

Defeat in the Land of Victory

July 3, 2011

Vol. 1 Num. 8

JOSHUA 7

This Week's Core Competency:

Stewardship: I believe that everything I am or own belongs to God.

Instruct those who are rich in the present age not to be arrogant or to set their hope on the uncertainty of wealth, but on God, who richly provides us with all things to enjoy. Instruct them to do what is good, to be rich in good works, to be generous, willing to share, storing up for themselves a good reserve for the age to come, so that they may take hold of life that is real. (1 Tim 6:17-19)

Using This Study

❶ EXAMINE His Word

What does God SAY? Open your time with prayer. The words God uses to communicate matters so go back and pay close attention to the details that are emphasized or repeated in the passage.

❷ EXPLORE His Word

What does God MEAN? Asking questions of the text helps surface how the details relate to the message God wants to communicate.

❸ EXPAND His Word

How does this FIT? Studying cross references can help expand your understanding of a passage and discover the unity in God's word.

❹ EMBRACE His Word

Why does it MATTER to me? Embrace God by responding to what you discover in His word in faith and obedience.

Introduction

As one growing up with a younger sibling, I remember both advantages and disadvantages to being older. The advantages often included such privileges as a later bed time, less adult supervision, and to my little sister's frustration, the advantage of size! My size advantage was especially handy when jockeying for the front seat in the family car or the top position in a wrestling match. Indeed, being bigger and older with more experience definitely had advantages.

In spite of its advantages, maturity and experience can also have disadvantages. This is evident when discipline came by the hands of my parents. Mine was usually more intense, severe and longer lasting than that which my sister endured. What she got in the form of discipline was a joke! Any appeal I made about this obvious disparagement was usually met by my parents with the proverbial phrase "you know better!" It is true— more experience demands more responsibility.

Think about Israel's experience with God so far. They experienced a revelation of God that others did not. The defeat of Sihon and Og, His powerful hand at the Jordan River, and His miraculous destruction of Jericho was all an indisputable testimony! This open display of miracles was incontrovertible evidence of God's power and presence in Canaan and should have turned the most stubborn skeptic. Unfortunately, Rahab was the only convert and God held the others responsible for their refusal to respond because by this time "they knew better!"

This Week

We see this principle clearly in this week's study. Like the Canaanites, Israel's experience of God's presence made them more responsible to Him. Blatant disobedience in light of what God was doing revealed a spiritual blindness, a depravity— a hardness of heart that even God's miracles could not eradicate. He knew that disobedience would eventually influence others and would keep His people from possessing the land so he removed it.

Learn from Joshua 7 what can quickly bring defeat in the land of victory.

① EXAMINE His Word

What does God SAY? Prayerfully note significant details and terms emphasized in the passage.

1 The Israelites, however, were unfaithful regarding the things set apart for destruction. Achan son of Carmi, son of Zabdi, son of Zerah, of the tribe of Judah, took some of what was set apart, and the LORD's anger burned against the Israelites.

2 Joshua sent men from Jericho to Ai, which is near Beth-aven, east of Bethel, and told them, "Go up and scout the land." So the men went up and scouted Ai.

3 After returning to Joshua they reported to him, "Don't send all the people, but send about 2,000 or 3,000 men to attack Ai. Since the people of Ai are so few, don't wear out all our people there."

4 So about 3,000 men went up there, but they fled from the men of Ai.

5 The men of Ai struck down about 36 of them and chased them from outside the gate to the quarries, striking them down on the descent. As a result, the people's hearts melted and became like water.

6 Then Joshua tore his clothes and fell before the ark of the LORD with his face to the ground until evening, as did the elders of Israel; they all put dust on their heads.

7 "Oh, Lord GOD," Joshua said, "why did You ever bring these people across the Jordan to hand us over to the Amorites for our destruction? If only we had been content to remain on the other side of the Jordan!

8 What can I say, Lord, now that Israel has turned its back and run from its enemies?

9 When the Canaanites and all who live in the land hear about this, they will surround us and wipe out our name from the earth. Then what will You do about Your great name?"

10 The LORD then said to Joshua, "Stand up! Why are you on the ground?"

11 Israel has sinned. They have violated My covenant that I appointed for them. They have taken some of what was set apart. They have stolen, deceived, and put the things with their own belongings.

12 This is why the Israelites cannot stand against their enemies. They will turn their backs and run from their enemies, because they have been set apart for destruction. I will no longer be with you unless you remove from you what is set apart.

13 "Go and consecrate the people. Tell them to consecrate themselves for tomorrow, for this is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says: There are things that are set apart among you, Israel. You will not be able to stand against your enemies until you remove what is set apart.

14 In the morning you must present yourselves tribe by tribe. The tribe the LORD selects is to come forward clan by clan. The clan the LORD selects is to come forward family by family. The family the LORD selects is to come forward man by man.

15 The one who is caught with the things set apart must be burned, along with everything he has, because he has violated the LORD's covenant and committed an outrage in Israel."

16 Joshua got up early the next morning. He had Israel come forward tribe by tribe, and the tribe of Judah was selected.

17 He had the clans of Judah come forward, and the Zerahite clan was selected. He had the Zerahite clan come forward by heads of families, and Zabdi was selected.

18 He then had Zabdi's family come forward man by man, and Achan son of Carmi, son of Zabdi, son of Zerah, of the tribe of Judah, was selected.

19 So Joshua said to Achan, "My son, give glory to the LORD, the God of Israel, and make a confession to Him. I urge you, tell me what you have done. Don't hide anything from me."

20 Achan replied to Joshua, "It is true. I have sinned against the LORD, the God of Israel. This is what I did:

21 When I saw among the spoils a beautiful cloak from Babylon, 200 silver shekels, and a bar of gold weighing 50 shekels, I coveted them and took them. You can see for yourself. They are concealed in the ground inside my tent, with the money under the cloak."

22 So Joshua sent messengers who ran to the tent, and there was the cloak, concealed in his tent, with the money underneath.

23 They took the things from inside the tent, brought them to Joshua and all the Israelites, and spread them out in the LORD's presence.

24 Then Joshua and all Israel with him took Achan son of Zerah, the silver, the cloak, and the bar of gold, his sons and daughters, his ox, donkey, and sheep, his tent, and all that he had, and brought them up to the Valley of Achor.

25 Joshua said, "Why have you troubled us? Today the LORD will trouble you!" So all Israel stoned them to death. They burned their bodies, threw stones on them,

26 and raised over him a large pile of rocks that remains to this day. Then the LORD turned from His burning anger. Therefore that place is called the Valley of Achor to this day.

What are your first impressions?

2 EXPLORE His Word

What does God MEAN?

1. The important phrase “set apart” is used _____ times in vv. 1-26. Joshua instructs the Israelites in 6:17-19 about this term; summarize what he says in your own words:
2. In v. 1, God’s emotion towards Israel was that of _____ because they were “_____” towards Him. Explain from v. 11 what Israel specifically did:
3. In vv. 2-5, Joshua sent men to Ai to _____ the land. Instead of conquering the small city, they were _____ by the men of Ai, who killed _____ Israelites. What or whom brought this defeat (6:18, 7:12)?
4. Israel associates itself with that which was set apart. In vv. 13-15 God explains to Joshua how the nation must respond if it is to move forward with Him and take possession of the land. “The one caught with the things _____ must be _____” (v. 15)? Why do you think God commanded this?
5. Verse 15 states that “he violated the Lord’s covenant and committed an _____ in Israel.” Read Exodus 34:10-12 and consider all the miraculous events in the last six chapters of Joshua and explain why you think this statement is true:

3 EXPAND His Word

How does this FIT?

6. Read Acts 5:1-11 and compare it with Joshua 7. Why do you think God’s response is so severe in both?
7. God required that Israel respond corporately to this situation (vv. 24-25). Read 1 Corinthians 6:6-7, 11-13 and Proverbs 13:20 and discuss what principle(s) you see about the influence of others:

④ EMBRACE His Word

Why does this MATTER to me?

8. Read James 4:2-4. What practical steps could you take to avoid allowing material things or money to supplant God (in your affections, as your security, as your comfort, as part of your identity, or as a source of your pride)?

9. Read Joshua 7:21 and this week's Core Competency (1 Timothy 6:17-19) and consider: How has the quest for material things or money caused you to stumble?

Summarize your thoughts on the passage:

Write about what God wants you to KNOW...

Write about how God wants you to FEEL...

Write about what God wants you to DO...

Sermon Notes:

30 CORE Competencies

10 Core Beliefs

Trinity *2 Corinthians 13:14*

I believe the God of the Bible is the only true God - Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Salvation by Grace *Ephesians 2:8-9* I believe a person comes into a right relationship with God by His grace, through faith in Jesus Christ.

Authority of the Bible *2 Timothy 3:16-17*

I believe the Bible is the Word of God and has the right to command my belief and action.

Personal God *Psalms 121:1-2*

I believe God is involved in and cares about my daily life.

Identity in Christ *John 1:12*

I believe I am significant because of my position as a child of God.

Church *Ephesians 4:15-16*

I believe the church is God's primary way to accomplish His purposes on earth today.

Humanity *John 3:16*

I believe all people are loved by God and need Jesus Christ as their Savior.

Compassion *Psalms 82:3-4*

I believe God calls all Christians to show compassion to those in need.

Eternity *John 14:1-4*

I believe there is a heaven and a hell and that Jesus Christ is returning to judge the earth and to establish His eternal kingdom.

Stewardship *1 Timothy 6:17-19*

I believe that everything I am or own belongs to God.

10 Core Practices

Worship *Psalms 95:1-7*

I worship God for who He is and what He has done for me.

Prayer *Psalms 66:16-20*

I pray to God to know Him, to lay my request before Him and to find direction for my daily life.

Bible Study *Hebrews 4:12*

I read the Bible to know God, the truth, and to find direction for my daily life.

Single-mindedness *Matthew 6:33* I focus on God and His priorities for my life.

Spiritual Gifts *Romans 12:4-6*

I know and use my spiritual gifts to accomplish God's purposes.

Biblical Community *Acts 2:44-47*

I fellowship with other Christians to accomplish God's purposes in my life, others' lives, and in the world.

Giving Away My Time *Colossians 3:17*

I give away my time to fulfill God's purposes.

Giving Away My Money *2 Corinthians 8:7*

I give away my money to fulfill God's purposes.

Giving Away My Faith *Ephesians 6:19-20*

I give away my faith to fulfill God's purposes.

Giving Away My Life *Romans 12:1*

I give away my life to fulfill God's purposes.

10 Core Virtues

Joy *John 15:11*

I have inner contentment and purpose in spite of my circumstances.

Peace *Philippians 4:6-7*

I am free from anxiety because things are right between God, me, and others.

Faithfulness *Proverbs 3:3-4*

I demonstrate loyalty in my relationships with others in response to God's loyalty to me.

Self-Control *Titus 2:11-13*

I have the power, through Christ, to control myself.

Humility *Philippians 2:3, 4*

I choose to esteem others above myself.

Love *1 John 4:10-12*

I sacrificially and unconditionally love and forgive others.

Patience *Proverbs 14:29*

I endure patiently under the unavoidable pressures of life.

Kindness/Goodness *1 Thess. 5:15*

I choose to do the right things in my relationships with others.

Gentleness *Philippians 4:5*

I am thoughtful, considerate and calm in dealing with others.

Hope *Hebrews 6:19-20*

I can cope with the hardships of life and with death because of the hope I have in Jesus Christ.