

# DISCIPLESHIP GROUPS

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

August 2012

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

### **Lesson #7: Handling Defeat**

Many spiritual leaders have fallen from grace as their sins have been discovered. Who have you seen that has handled their sin in a manner that has brought them back into fellowship with God and their community?

#### **OBSERVATION/INTERPRETATION**

Read Joshua 8:1-8

1. Why did God tell Joshua not to be afraid?

*Note: Using your Bible concordance, notice when and to whom God says, "fear not."*

2. What evidence did Joshua have that God was committed to him and the Israelite's cause? Ps 37:23-24

3. What were the people supposed to do with the spoils of Ai? v.2 Why is this different than Jericho?

4. What did Joshua tell them men to do? Why do you think the tactics were successful?

*Note: We can never exaggerate the importance of the Christian soldier spending time daily in the Word of God. Unless daily we take the sword of the Spirit by faith (Eph. 6:17), we go into the battle unarmed and therefore unprepared. Spiritually minded believers are victorious because they allow the Word of God to "saturate" their minds and hearts. The Spirit using the Word controls their desires and decisions and this is the secret of victory.<sup>1</sup>*

5. God's instructions for taking Ai were different than those for Jericho. Joshua was obedient to God, even though it was different. What can we learn about God and His ways?

Read Joshua 8:9-28

6. How might the recent stoning of Achan have affected their zeal for God and the battle?

7. How was Joshua actively involved rather than just a spectator? Why was this important?

8. How does Joshua's involvement compare to that of Moses? Ex 17:9-10

*Note: The Israelites' encounter with Ai had begun at the city gate (7:5); at its conclusion, the king's body was dumped at that very spot, and a pile of stones was erected over it. The king's fate here was exactly the same as Achan's fate in 7:26. This makes the point clearly that God would not favor his own people when they blatantly disobeyed any more than he would favor wicked Canaanites; Achan was expelled from Israel and treated as a Canaanite.<sup>2</sup>*

9. Why were all the people of and the city of Ai destroyed?

#### **APPLICATION**

- The land was a gift from God but had to be won by physical conquest. We must be actively involved in our spiritual walk. The sluggard expects God to do it all. Some Christians think Christianity is simply the dutiful fulfillment of an endless series of religious obligations. (Gal 3:1-3) The self sufficient man expects his own strength to be enough. What is the proper balance between trusting God (faith) and personal responsibility? Col 1:29
- Clearly God can make a new beginning from failure. Rom 8:28-29 What might be keeping you from accepting God's forgiveness and fellowship?

<sup>1</sup> Wiersbe, W. W. (1996). *Be Strong*. "Be" Commentary Series (96). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

<sup>2</sup> Howard, D. M., Jr. (1998). *Vol. 5: Joshua*. The New American Commentary (211). Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers.