



Talmid תלמיד a Hebrew word that means “a true disciple who desires to be what the Rabbi Jesus is.”

Whoever claims to live in Him must walk as Jesus did. 1 John 2:6 (NIV)

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STUDY TO SHEW THYSELF APPROVED UNTO GOD, A WORKMAN THAT NEEDED NOT TO BE ASHAMED, RIGHTLY
DIVIDING THE WORD OF TRUTH. 2 TIMOTHY 2:15

Spiritual Defeat Because of Sin

Pastor Eddie Ildefonso

THE CONQUEST OF THE PROMISED LAND

[Joshua 6:1-22:24](#)

The Failed Assault at Ai (Achan's Sin): Spiritual Defeat Because of Sin

[\(Joshua 7:1-26\) Introduction:](#) all kinds of human emotions are felt by people who experienced failure. There are the emotions of discouragement and depression, of being distressed and downhearted, of feeling down and being treated like an outcast, of being sad and crestfallen, of being disheartened and demoralized.

Sadly, these emotions become serious problems for some people. For example, people by the millions wrestle with the problem of depression and discouragement, living defeated, unsuccessful lives. For many people, life is like a roller coaster with peaks and valleys, being up one day and down the next. Life becomes like a wave of the sea rolling in and out, swaying to and fro. Sometimes there is progress, but there is also regression. Gains are sometimes made, but losses are also suffered. From time to time there is victory, but there is far too often defeat.

There are occasional conquests and triumphs, but there is more often the experience of being overthrown, a sense of being routed and trounced by the events and experiences of life.

But listen: there is a glorious message of hope, the message of Holy Scripture. The Word of God declares that all these emotions that discourage and defeat us can be conquered. We can live a victorious life, a life that conquers and triumphs over all enemies that seek to defeat us as we walk throughout life.

Remember that Joshua and the army of Israel had just experienced the glorious conquest of the fortress at Jericho. Joy and rejoicing were flooding their hearts, for they had witnessed the power of God acting in their behalf. They had seen the walls of Jericho crumbling under the miraculous power of God. The future looked bright, for it seemed as though God would be with them as they marched forth to conquer the promised land. But then it happened: when the army launched an attack against the second city of the enemy, the soldiers were routed and soundly beaten. Defeat was now staring the Israelite army in the face. And through this experience, a strong warning is issued to succeeding generations: sin will always lead to defeat in spiritual warfare. This is the subject of this important passage of Scripture: *The Failed*

Assault at Ai (Achan's Sin): Spiritual Defeat Because of Sin, Joshua 7:1-26.

- The cause of the failed assault: sin (v.1).**
- The consequences of sin upon God's people (v.2-5).**
- The remedy for sin and defeat: a confrontation with the LORD (v.6-26).**

1. (Joshua 7:1) The cause of the failed assault: sin.

Sin, Results— Theft, Results— Stealing, Results— Responsibility, Corporate—Corporate Responsibility— Community, Duty— Society, Duty— Society, Corporate Responsibility, Flesh,

Aim of: the cause of the failed assault against Ai was sin, terrible sin. A soldier had stolen some things that had been given to the Tabernacle, that had been set apart and devoted to God and His service. The soldier's name was Achan. His very name means "**trouble**," and he is known as the man who brought trouble upon Israel (**Joshua 7:25**). The trouble he caused had far-reaching consequences: his sin affected the whole community of Israel. It caused the first military defeat of God's people.

Note this fact: all Israel was charged with the crime, not just the individual man. There was a **corporate responsibility**. Therefore there was **corporate, community guilt**. God looked upon the community as one body of people who should love, care for, and look after one another. Israel was one body of people, one nation, one community of people who were to build up one another and build a strong, righteous, moral, and just society.

The point is striking: within communities, neighbors are to look after one another and take care of one another. In God's plan and purpose for Israel (and for all other peoples), neighbors are to love one another and be responsible and accountable for one another. Therefore, when Achan committed the sin of stealing from God, the whole community of Israel became guilty before God. Consequently, God charged the Israelites with **corporate, community guilt**. As a community, they were corporately responsible for one another; therefore, there was corporate guilt. God charged the Israelites with committing a "**trespass**" (**Maal**), with being unfaithful

to him. The word means to cover up, to act in secret, to act treacherously; to be unfaithful; to break faith; to break or violate a trust.

One man had trespassed against God; one man had been unfaithful to God, broken the trust with God. But the man did not live in isolation; he was not an island unto himself. He lived within a community; therefore, what he did affected the community as a whole. His sin had a devastating affect upon the Israelites: it caused the assault against Ai to fail. His sins separated the whole community from God, from His holy Presence and guidance. Therefore when Israel went into battle, God was not with them. Their sin had separated them from God. Sin had cut them off from God; consequently, when they went into battle, they fought in the **arm of the flesh**, not in the power of God. And they were defeated. All because of sin. Sin always causes failure and defeat when fighting the enemies of this world.

Thought 1. There are two strong lessons in this point for us.

1) Sin always leads to failure and defeat when fighting against the enemies of this world.

Enemy after enemy confronts us, enemies such as.....

- disease
- accident
- broken relationships
- financial difficulty
- loss of job
- natural catastrophe
- misunderstandings
- discouragement
- depression
- family problems
- work difficulties
- disappointments
- tension and stress
- loss of loved ones
- lack of purpose and fulfillment

Such enemies will defeat us if there is sin in our lives. God cannot dwell in the midst of sin. God is holy; therefore He can dwell only where there is righteousness and purity. His presence and guidance are not available where there is sin. We stand alone to struggle against such enemies if there is sin in our lives, and the only help available to us is what help man can give us. Supernatural help—God's presence

and power—is available only as we live holy and righteous lives before God. Sin separates, cuts us off from God and His help. Sin causes failure and defeat. Sin causes us to live lives that are weak and wavering before God, lives that ebb and flow like the waves of the sea. Listen to what God declares about sin:

"This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me" ([Matthew 15:8](#)).

"Deliver me from the workers of iniquity, and save me from bloody men" ([Psalm 66:18](#)).

"But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear" ([Isaiah 59:2](#)).

"And there is none that calleth upon thy name, that stirreth up himself to take hold of thee: for thou hast hid thy face from us, and hast consumed us, because of our iniquities" ([Isaiah 64:7](#)).

"They shall go with their flocks and with their herds to seek the LORD; but they shall not find *him*; he hath withdrawn himself from them" ([Hosea 5:6](#)).

2) There is a *corporate, community responsibility* for one another. This corporate responsibility is true among all of society, but it is especially true among God's people. The first and greatest commandment is for people to love God with all of their hearts, minds, bodies, and souls. But the second and greatest commandment is that we love one another. Every human being is to love his or her neighbor, love every other human being upon this earth. God expects us to love and care for one another, looking after and taking care of our neighbors. We are responsible for our neighbors; therefore we are held accountable by God for one another. When one of us joys, we are all to rejoice together. When one of us hurts, we are all to hurt together. When one of us needs help, we are to help that one. When one of us sins, it affects the whole community. When a person is murdered, a community is responsible for that blood and held accountable to see that justice is done.

The point is this: there is *corporate responsibility* and *corporate accountability* within our communities, and especially within the church. Righteousness affects our communities, and sin and evil affects our communities. Righteousness builds us up; but sin tears us down and eventually destroys us—both individually and corporately (within our communities). This is exactly what Scripture declares:

"Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself" ([Matthew 22:39](#)).

"So we, *being* many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another" ([Romans 12:5](#)).

"Let love be without dissimulation [hypocrisy]. Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good" ([Romans 12:9](#)).

"For we *being* many are one bread, and one body: for we are all partakers of that one bread" ([1 Cor. 10:17](#)).

"There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus" ([Galatians 3:28](#)).

"And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ" ([Ephes. 4:11-13](#)).

"For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ. For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit. For the body is not one member, but many" ([1 Cor. 12:12-14](#)).

"Honour all men. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honour the king" ([1 Peter 2:17](#)).

"And the LORD make you to increase and abound in love one toward another, and toward all men, even as we do toward you" ([1 Thes. 3:12](#)).

"One sinner destroyeth much good" ([Eccles. 9:18](#)).

"Blessed is the nation whose God is the LORD: and the people whom he hath chosen for his own inheritance" ([Psalm 33:12](#)).

"By the blessing of the upright the city is exalted: but it is overthrown by the mouth of the wicked" ([Proverbs 11:11](#)).

"Righteousness exalteth a nation: but sin is a reproach to any people" ([Proverbs 14:34](#)).

"Take away the wicked from before the king, and his throne shall be established in righteousness" ([Proverbs 25:5](#)).

2. ([Joshua 7:2-5](#)) The consequences of sin upon God's people.

Self-confidence—Flesh, Arm of—Consequences, of Sin—Anger, of God—Defeat, of the Believer—Defeat, of Israel—Israel, Defeat in Warfare—Discouragement, Caused by—Defeat,

Caused by: the consequences of Achan's sin were far-reaching and most tragic, for the consequences fell not only on Achan but also upon all the Israelites.

There were three serious consequences of sin upon God's people.

1. The sin of Achan aroused the LORD's anger ([Joshua 7:2](#)). Sin had been committed; therefore the justice of God had to be executed. Keep in mind that God's judgment was falling upon the Canaanites because of their terrible sin and evil, because their "cup of iniquity" had been filled to the brim.

[Genesis 15:16](#). See [DEEPER STUDY # 1—Joshua 11:20 Supplement #5 - sent October 07 in separate document](#).

The Canaanites had sinned beyond repentance, beyond ever returning to God. The Canaanites were

facing the judgment of God because of their evil. Now, God's people had sinned; consequently, they too must be judged. God shows no favoritism or partiality to any person or people; justice must be executed against sin. Sin arouses the anger, the justice and judgment of God; consequently, the anger of the LORD burned against the Israelites. The arousal of God's justice and judgment is the first consequence of sin.

2. The second consequence of sin was that of being defeated by the enemy ([Joshua 7:2-5](#)). **Note this fact:** Joshua and his officers were totally unaware that Achan had stolen some items from the Tabernacle. He and the army, in fact, all the Israelites were rejoicing over the great victory over Jericho. The LORD had given a great victory over one of the strongest fortified cities of the Middle East. The walls of Jericho had crumbled before the very eyes of the Israelite army, crumbled by the miraculous power of God. A spirit of joy and rejoicing and revelry was bound to fill the camp of the Israelites. They knew beyond question that God was with them and was going to give them victory over the enemies of the promised land.

a. Note that in preparing to attack Ai, Joshua acted without seeking the LORD's presence ([Joshua 7:2](#)). He sent several men to spy out Ai which was near Beth Aven just east of Bethel. There is no reference to Joshua seeking the counsel and guidance of the LORD. Apparently, he acted entirely on his own, beaming with self-confidence because of the great victory over Jericho.

b. The spies reported back in the arm of the flesh, also being full of self-confidence ([Joshua 7:3](#)). They reported that Ai had only a small army, suggesting that only two to three thousand soldiers were necessary to conquer the city. Again, note that the report of the spies was full of self-confidence. The men were resting upon the arm of the flesh, the strength of the army itself to gain the victory. There is no mention whatsoever about the LORD and the need for His presence, guidance, and power. Joshua and the officers plainly did not seek the LORD. This is clear, for we shall soon see that God's strategy was to send the entire army against Ai, not just a few thousand soldiers (cp. [Joshua 8:1](#)).

c. Joshua sent three thousand troops that were immediately routed, soundly defeated ([Joshua 7:4-5](#)).

The Israelite soldiers retreated and were chased from the gate of Ai as far as Shebarim, which means the *stone quarries*. Thirty-six soldiers lost their lives in the retreat.

3. The sin resulted in terrible, devastating discouragement. A demoralized, paralyzed spirit struck the people. Their hearts melted with fear and their courage became as liquid as water.

Thought 1. There are two strong lessons in this point for us:

1) Self-confidence, acting in the *arm of the flesh*, will lead to failure and defeat. A person cannot stand by himself in this life and conquer the serious trials of life, not trials such as paralyzing accidents and deadly diseases. And no person can conquer all the temptations of life and the inevitable confrontation with death—not in the *arm of the flesh*. Self-confidence collapses before the temptations of life, and self-confidence never conquers death. Joshua and the Israelite army were defeated because of self-confidence, failing to place their trust in God. Scripture warns us against the danger of self-confidence:

"Peter answered and said unto him, Though all men shall be offended because of thee, yet will I never be offended" (Matthew 26:33).

"And he spake this parable unto certain which trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others: Two men went up into the temple to pray; the one a Pharisee, and the other a publican. The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican. I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess. And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner. I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other: for every one that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted" (Luke 18:9-14).

"Be of the same mind one toward another. Mind

not high things, but condescend to men of low estate. Be not wise in your own conceits" (Romans 12:16).

"And if any man think that he knoweth any thing, he knoweth nothing yet as he ought to know" (1 Cor. 8:2).

"For if a man think himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceiveth himself" (Galatians 6:3).

"Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall" (1 Cor. 10:12).

"Beware lest thou forget the LORD, which brought thee forth out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage" (Deut. 6:12).

"Be not wise in thine own eyes: fear the LORD, and depart from evil" (Proverbs 3:7).

"Pride goeth before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall" (Proverbs 16:18).

"Seest thou a man wise in his own conceit? there is more hope of a fool than of him" (Proverbs 26:12).

"Boast not thyself of tomorrow; for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth" (Proverbs 27:1).

"They that trust in their wealth, and boast themselves in the multitude of their riches; None of them can by any means redeem his brother, nor give to God a ransom for him" (Psalms 49:6-7).

"He that trusteth in his own heart is a fool: but whoso walketh wisely, he shall be delivered" (Proverbs 28:26).

"Woe unto them *that are* wise in their own eyes, and prudent in their own sight" (Isaiah 5:21).

2) When God's people sin, He chastises them. He disciplines and corrects them just as a father disciplines and corrects his child. Chastisement

or discipline is necessary in order to save the child from harming himself. So it is with God. God chastises or disciplines us to keep us from harming ourselves by sinking deeper and deeper into sin. Without the chastisement of God, sin would run rampant and destroy us. Just imagine what kind of world this would be if the sins of lawlessness, brutality, violence, immorality, lying, stealing, and the host of other sins were given free reign and allowed to run unrestrained upon this earth.

Sin must be chastised, corrected, and disciplined by God or else the whole human race would become engulfed with a spirit of lawlessness upon this earth. Evil would run rampant, even among some of God's people who walk in carnality, living lives of immorality. This is the clear purpose for chastisement (discipline, correction): to save us from harming ourselves. Chastisement is one of the consequences of sin.

"Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away: and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit" ([John 15:2](#)).

"For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep. For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged. But when we are judged, we are chastened of the LORD, that we should not be condemned with the world" ([1 Cor. 11:30-32](#)).

"And ye have forgotten the exhortation which speaketh unto you as unto children, My son, despise not thou the chastening of the LORD, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him: For whom the LORD loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth" ([Hebrews 12:5-6](#)).

"Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations: That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ" ([1 Peter 1:6-7](#)).

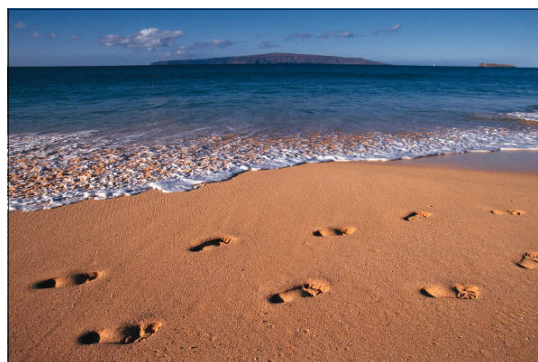
"Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you: But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy" ([1 Peter 4:12-13](#)).

"Thou shalt also consider in thine heart, that, as a man chasteneth his son, so the LORD thy God chasteneth thee" ([Deut. 8:5](#)).

"My son, despise not the chastening of the LORD; neither be weary of his correction: For whom the LORD loveth he correcteth; even as a father the son in whom he delighteth" ([Proverbs 3:11-12](#)).

"Behold, I have refined thee, but not with silver; I have chosen thee in the furnace of affliction" ([Isaiah 48:10](#)).

Continued in next edition...



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