

# 7

## Achan: Sin in the Community

### Joshua 7

The effect of individual sin unleashed in the body of Christ can have devastating consequences. It can creep slowly through the life of a church, university fellowship, small group or Sunday-school class, quenching the work of the Holy Spirit and hindering the advance of God's kingdom.

**GROUP DISCUSSION.** Where have you seen the negative effects of one individual's actions in an organization, family, workplace or neighborhood?

**PERSONAL REFLECTION.** In what ways have you met God or grown spiritually through your involvement in the body of Christ?

Israel discovered the deadly, far-reaching effect of individual sin during its conquest of Canaan around 1300 B.C. In the midst of a miraculous victory at Jericho (Joshua 6), Achan took several items that were to be devoted to the Lord. Israel experienced the consequences of his sin in their next battle against the smaller city of Ai. *Read Joshua 7.*

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1. Retell the story in your own words.

2. What happens to Joshua and the Israelites when they attempt to conquer the city of Ai, and why (vv. 1-5)?

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3. After their defeat, the hearts of the Israelites "melted and became like water" (v. 5). Imagine that you are a reporter observing the scene. Describe the different types of reactions you might hear. (Remember, they do not yet know the reason for their defeat.)

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4. When you or an individual in your fellowship or church experience a setback, how do you respond?

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5. Describe Joshua's fears in your own words (vv. 6-9).

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6. How does God respond to Joshua's pleas (vv. 10-15)?

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7. Why do you think God held all of Israel responsible for the sin of one person?

8. What was the root cause of Achan's sin against God?

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9. What sins or obstacles might be preventing your church or fellowship from progressing according to God's plan?

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10. In obedience to God, Israel took radical steps to remedy the situation (vv. 22-26). What guidelines did Jesus give us in Matthew 18:15-17 to maintain holiness in the church?

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11. What practical steps can you take to build up your fellowship or church this week?

*Joshua 8:1-29 recounts how God granted the Israelites victory over Ai in their second attempt to conquer the city. Ask God to make you clean vessels through whom he can do mighty works.*

### **Now or Later**

Read Ephesians 4:17—5:7. What type of behavior do you most need to put off and put on?

What work does God need to do in your heart?