

## **WEEK 5: AN “ACHAN” HEART: THE IMPORTANCE OF OBEDIENCE AND FAITHFULNESS/Joshua 7**

**PREPARE:** Read Psalm 115, focusing on v. 1. Spend time confirming your trust in God.

Now read vv 2-11. Spend time in confession, particularly acknowledging ways you have mistrusted or dishonored God in thought, word, or deed.

Finish vv 12-18 with this in mind: Bring your requests to Him; confirm/reaffirm your trust in Him to work out His good, pleasing and perfect plan for you.

What has been particularly helpful to you in spending time in Psalm 115?

**REFLECT:** Connect with each other and share one area that you are seeking God’s next steps for you.

**STUDY:** Read Joshua 6:15-19. Joshua has been given special instructions by God for the people before entering the city of Jericho. What were the special instructions?

What do you think “the devoted things” included? (See NOTE below before answering)

**NOTE:** Jericho may have been the center of worship for the moon-god. (Jericho probably means “moon city”). Because of this, there would have been every good reason why God was intent on leaving nothing behind (except for Rahab and household) in the idol-worshipping Canaanite cities that were to be destroyed.

Read Joshua 6: 22-27. How did Joshua model obedience to God in regard to God’s instructions about the city of Jericho and the subsequent treatment of Rahab and her household?

Read Joshua 7:1. Here we first discover Achan from the tribe of Judah. How does the scenario change because of Achan’s actions?

Read 7:2-5. Unaware of what transpired in Jericho, Joshua continues the strategic campaign against other pagan cities, this time sending spies to the city of Ai. A conquest in this area would have given Israel a foothold into the central highlands beyond the Jordan Valley. What happened in this battle?

**What clue do you find in verse 1 that confirms the importance of the covenant relationship Israel as a chosen community had with God?**

**Joshua 7:6-12 confirms the intense devastation Joshua and the people felt as a result of the humiliating defeat in Ai. Coveted, Describe Joshua's reaction.**

**What does this passage teach about the importance of both personal and corporate confession and repentance?**

**Verses 13-15 contain God's very detailed instructions Joshua was to carry out among the congregation. What were they?**

**Read Joshua 7:16-26. Achan's sinful actions led to far-reaching consequences. What were they?**

**According to James 1:13-15 and 1 John 2:15-17, desire, sin, and death are the three stages of temptation. In the same way that Achan "saw, coveted, and took" the devoted things, we too can give into our own pursuits of things that get in the way of God's transformative work: position, power, prestige, privilege, possessions, and pleasure. Consider the choices you make in your own life. Are there "devoted things" that you have coveted, taken, and rationalized ("it won't hurt anyone") in order to suit your own desires? Spend some time alone with God and ask Him to excavate the sins that so easily entangle you. Write down what you sense God might be saying to you.**

**Because of Christ's death on the cross, we experience the full and complete forgiveness of confessed sin (1 John 1:9,10 and Hebrews 10:10) but there are often natural consequences of our sin: broken relationships, the need for reconciliation, financial losses, etc. The good news is that God is in the restoration business through Jesus Christ (Isaiah 61); even though we have the propensity to go our own way, God removes our transgressions when we come to Him. Hallelujah! What a Savior! (Read Psalm 103 as a reminder). Spend time praising Him for His persevering love and forgiveness!**

**Share Prayer Requests**