

**Studies in the Book of Joshua**  
**Lesson 6 – Joshua 7:1-26**  
**The Abundant Life**  
**Trouble Valley**

God had made it clear that the spoils of Jericho were to be “devoted” or dedicated to Him and placed in His treasury, but Achan had disobeyed this law. It is possible that Joshua was too hasty in his attack on Ai, that he did not wait for the Lord’s direction. Furthermore, he acted upon the suggestions of the spies rather than on God’s Word. Later, God rejected the plan given by the spies. There is a hint of overconfidence in these verses: Jericho had fallen to Israel, and they were confident that the smaller city of Ai would be a “pushover.” Self-confidence, dependence on human wisdom, impatience, lack of prayer, and a secret sin were behind Israel’s defeat at Ai.

Joshua and his leaders spent the whole day in prayer before the ark, and even Joshua wanted to “back up” and settle for an inheritance on the other side of the Jordan! Note, however, that Joshua was more concerned about the glory of the Lord and the testimony of Israel before the heathen nations, than he was about the discouragement of the defeat. It is a mark of true spirituality when God’s glory is what motivates a servant’s life.

God spoke sternly to His servant: “*Get up! Israel has sinned!*” Of course, only one man had sinned, but this involved the entire nation. It is a solemn truth that one person’s disobedience can cause the sorrow and failure of a whole nation, family, or church. Achan thought he could hide his sin, but God saw what he did. And because an “accursed thing” was in the camp, God could not dwell with His people. “Be sure your sin will find you out!” Achan was discovered and his sin exposed. “*I have sinned!*” confessed Achan. Undoubtedly the members of his household knew about the loot and were sharing in his sin. All of them had to be judged for their disobedience, so the people took them to the valley and stoned them. That place was called the “Valley of Achor.” Israel has been in the “valley of trouble” because of her rejection of Christ, but one day the nation will turn to Him and find hope.

**Read Joshua 7, pray and answer the following questions:**

1. How did the Israelites act unfaithfully? (7:1)
  
2. How did the Lord respond to the Israelites' unfaithfulness? (7:1)
  
3. For what reason did Joshua send men from Jericho to Ai? (7:2)
  
4. What report did the spies give to Joshua regarding their mission?
  
5. Why were the spies confident of their ability to overcome the city of Ai? (7:3)
  
6. What was the outcome of the Israelites' battle with the men of Ai? Why had the Lord allowed Israel to lose the battle with Ai?
  
7. According to Joshua, for what reason was Achan asked to confess his sin? (7:19)

8. How did the Israelites repent of their sin before the Lord?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
9. What was the Lord's response to the Israelites repentance? (7:26)
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
10. What does this story tell us about the power of greed?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
11. How does God's response to Israel's repentance encourage you?

### **Confession That Brings Healing**

Great word from the "Word in Life Study Bible"

Achan's confession of sin was clear and straightforward. Rather than try to hide what he had done, he openly declared not only that he had sinned, but the specific nature of the sin as well. He and his family received the required punishment for his wrongdoing, but his confession brought cleaning to the nation. Sin always has consequences. Nevertheless, Scripture urges us to confess our sin, because great benefits can result.

What does it mean to tell God, "I'm sorry" and admit that we have sinned? In 1 Sam. 15:17-31 Samuel's confrontation of Saul about sins that Saul had committed and responsibilities that he had betrayed makes an interesting study in confession.

Saul acknowledged his error and described its source: fear of his people rather than of God's commands. Samuel informed Saul that he would lose his kingship because of what he had done. Here we see an example of sin's long-lasting consequence regardless of confession and forgiveness. Below is

a list of some other people in the Bible who confessed sins to the Lord. Each one offers a lesson about the impact of sin, as well as the healing and hope that come from acknowledging wrongdoing to a God who loves to forgive.

**JOB:** Learned from his suffering that he tended toward self-sufficiency, for which he repented. God was pleased and blessed him with abundance in the restoration of his property and family.

**MOSES:** Interceded for his people after the incident with the golden calf. Although Moses himself was blameless, he appealed to the Lord to forgive the people's sins. God heeded his prayer, but promised to punish the people's rebellion.

**ACHAN:** Confessed of taking forbidden spoils of war when confronted by Joshua. Achan was stoned to death, but the Lord turned from His fierce anger toward Israel.

**DAVID:** Admitted to adultery with Bathsheba and the murder of her husband, Uriah, when confronted by Nathan. The child of David and Bathsheba's union died shortly after its birth, even though David pleaded with God to heal it. Later God gave the couple a son, Solomon.

**EZRA:** Reacted strongly to the sin of intermarriage with Gentiles committed by many of the Israelites, by tearing his garments, pulling out his hair, and grieving over their sins for an entire day. Later he confronted the people, challenging them to repent and correct their wrongs, which they did.

**NEHEMIAH:** Recognized that the Babylonian exile was the result of his nation's repeated rebelliousness. In response, he prayed, fasted, mourned and repented. God gave him the opportunity to return to Jerusalem and begin rebuilding the city wall so that his people could live in freedom and security.

*All commentary provided by Warren Wiersbe and others*