

CAN'T FOOL ME

Nobody is so smart they can't get fooled. The QR code has 6-minutes worth of baseball clips with guys getting suckered. Although some people don't get fooled all the time, all people get fooled some of the time.



At its heart, sin is a lie—it deceives. If sin told the truth about its consequences, nobody would do it. Instead, sin says, "Live for today. The only thing that matters is what feels good right now. You will be satisfied, I promise."

If this were true, why has antidepressant usage risen so much in the last 20 years? In the middle of the pandemic in 2020, anti-anxiety medication jumped 34%. If the Coronavirus did nothing else, it showed us just how fragile the things we trusted truly were, and people medicated those consequences. Sin is a liar and we've all been fooled.

Only by seeking God's wisdom can we overcome the foolishness to which we naturally turn. Israel had repeated lessons on seeking the Lord's wisdom, but even in today's passage, they forgot to check with him first. Because they didn't seek the Lord, they got tragically fooled.

JOSHUA 9:8-15

⁸ They said to Joshua, "We are your servants." And Joshua said to them, "Who are you? And where do you come from?" ⁹ They said to him, "From a very distant country your servants have come, because of the name of the Lord your God. For we have heard a report of him, and all that he did in Egypt, ¹⁰ and all that he did to the two kings of the Amorites who were beyond the Jordan, to Sihon the king of Heshbon, and to Og king of Bashan, who lived in Ashtaroth. ¹¹ So our elders and all the inhabitants of our country said to us, 'Take provisions in your hand for the journey and go to meet them and say to them, "We are your servants. Come now, make a covenant with us.'"

¹² Here is our bread. It was still warm when we took it from our houses as our food for the journey on the day we set out to come to you, but now, behold, it is dry and crumbly. ¹³ These wineskins were new when we filled them, and behold, they have burst. And these garments and sandals of ours are worn out from the very long journey." ¹⁴ So the men took some of their provisions, but did not ask counsel from the Lord. ¹⁵ And Joshua made peace with them and made a covenant with them, to let them live, and the leaders of the congregation swore to them.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

How can I know when God is telling me to do something? Joshua had access to God through his presence in the Tabernacle. God dwelled among the people. Obviously, none of us can go visit with God in the same way Joshua could.

Since we can't go visit God's presence, are we hopeless? No! Check out the QR code for more answers to the question, "How can I know when God is telling me to do something?"



DISCUSSION

What's some great advice you've received?

ICEBREAKER

1. What did they claim they had heard? (9-10)

OBSERVATION

2. What apparent evidence did they present? (12-13)

3. What did Joshua and the Israelites do and not do? (14)

4. Why might they have claimed to pretend they traveled so far? (9-13)

INTERPRETATION

5. Why do you think Joshua and the Israelites responded as they did? (14)

6. What do you think are the keys in your life to avoid the deception of sin and live according to God?

APPLICATION

When struggling to make good choices, God provided community. Like we mentioned last Week, you have people in your corner. Talk to your coach today.

VICTORY!

WEEK 9

A STUDY OF JOSHUA

STUDY NOTES ALL STAR

The oldest, most popular, and all-time best-selling basketball shoes are Converse All Stars. They were first produced in 1917 and were updated in the 1920's to the more familiar black and white variety. Nearly 60% of Americans have owned at least one pair.

Recently, Converse partnered with a designer to promote the new TURBODRK Chuck 70. The ad campaign had an Instagram post by Converse featuring two leather-clad masked figures in what appears as a pentagram shaped pose. The following quote from the designer, Rich Owens accompanied the post,

"I've been using this pentagram for a long time because obviously, it has adolescent occult associations. But I like geometric diagrams like that because, in a very primal way, they are a culture's grasp for control. And a way to organize thoughts and systems. And a pentagram, in this day and age with all of its associations... I like the fact that it refers to an alternative system. And that suggests openness and empathy. It suggests the pursuit of pleasure, this pursuit of sensation. But one of the main things that I think it suggests is empathy and a consideration of systems of living that might not be standard. So that leads us to be more accepting and tolerant of other systems, which I think is a good thing."

Words like "occult," "control," "pleasure," "sensation," etc. should raise a red flag for anyone passionately pursuing Jesus. Not everything in this paragraph is anti-Christian. We're big fans of openness, empathy, tolerance, and acceptance—however, a biblically-minded Christian will define those terms very differently.

The deception is very subtle. In fact, some people may say, "This doesn't matter, it's just a shoe." Cultural values shape our faith more than we often consider. So often, we are steeped in lies from living in a sinful world that we don't even have the perspective needed to know what we're doing is wrong. Something can sound so right and yet be completely wrong—even a shoe ad.

Today's story is an example of this. Israel had a limited perspective. They did something that sounded right, yet had devastating generational consequences.

VICTORY REQUIRES HUMILITY

After Israel's victories at Jericho and Ai, inhabitants of the Land named the "Gibeonites" (because they were from Gibeon), planned to trick Israel. They put on costumes of worn-out clothes and traveling gear, and came to speak with Joshua about a peace treaty.

Joshua cleverly asked how he might know they're not the Land's inhabitants. They responded, ***"From a very distant country your servants have come, because of the name of the Lord your God. For we have heard a report of him, and all that he did in Egypt, and all that he did to the two kings of the Amorites..."***

Notice, however, that he referred to "your God." Clearly, they weren't ready to convert as Rahab had done even though they feared destruction by Israel's God.

Likewise, he slyly never mentioned the victories at Jericho or Ai. Instead, he appeared to only know what happened years ago. Had the con man acknowledged Joshua's two most recent victories inside the Land, he may have blown his cover.

As proof that they traveled far, the men showed their old worn-out provisions. Inspecting the gear, ***the men took some of their provisions, but did not ask counsel from the Lord. And Joshua made peace with them and made a covenant with them, to let them live, and the leaders of the congregation swore to them.***

HUMILITY REDUCES FOOLISHNESS

Subtle, foolish pride led to over-confidence, causing them to trust their own judgment based on what they physically experienced (sight and taste) and felt (sympathy and compassion) rather than seeking an answer from God. That pride made them vulnerable. In so many words they declared, "Who needs God?"

Most of us know right from wrong, black and white. However, life is full of gray choices. In these moments we need practical help to evaluate our decisions. Here are a few suggestions: First, "Is there a clear-cut Bible command?" Things like lying, sexual immorality, drunkenness are clearly prohibited in the Bible.

Second, "Will this hurt my body or upset the Holy Spirit living within me?" Smoking and vaping isn't really in the Bible. However, we know it damages the body. Therefore, it's not something a person ought to do. Additionally, the addiction caused by repeated use turns into a life-long consequence for a short-term decision.

Finally, "Will this hurt my witness or defame God's name?" As a silly example, if you have the little fish symbol on your car, don't drive like an idiot. If believers are in the business of making disciples, then we don't want to damage our mission by conduct or language.

It's sometimes hard to know what to do. In all things, we must humble ourselves, seek the Lord, and determine how he would have us live.