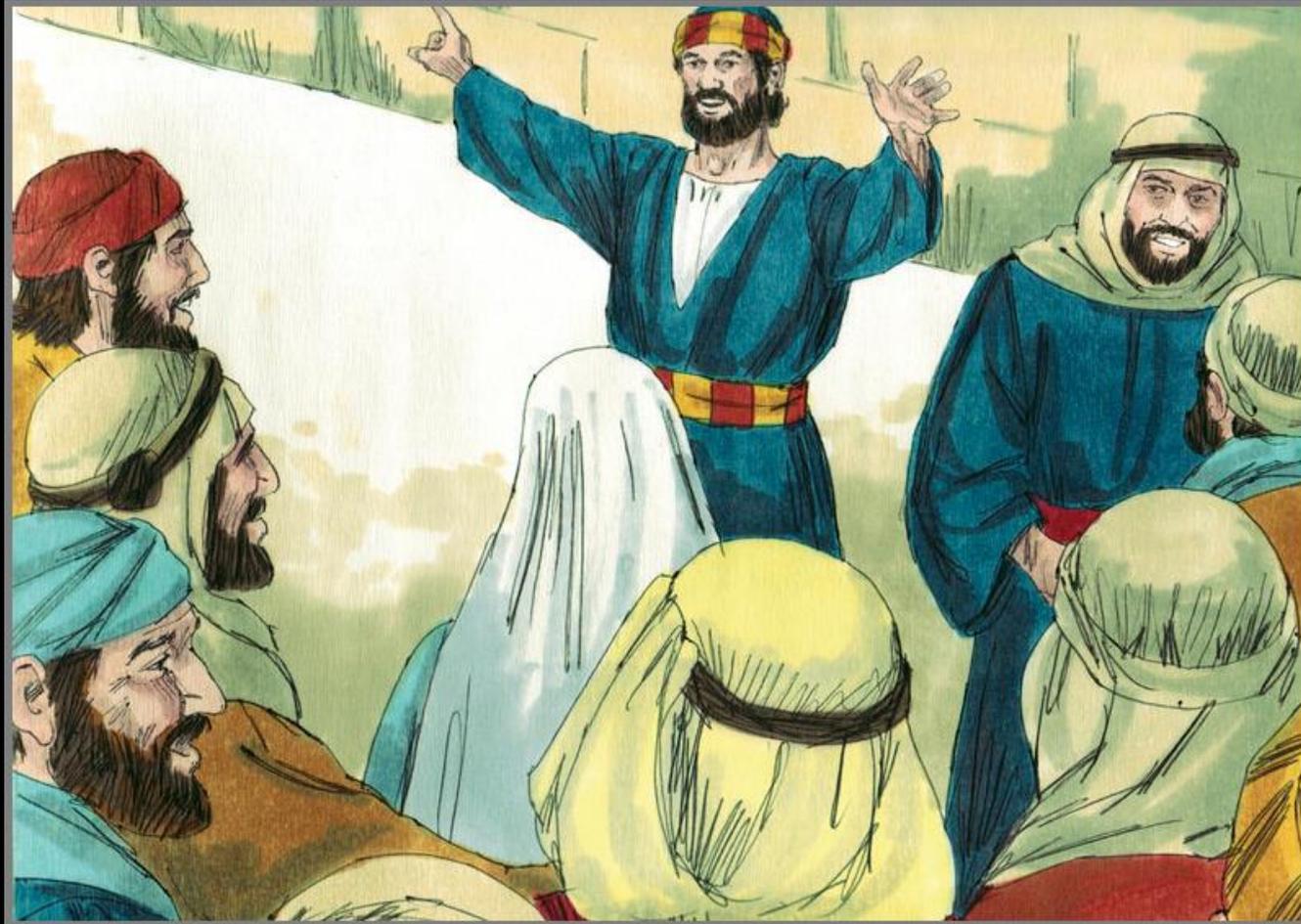
There was not a needy person among them, for as many as were owners of lands or houses sold them and brought the proceeds of what was sold and laid it at the apostles' feet, and it was distributed to each as any had need. (4:34-35)



Thus Joseph, who was also called by the apostles Barnabas (which means 'son of encouragement'), a Levite, a native of Cyprus, sold a field that belonged to him and brought the money and laid it at the apostles' feet. (4:36-37)



Now many signs and wonders were regularly done among the people by the hands of the apostles... And more than ever believers were added to the Lord, multitudes of both men and women. (5:12, 14)



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. The people also gathered from the towns around Jerusalem, bringing the sick and those afflicted with unclean spirits, and they were all healed. (5:15-16)



God was having an incredible
impact on the believers!



The believers were having an
incredible impact on the world
around them!



The apostles prayed for God to do a mighty work and it was happening!



They were filled with the
Holy Spirit. (v31)



They spoke the word of
God with boldness. (v31)



They were of one
heart and soul. (v32)



Nothing was their own, the
they shared everything. (v32)

PRIVATE PROPERTY

DIDN'T EXIST

Great grace was upon them all.

(v33)



There was no needy person
among them. (v34)



Many signs and wonders were regularly
done among the people. (v12)



More than ever believers were added
to the Lord, multitudes. (v 14)



The sick and those afflicted with unclean spirits, and they were all healed. (v16)



This is the situation that we all hope for
and dream of...

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. (v32)

There is a twofold effect of
genuine belief in Christ:

The heart is loosened in relationship to things.



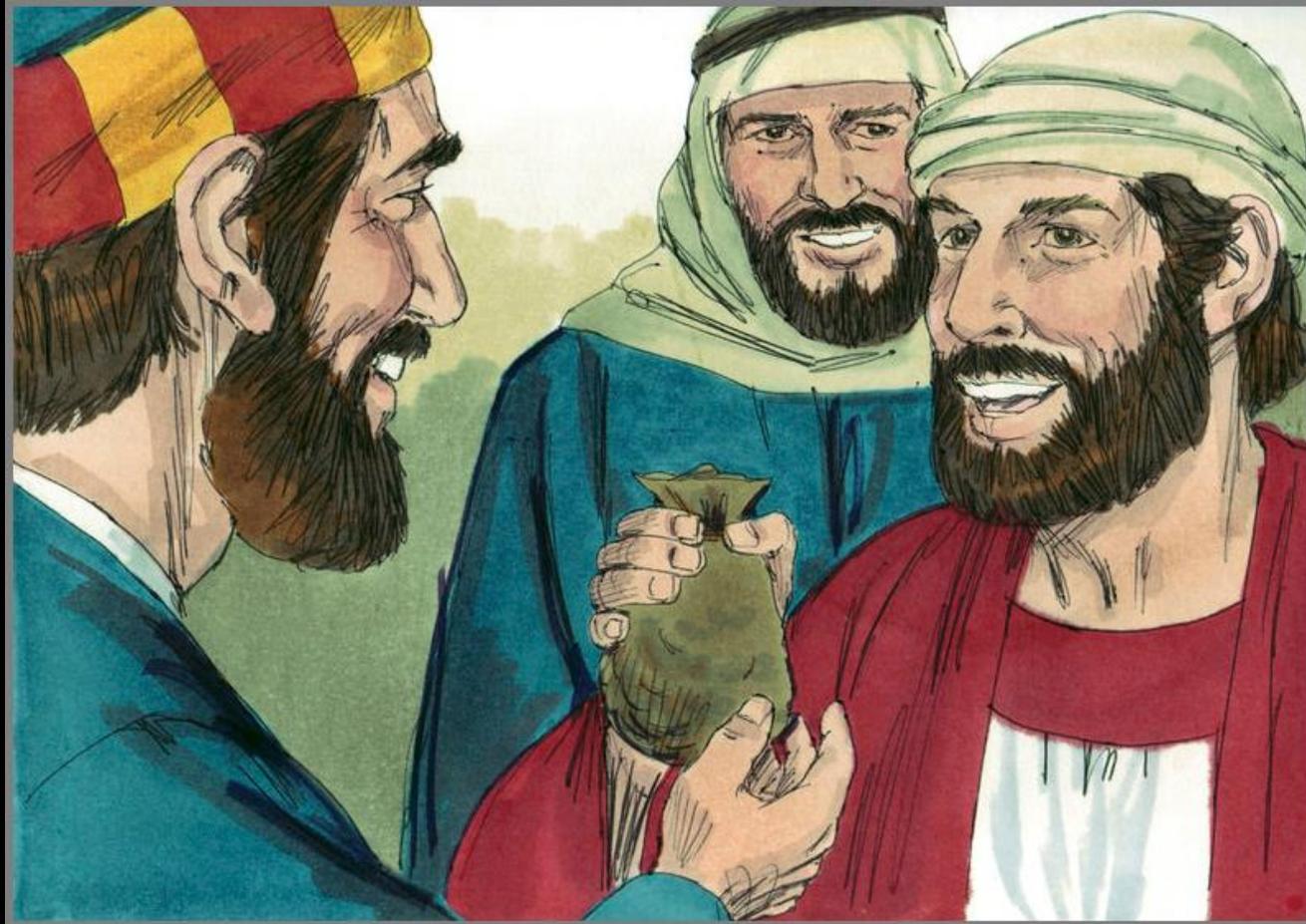
There is a twofold effect of
genuine belief in Christ:

The heart is tightened in its relationship to people.



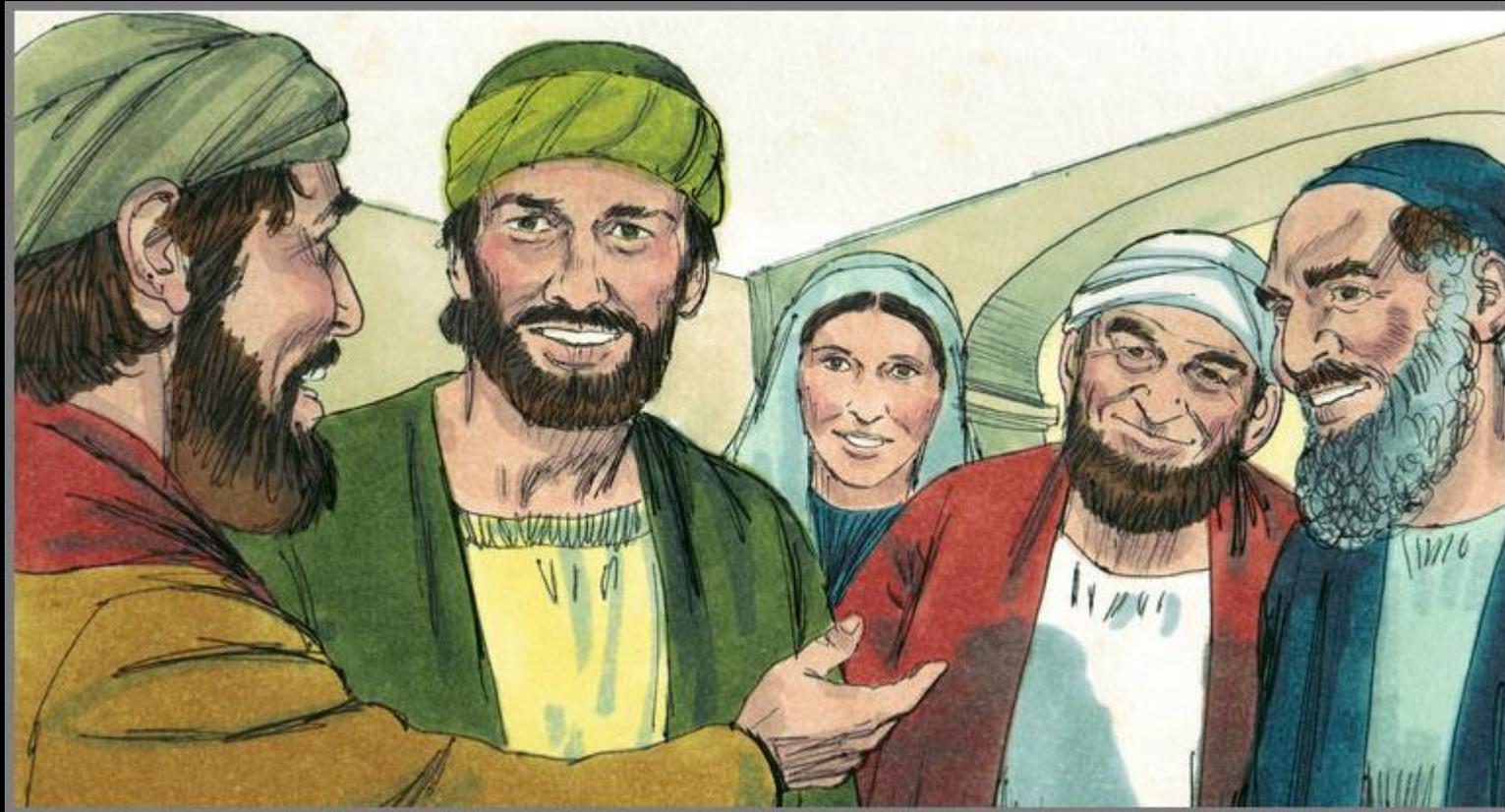
The heart is loosened in relationship to things.

Barnabas...sold a field that belonged to him and brought the money and laid it at the apostles' feet. (4:36-37)

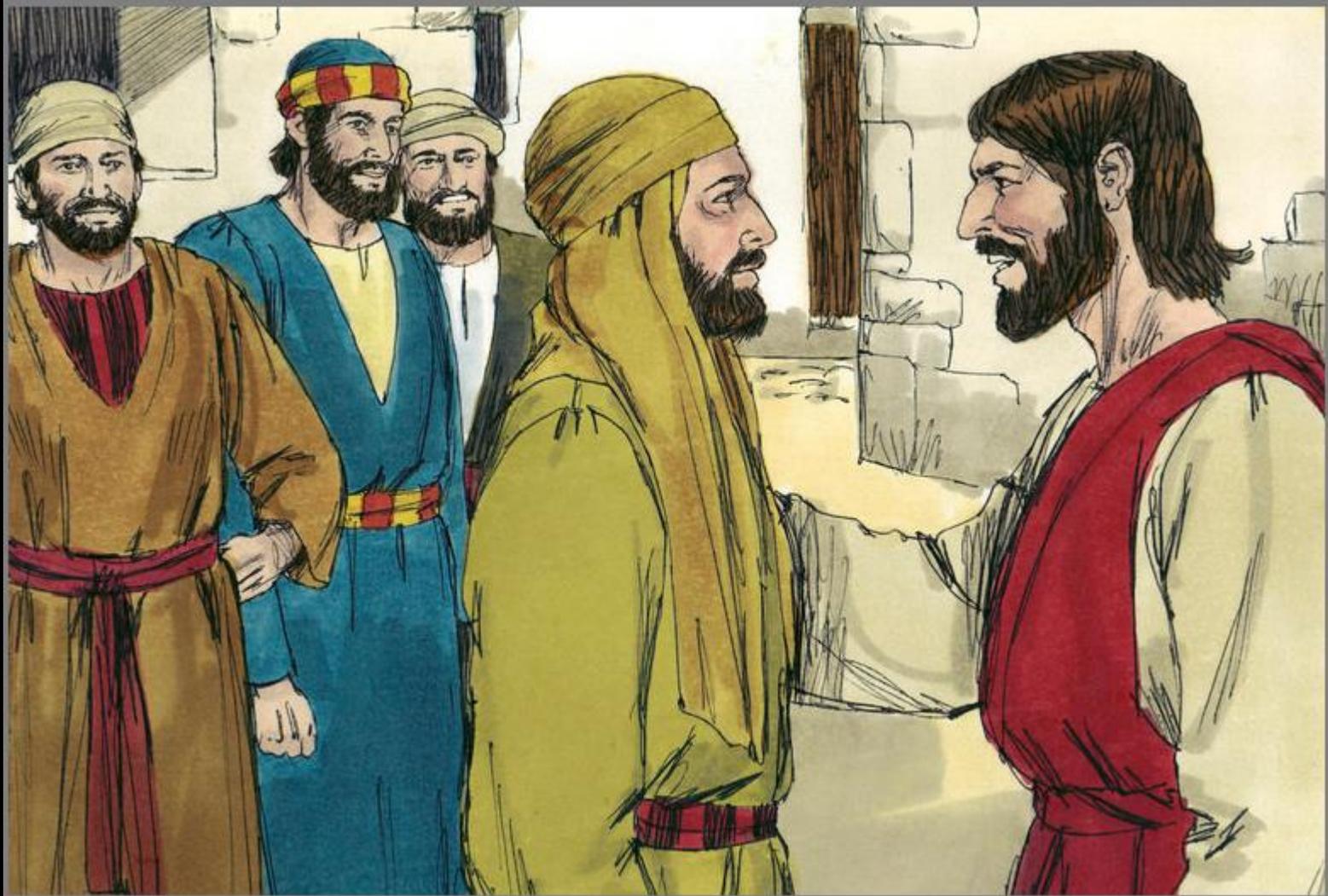


The heart is tightened in its relationship to people.

When [Saul] had come to Jerusalem, he attempted to join the disciples. And they were all afraid of him, for they did not believe that he was a disciple. But Barnabas took him and brought him to the apostles and declared to them how on the road he had seen the Lord, who spoke to him... (9:26-27)



Jesus addressed this fundamental display of true discipleship many times...



The heart being loosened in relationship to things.

Be on your guard against all kinds of greed; life does not consist in an abundance of possessions. (Luke 12:15)

Sell your possessions and give to the poor. (Luke 12:33)

Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal. (Matt 6:19)

Do not be anxious about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink, nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing? (Matt 6:25)

The heart being tightened in relationship to people.

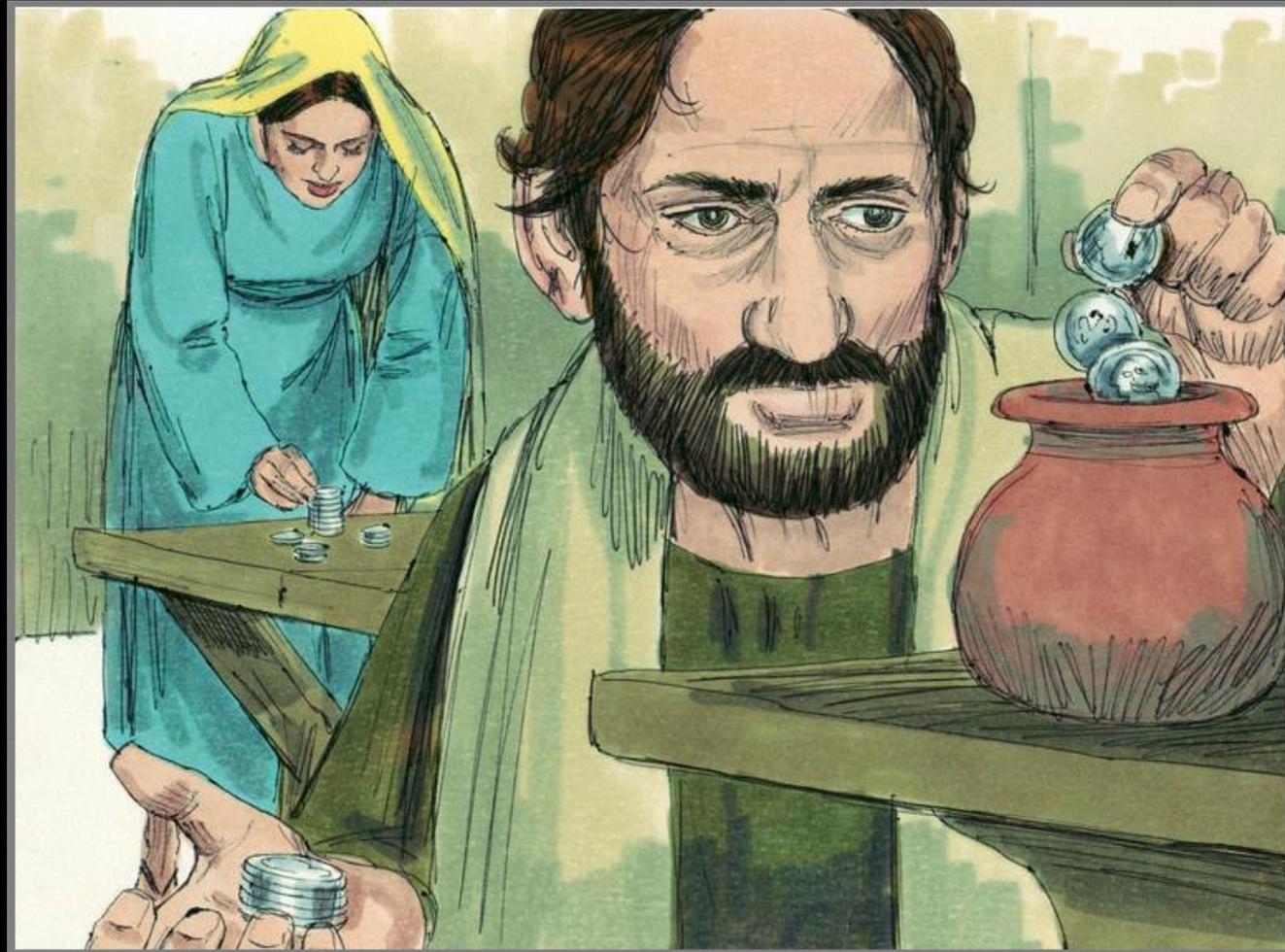
Love your neighbor as yourself. (Mark 12:31)

This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends. (John 15:12-13)

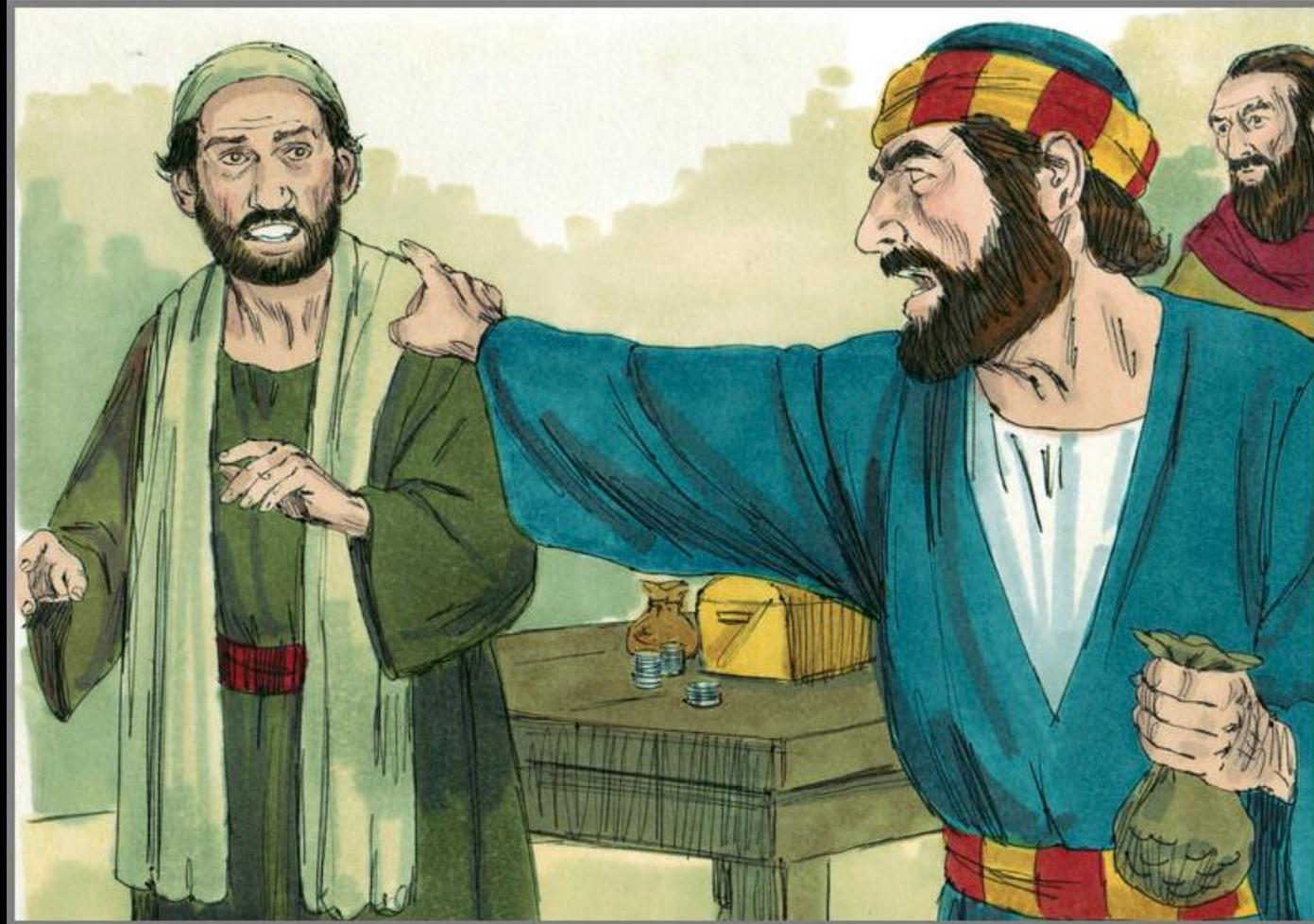
A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another. By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.” (John 13:34-35)

Regardless of the success of
the gospel at this point...
some missed out on what was
happening.

But a man named Ananias, with his wife Sapphira, sold a piece of property, 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. (5:1-2)

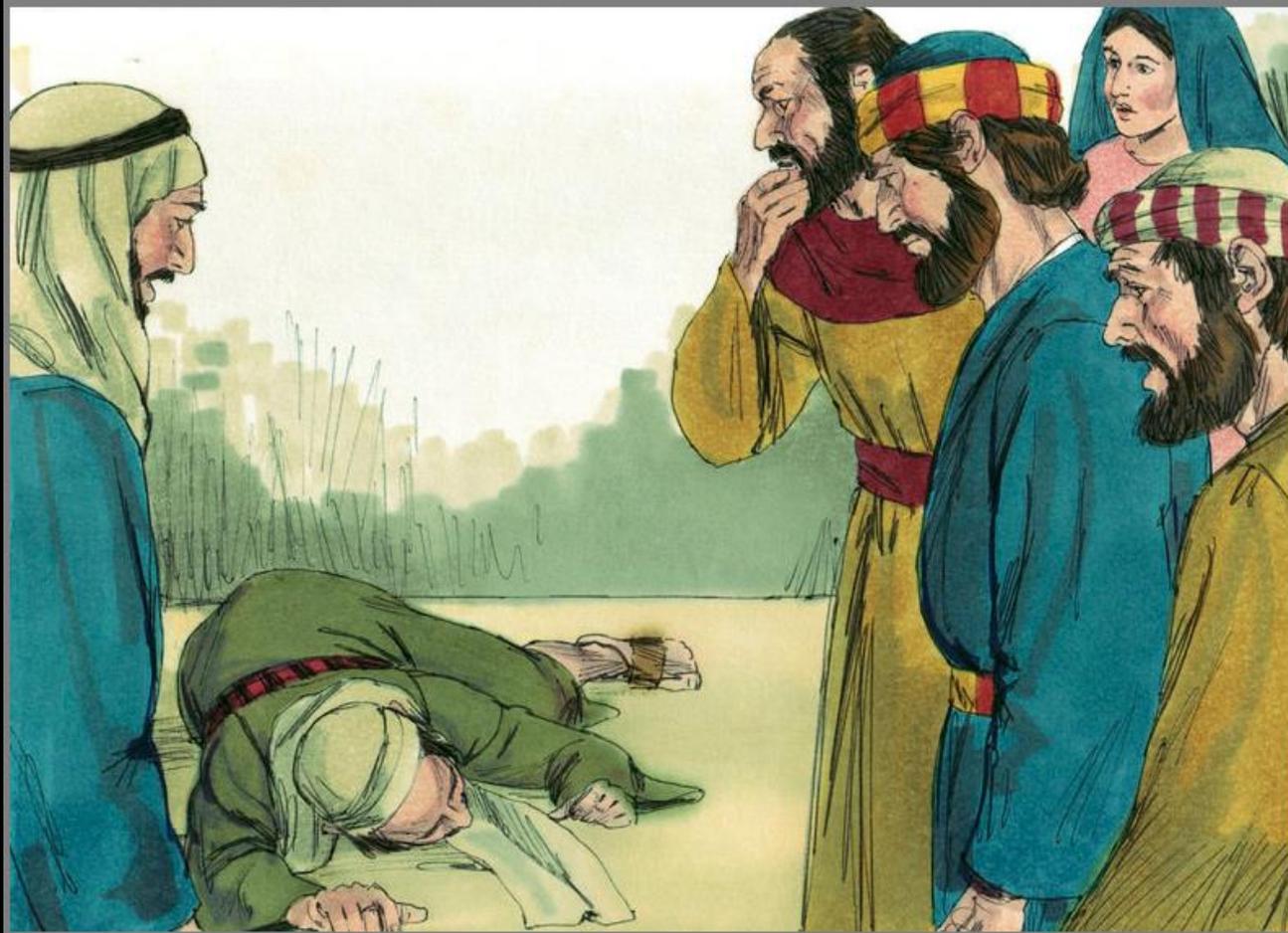


But Peter said, “Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit and to keep back for yourself part of the proceeds of the land? (5:3)



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.” (5:4)

When Ananias heard these words, he fell down and breathed his last. And great fear came upon all who heard of it. The young men rose and wrapped him up and carried him out and buried him. (5:5-6)



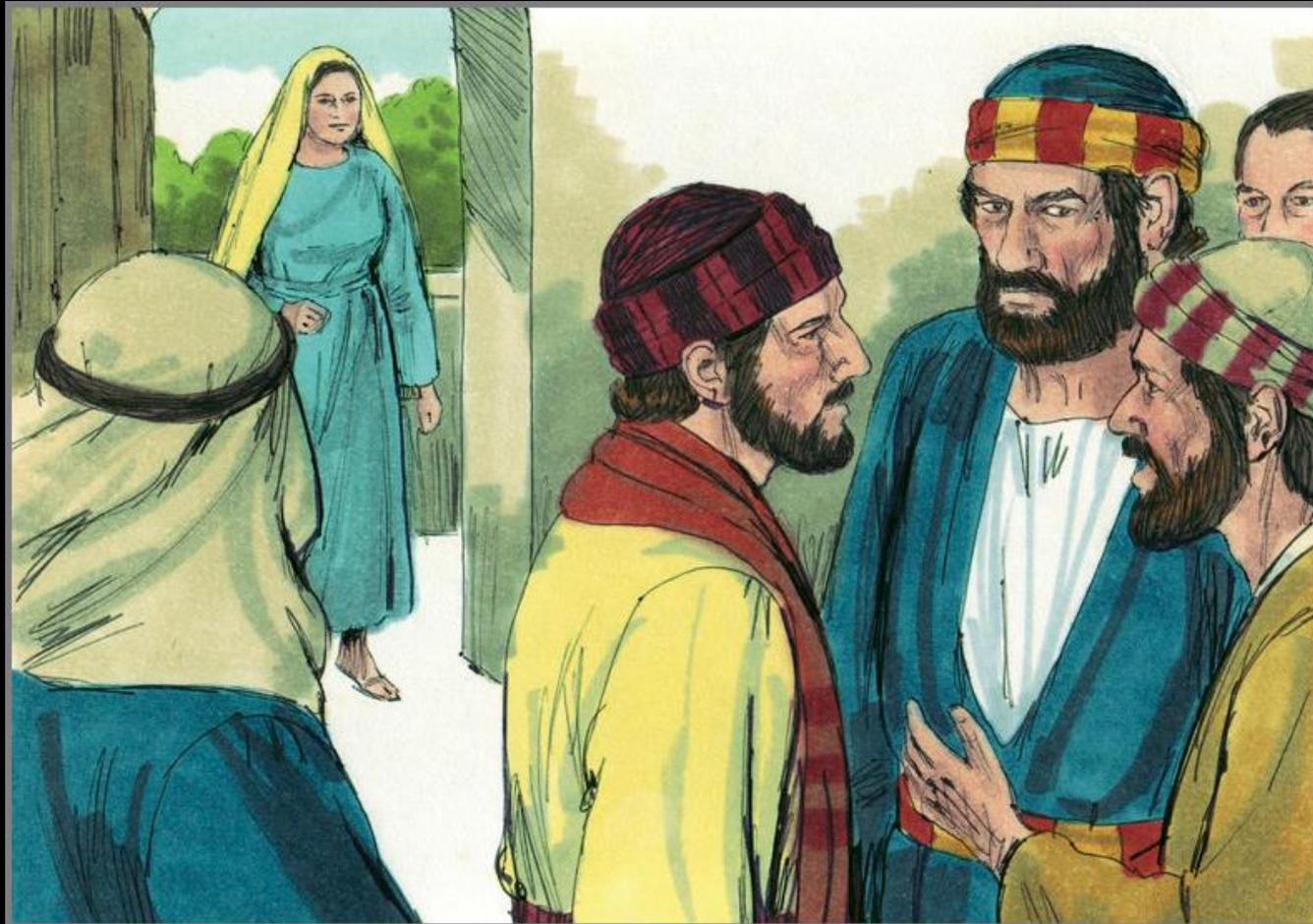
Despite the significant
impact of the gospel...

Ananias' heart was
tightened towards things
and loosened towards his
relationship with others.

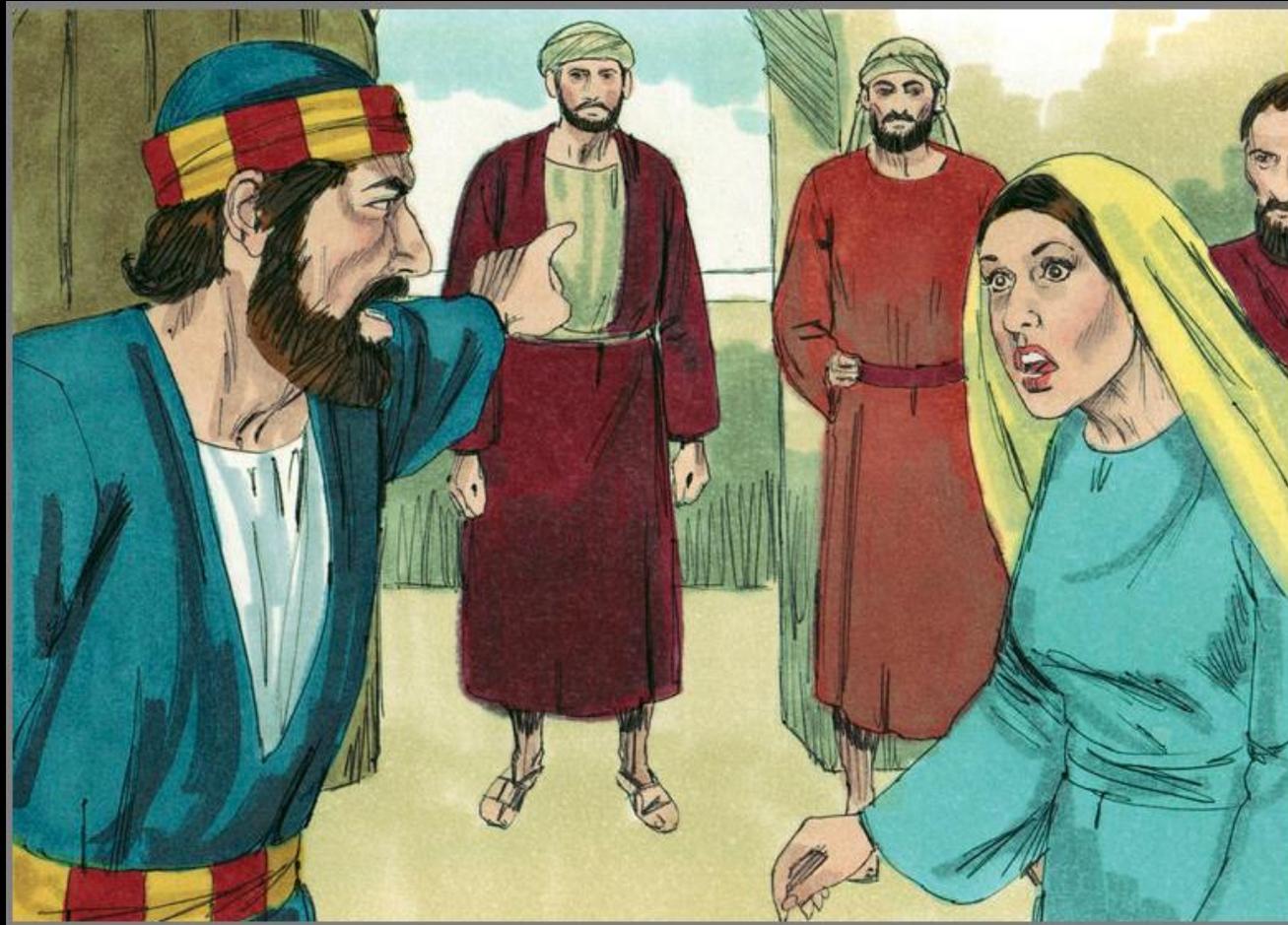
He was willing to lie in order to
maintain a grip on things.

He was unwilling to repent in order to regain his relationship with the apostles and the other believers.

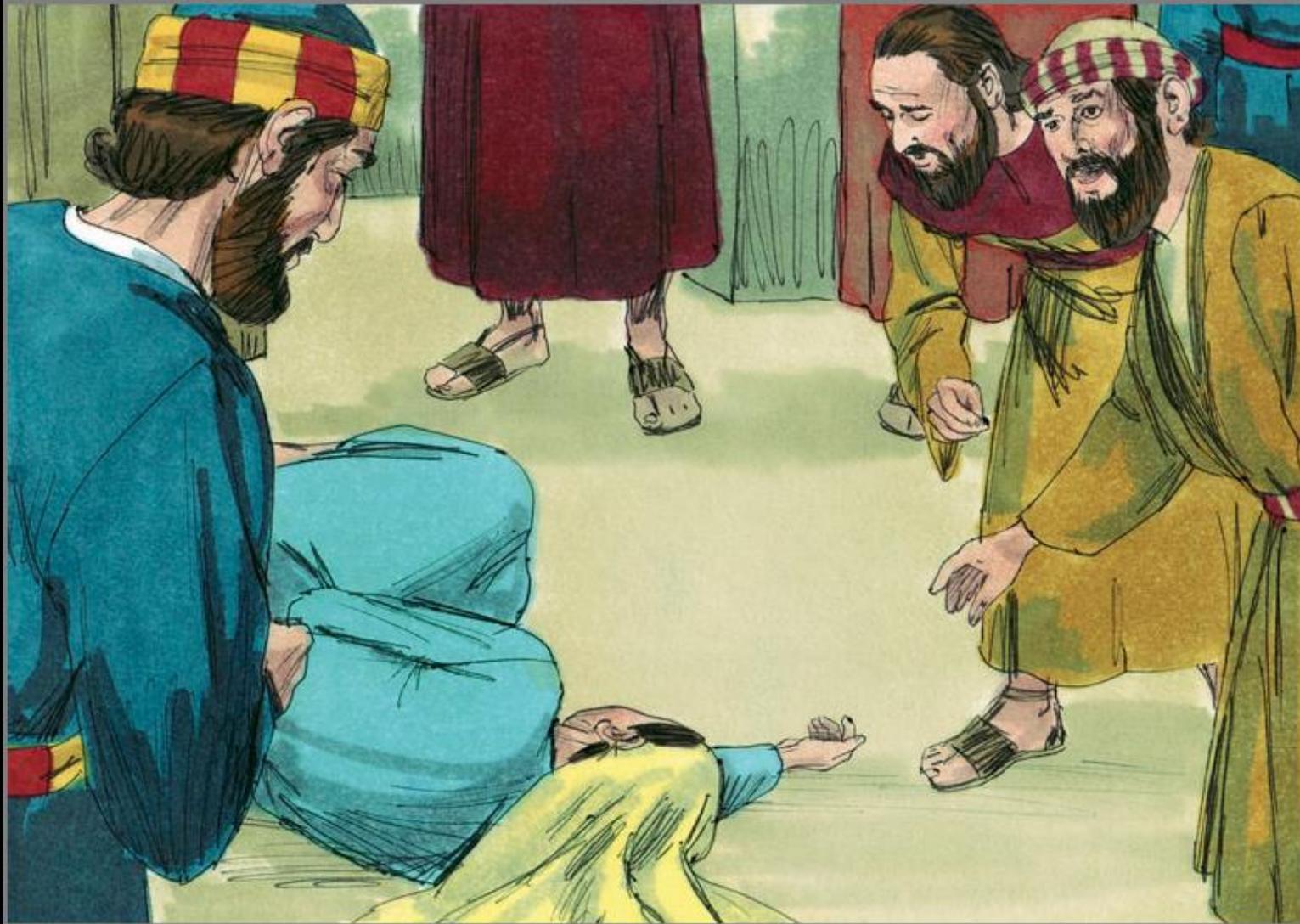
After an interval of about three hours his wife came in, not knowing what had happened. And Peter said to her, “Tell me whether you sold the land for so much.” And she said, “Yes, for so much.” (5:7-8)



But 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.” (5:9)



Immediately 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. (5:10)



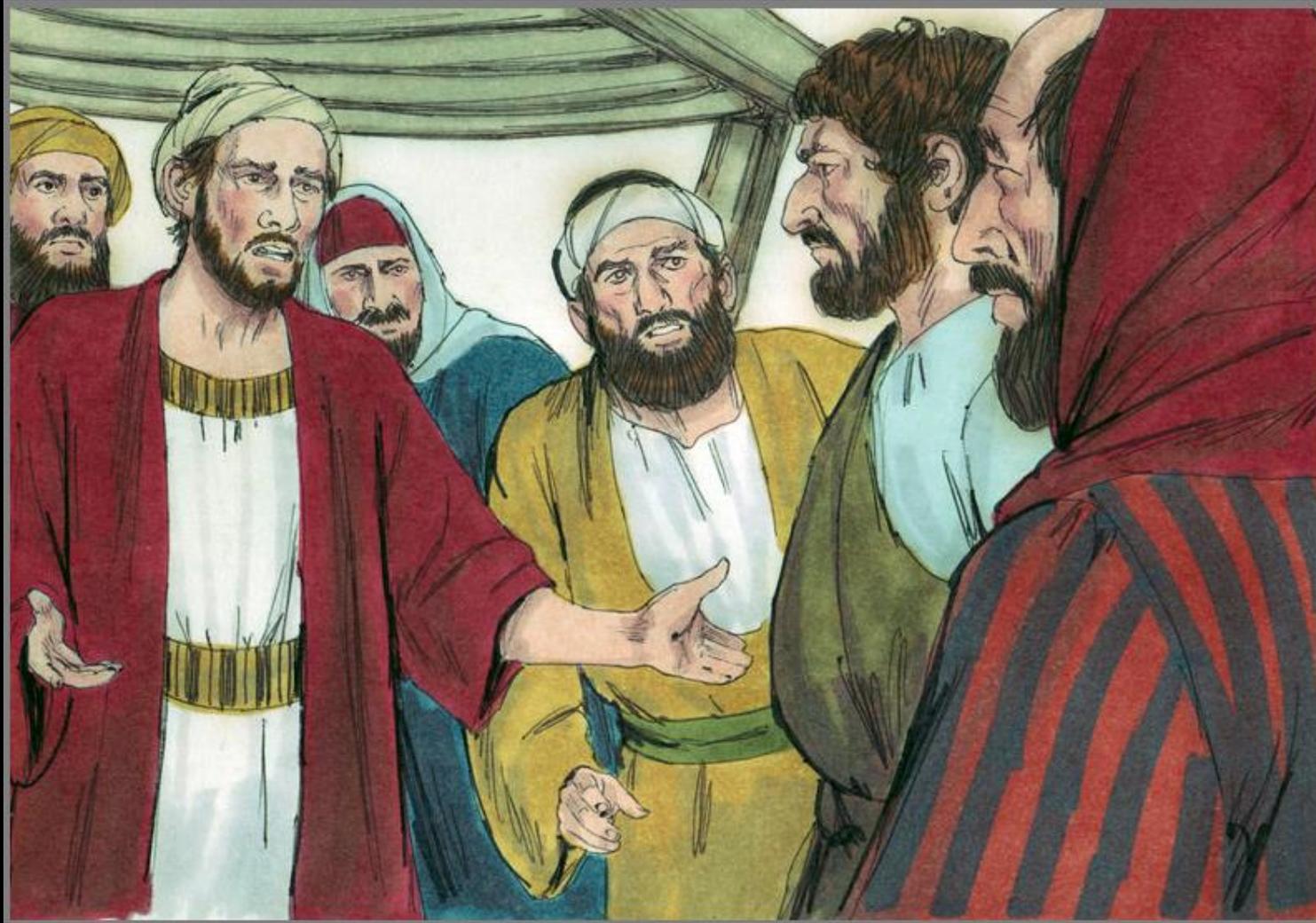
Despite the significant
impact of the gospel...

Sapphira's heart was
tightened towards things
and loosened towards her
relationship with others.

She was willing to lie in order to
maintain a grip on things.

She was unwilling to repent in order to regain her relationship with the apostles and the other believers.

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



#1 We must be very cautious when we see a love for things; property and possessions, rising in our hearts.



Those who want to get rich fall into temptation and a trap and into many foolish and harmful desires that plunge people into ruin and destruction.

1 Tim 6:9

Practical Ideas

We must regularly take our 'spiritual pulse'.

Identify areas of desire, possessions, comforts, habits that are gaining too much control.

Ask your spouse to help identify areas of weakness in the realm of pride, possession or property.

#2 We must be very cautious when we see a love for people; believers and unbelievers alike, decreasing in our hearts.



Practical Ideas

Be aware of hurts, grudges, and increased irritability towards certain people.

Identify specific relationships that need work. Take strides to connect, confess & correct any issues. Schedule relationships.

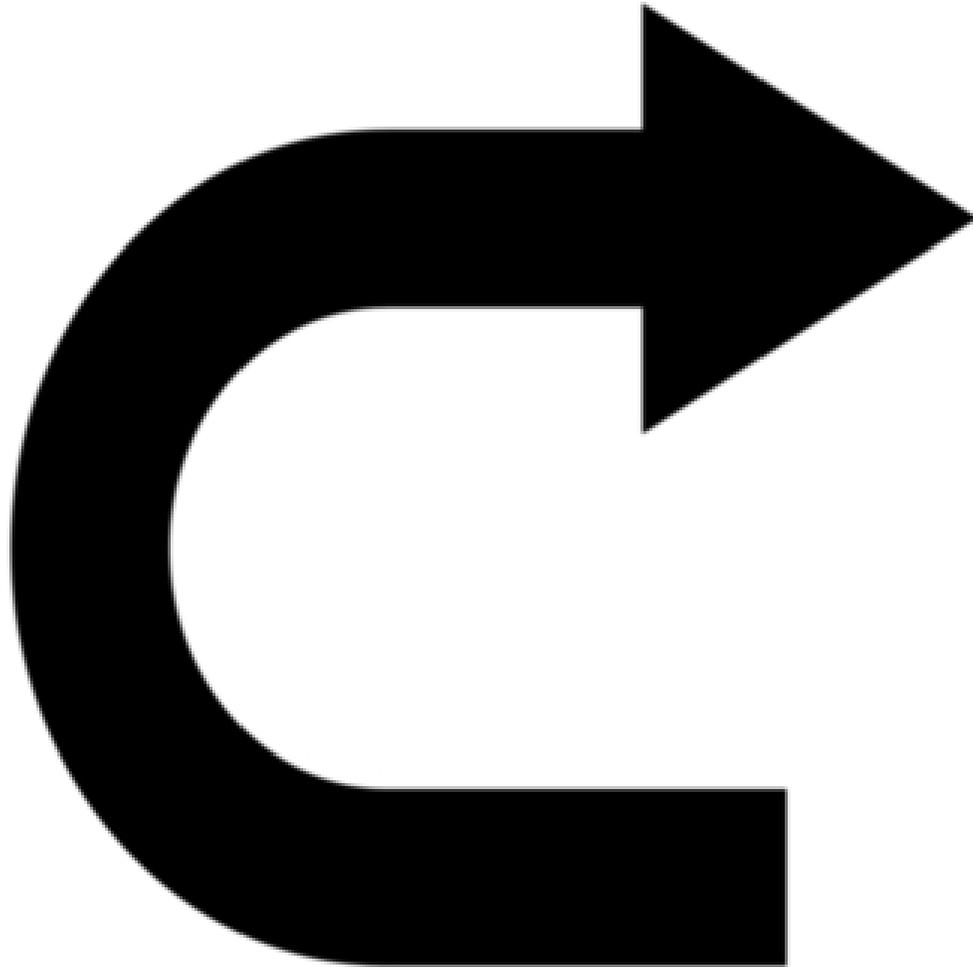
Be aware of our tendency to withdrawal from community.
We live in a very independent, individualistic society.

#3 Deceiving ourselves, denying sin and refusing to repent...leads to death.

But each one is **tempted** when he is carried away and enticed by his own **lust**. Then when lust has conceived, it gives birth to **sin**; and when sin is accomplished, **it brings forth death**. (James 1:14-15)



#4 When caught or confronted in an error,
we must admit it right away and repent.



If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say we have not sinned, we make him a liar...

1John 1:8-10a

Practical Ideas

Whenever a fellow believer, our spouse or the Spirit begins to confront us on an issue, we must address it as serious.

When we realize the concern is valid, we must admit it quickly. Do not be concerned with 'saving face'.

Be thankful that God brought the issues to mind. Do not harbor ill will against the person who God used.

#5 There really is a way to miss out on what God is wanting to do in the world.



“The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who gave a wedding feast for his son, and sent his servants to call those who were invited to the wedding feast, but they would not come... they paid no attention and went off, one to his farm, another to his business...”

Matt 22:2-3, 5

Practical Ideas

Fight the temptation to believe that a lukewarm commitment to Christ will accomplish as much as radical devotion.

Recite to yourself daily: “No one can serve two masters. Either you will hate the one and love the other, or you will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and money.” (Matt 6:24)

Review missed opportunities of the past. Beware when similar situations/temptations arise again.

#6 There is a way to maximize our stake
in what God is wanting to do in the
world.



“...there is no one who has left house or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or lands, for my sake and for the gospel, who will not receive a hundredfold now in this time...and in the age to come eternal life.

Mark 10:29-30

Practical Ideas

Live each day on purpose. Do not stroll through life.

Set daily goals for tightening your grip on people and loosening your grip on things. Schedule it.

Pray. Pray. Pray. Ask God to give you the wisdom to know what to do and what not to do...and the discipline to follow through.

**#7 In order to maximize our stake in what God is wanting to do in the world...
we need to be more like Barnabas;
whose heart was loosened towards things...and tightened towards people...for the mission of God.**

Practical Ideas

Read about the lives of Paul & Barnabas. Read about the lives of other incredible Christians (*Hudson Taylor*)

Jot down disciplines or habits that you see overlapping in these 'great Christians' lives. What was their view of people? And possessions?

Take a risk. Give something away. Sell something you hold dear and give the proceeds away. See how you feel.



Group/Follow Up Questions

What are your favorite 3-4 possessions that you own?



Group/Follow Up Questions

Is there one that stands out above the rest?

(Ask spouse!)



Group/Follow Up Questions

Have you ever felt that your attachment to those things was 'too much'? Has the attachment ever caused you to lash out or withdraw from people?



Group/Follow Up Questions

Have you ever felt 'owned' by the things that you own? (*Television, Phone, Internet, Car, House*)



Group/Follow Up Questions

Is it easy or difficult for you to make time for other people, especially believers? *(Having them over for dinner, stopping by to visit, going a group...)*



Group/Follow Up Questions

Have you ever felt yourself wanting to spend more time with a possession/hobby vs. people?

(Car, Hunting, Reading, Game)



Group/Follow Up Questions

Have you ever considered comparing how much money you spend on cable, phone, hobby etc. vs how much you give to people/ministry?



Group/Follow Up Questions

Do you think that you would be more happy or less happy if you downsized some things, and increased some people in your life?



Group/Follow Up Questions

What is one simple step that you could take today to make a specific possession less controlling and a specific person more important?