

Joshua's Leadership Tip #8

Contentment: A Battle Strategy

But the people of Israel broke faith in regard to the devoted things, for Achan the son of Carmi, son of Zabdi, son of Zerah, of the tribe of Judah, took some of the devoted things. And the anger of the Lord burned against the people of Israel. (Joshua 7:1 ESV)

We are all too familiar with our personal struggles with our flesh or sin. Many times we can relate to Paul's internal pleading found in Romans:

“But I see a different law in my members waging war against the law of my mind and making me captive to the law of sin that is in my members. Wretched man that I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death? Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, I myself serve the law of God with my mind, but with my flesh I serve the law of sin.” (7:23-28).

Joshua sent 3000 men to capture the city of Ai and they were defeated. When Joshua asked the Lord why they lost the battle, the Lord responded “Israel has sinned...taken some of the riches for themselves...You are contaminated...The one caught with the riches must be burned up with all who belong to him because he violated the Lord's covenant and did such a disgraceful thing in Israel” (7:11, 13, 15). God had warned the Israelites to not keep the valuable plunder found in Jericho (Joshua 6:18-19). It is easy to understand why Achan would disobey God's ban on keeping valuables for himself. Temptation and sin are easier than obeying God. The result of disobedience was a broken fellowship with God and the loss of battles.

Like Achan, we can break our intimate relationship with God and be tempted by ungodly pursuits. Keathly, a Bible Scholar reminds us we all face desires (or lust patterns) and include things like a desire for position, power, prestige, pleasure, possessions, praise or applause, and

recognition. Our lust patterns are nothing more than human solutions or protective strategies we use apart from God to find security, significance, and satisfaction (1).

Let's take the directive from the Lord to Joshua, "I will not be with you anymore unless you destroy the things under the ban from your midst." (Joshua 7:12). We can follow Paul's wise advice and find security, significance, and satisfaction in God alone. (Philippians 3:13-14; 4:12-13; 1 Timothy. 6:6-19)

(1) Keathley III, J. Hampton. Defeat at Ai and the Sin of Achan (Joshua 7:1-26)
<https://bible.org/series/studies-life-joshua>