

# VICTORY!

WEEK 7

## A STUDY OF JOSHUA

### POWER PLAY

In hockey, when a team takes a penalty, one player goes to the penalty box creating a “power play” for the other team. Roughly 20–25% of goals scored happen on a power play. One person’s transgression hinders the whole team. The remaining players fight to pick up the slack, but it’s often not enough.

The Israelites enjoyed a stunning victory at Jericho. Obeying the Lord’s instructions, on the seventh day they marched seven times, shouted, and the walls fell flat! Once the walls fell, the Israelites charged over the rubble, secured the most valuable items for the Lord, killed its inhabitants, and burned everything else. Every Israelite involved obeyed all instructions...except one man.

After Jericho, Israel marched up to take Ai. Spies reported only two or three thousand men should be plenty. What the fighting men of Israel didn’t know is that Ai had a power play. As we will see today, one of their own had a penalty against him and the whole team suffered a stiff loss.

#### JOSHUA 7:19–26

<sup>19</sup> Then Joshua said to Achan, “My son, give glory to the Lord God of Israel and give praise to him. And tell me now what you have done; do not hide it from me.” <sup>20</sup> And Achan answered Joshua, “Truly I have sinned against the Lord God of Israel, and this is what I did: <sup>21</sup> when I saw among the spoil a beautiful cloak from Shinar, and 200 shekels of silver, and a bar of gold weighing 50 shekels, then I coveted them and took them. And see, they are hidden in the earth inside my tent, with the silver underneath.”

<sup>22</sup> So Joshua sent messengers, and they ran to the tent; and behold, it was hidden in his tent with the silver underneath. <sup>23</sup> And they took them out of the tent and brought them to Joshua and to all the people of Israel. And they laid them down before the Lord. <sup>24</sup> And Joshua and all Israel with him took Achan the son of Zerah, and the silver and the cloak and the bar of gold, and his sons and daughters and his oxen and donkeys and sheep and his tent and all that he had. And they brought them up to the Valley of Achor. <sup>25</sup> And Joshua said, “Why did you bring trouble on us? The Lord brings trouble on you today.” And all Israel stoned him with stones. They burned them with fire and stoned them with stones.

<sup>26</sup> And they raised over him a great heap of stones that remains to this day. Then the Lord turned from his burning anger. Therefore, to this day the name of that place is called the Valley of Achor.

### ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

On this side of Jesus's life, death, and resurrection sin has been beaten. We can be free from sin. Not only that, our God fights for us, in us, and through us. Our spiritual battles cause us to forget the victory we have in Christ by the power of the Holy Spirit.



Listen to the song "Armies" on the left by KB to get hyped about the God who fights for us. On the right, KB interviews Chris Tomlin who's song "Whom Shall I Fear," inspired this track.



### DISCUSSION

What is something you've learned about temptation as you have fought your spiritual battle?

ICEBREAKER

1. What did Joshua say to Achan? How did Achan respond? (19-21)

2. What happened next? (22-24)

3. How was the matter concluded? (25-26)

OBSERVATION

4. What can we learn from Joshua's...  
- words and tone when disciplining Achan? (19)

- actions validating Achan's confession? (22-24)

- final response re: Achan and his family? (25-26)

INTERPRETATION

5. How can/do you help your team realize how their behavior, on and off the field, impacts the entire team?

APPLICATION

Have you been impacted negatively by someone else's sin? Sure, we all have to one degree or another. God's job is justice, our job is forgiveness. Sound hard? Talk to your coach today.

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## STUDY NOTES

### HOME FREE

In week 3 of the 2020 season, the Seattle Seahawks' DK Metcalf beat Trevon Diggs of the Dallas Cowboys on a deep pass by about five yards. With less than 10 yards to the endzone after the catch, Metcalf held the ball one-handed and started to slow up for an easy jog-in goal.



One problem for Metcalf, however, was Diggs never quit on the play. Instantly, this clip showed up in the *"Never celebrate too early"* compilations. Diggs didn't let up and got the step he needed to punch the ball out of the back of the endzone before Metcalf strolled in. Instead of scoring, the Seahawks turned the ball over with a Cowboy's touchback. If Metcalf had not let up, if he had secured the ball like every coach ever told him to do, he would have easily scored. In perceived success lurks the greatest danger of failure.

Under Joshua's leadership, Israel had stacked success on success. God delivered them on dry land across an otherwise raging river. God gave Jericho into Israel's hands without even a fight. The worst part of Jericho was the marching for all the men who had been recently circumcised.

Then, as Israel set her sights on Ai, they figured it would be easy. Men died and Israel was beaten. Burdened, Joshua went to the Lord and discovered one of their own had started spiritually coasting.

### DISCIPLINE INVOLVES PERSONAL SIN

After Israel took a beating at Ai, *Joshua tore his clothes and fell to the earth on his face before the ark (7:6)*. The Lord told Joshua that someone had taken loot for themselves from Jericho. The Lord instructed Joshua to separate the people out by tribes. Through casting lots they would discover first the offender's tribe, then clan, then household, and then the man himself. Soon, Joshua, brokenhearted, stood before Achan from the tribe of Judah and the clan of Zerah.

**Then Joshua said to Achan, "My son, give glory to the Lord God of Israel and give praise to him. And tell me now what you have done; do not hide it from me."** We can imagine Achan going through this process, knowing the whole selecting of tribe, clan, etc. would eventually get to him. He hoped it wouldn't, but it did.

Even though Achan's sin led to the death of 36 men, note Joshua's fatherly compassion. He called him "son," and first encouraged him to give God glory and praise. Essentially, Joshua said,

"You can lie to me, but you can't fool God. Honor God's wisdom, knowledge, and power and tell us the truth."

**Achan answered Joshua, "Truly I have sinned against the Lord God of Israel, and this is what I did: when I saw among the spoil a beautiful cloak from Shinar, and 200 shekels of silver, and a bar of gold weighing 50 shekels, then I coveted them and took them. And see, they are hidden in the earth inside my tent, with the silver underneath."** Clearly, this was wrong and Achan knew it. He wasn't ignorant of the command (that wouldn't have helped anyway), but he took the plunder.

Joshua sent men to gather the plunder **and they laid them down before the Lord. And Joshua said, "Why did you bring trouble on us? The Lord brings trouble on you today." And all Israel stoned him with stones. They burned them with fire and stoned them with stones.** Joshua not only destroyed the plunder, but Achan, his family, and everything he had. Finally, they set up a reminder of sin's consequences because, as we've said, reminders are important.

Why judge Achan's whole family? The text remains silent. However, the Law prohibited innocent family members from being punished for the sins of their relatives (Deuteronomy 24:16). Therefore, Achan's family must have somehow been guilty of assisting him in his sin, if only in keeping his secret.

### VICTORY REQUIRES DISCIPLINE

The judgment seems brutally harsh to our modern ears. It was swift and severe, but it was just. Sin, like cancer, spreads—it infects. God wanted to settle Israel into the Promised Land as a holy people. He could not let them conquer the Land while corrupting themselves.

Just because Israel had been successful so far, didn't mean it was time to loosen up in obedience. There is no such thing as home free. You cannot let off the gas. In this life, you are not safe, ever.

Additionally, not only does your sin affect you, it impacts others as well. In Achan's case, men died even though he thought, "I'm not hurting anybody." Sound familiar? This statement is all too often followed by, "I didn't mean to."

Bible scholar, Douglas Moo, said, "Christian maturity should not be measured by the infrequency of temptation, but by the infrequency of yielding to it." Perhaps, as you been fighting your spiritual battle that we've discussed in previous Weeks, you've been facing extra temptation. Don't give up!

If you've been experiencing victory, that's awesome. You don't accidentally defeat sin. Maintain your discipline and keep fighting!

