

# DISCIPLESHIP GROUPS

*Our Mission: Reaching Out to Leaders Who Can Change the World.*

August 2012

## *Joshua: Hope for God's People*

### **Lesson #6: The Cost of Sin**

What do you think about the policy in some countries where a person is publically punished for a crime? (i.e. stealing - cut hand off)

#### **OBSERVATION/INTERPRETATION**

##### Read Joshua 7

*Note: The defeat of Ai shows that God's blessings are not automatic. The privilege of being one of God's people carries responsibility of living according to His high standard of righteousness. By making the punishment of Achan a public event, God sought to teach Israel the corporate ramifications of violating His covenant. Israel was trapped in the Jordan Valley because the flooded Jordan prevented their retreat. If God had forsaken them, the Amorites would have loved to wipe them out.*

1. Why didn't all the people fight against Ai? Vs 3
2. How did Joshua initially react to the defeat? Vv 6-9 How was his thinking right and wrong?  
*Note: Achan's sin was overt, but Joshua's sin of self confidence was not. Each sin has its consequences.*
3. How do God's concerns differ from Joshua's? VV 10-12; 6:18
4. Why do you think God didn't just tell Joshua who caused the problem?
5. How would you have prepared (consecrated yourself) for a judgment meeting with God? v. 13; 3:5; 1 Jn 1:9
6. What was Achan's sin(s)? How did he probably justify it? Who helped him commit it? Dt 24:16 If it was against God, why were the people around him punished? (vs. 5 - 36 men died) 7:1; 11; Ex 19:5,6  
*Note: Achan's actions, besides violating (1) the Eighth Commandment (about stealing: Exod 20:15), (2) God's instructions in Deut 20:10-20 (see on v. 11), (3) the injunction against lying (Lev 19:11), and (4) the First Commandment (about not having any other gods before the Lord: Exod 20:3; see on v. 1), also directly violated the Ninth Commandment (about coveting: Exod 20:17). A telling parallel to this passage is Gen 3:6, where the same verbs are used of Eve: both she and Achan "saw" and "desired" (or "coveted") and "took" what was forbidden to them.<sup>1</sup>*
7. Why do you think God was so drastic in his punishment?
8. How might our sins affect others? Gen 12:10-20; Jonah 1:1-4; 2 Sam 24:15-17; 1 Cor 5:4-7; Heb 12:15
9. How can we know if our difficulties are caused by sin? 1 Jn 1:9; Gal 5:21
10. What sins do we see punished by God today? By the church? 1 Cor 5 How might it affect the nation?  
*Note: God's people today are one body in Christ. Consequently, we belong to each other, we need each other, and we affect each other (1 Cor. 12:12). Any weakness or infection in one part of the human body contributes to weakness and infection in the other parts. So it also is with the body of Christ. 1 Cor. 12:26; Ecc. 9:18<sup>2</sup>*

#### **APPLICATION**

- How has the Lord "gotten tough" with you or someone you know to punish sin? Are you open to correction? Are you open to trusting God with enough faith to see Him at work?

*The connection between this pile of stones and the earlier set of twelve memorial stones that Joshua erected on the banks of the Jordan River is hard to ignore. The first set was specifically to be a reminder to Israel of God's presence with them (4:7). The pile of stones over Achan was a reminder to Israel of the story of Achan and the consequences of sin (and God's presence).<sup>3</sup>*

<sup>1 3</sup> Howard, D. M., Jr. (1998). *Vol. 5: Joshua*. The New American Commentary (197, 199). Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers.

<sup>2</sup> Wiersbe, W. W. (1996). *Be Strong*. "Be" Commentary Series (83-84). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.