

ACHAN'S SIN

Scripture:
Joshua 7:1-8:29

Memory Verse: *He who conceals his sins will not prosper, but he who confesses and forsakes them will find compassion. Proverbs 28:13*

Materials Needed:

Pictures of lesson
Copies of after-lesson worksheet

Objectives: As a result of this lesson, I want my students

To Know: that when Achan coveted, stole, and hid some of the valuable possessions from Jericho that belonged to God, even though no one knew about it at the time, it later cost Israel 36 men's lives and a defeat by Ai and after Achan was exposed, it cost him and his family's lives. Afterwards, Israel defeated Ai and Bethel.

To Realize: Hiding sin brings trouble for ourselves and others.

To Respond: by not giving into the temptation of hidden sin, but by exposing it immediately.

Setting Up the Story—

(Note: although we are given the information of Achan's sin before the Israelites go to fight Ai, do not cover those first few verses until after their defeat.)

Because this lesson links so strongly with last week's lesson, it would be good to start the class with a review game. You can write 7-9 questions about last week's lesson, divide the students into two teams, and play a tic-tac-toe game that reviews the facts and truth of the passage.

After playing the game, ask, "I want you to imagine you were Israelite soldiers coming back from Jericho that night. What would you be thinking and feeling?!" (students share) "What would you be thinking about all the other battles that are ahead of you?" Everyone is pretty excited. Joshua sends out a couple spies to see what the next town is going to be like and they come back and look what they report in **Joshua 7:3**. (a student reads)

Telling the Story—

Scripture:
Joshua 7:2-9

- I. Israel Defeated at Ai
 - A. Ai small and unfortified
 - B. Only 3,000 soldier go to fight

As you tell the story—

Storytell this part as if you are one of the spies reporting back to Joshua:
"It's small. Not very well-fortified. It'll be a piece of cake! The whole army doesn't even need to go—only send a few thousand and we'll wrap this thing

- C. Ai defeats them
 - 1. strikes down 36 men
 - 2. Israelites AFRAID!

D. Joshua cries out to God

Joshua 7:1, 10-15

II. Achan Sinned

A. God tells him someone has sinned

B. Achan had stolen: he believed four things

- 1. "My sin is small."
- 2. "It doesn't matter."
- 3. "It doesn't hurt anyone."
- 4. "No one will find out."

C. Someone took some of the things under the ban belonging to God

- 1. He stole
- 2. He deceived

D. He would be discovered by casting lots

up!"

Joshua leads his men out to battle. The men of Ai come out. The battle is engaged and something goes terribly wrong. Joshua looks around. His men are running away. He sees his men lying on the ground. Retreat! They pull back to their camp.

How are you feeling if you are Joshua. Ok. Jericho is one thing. God did that. But now you are facing your enemy in combat. And you lose to an EASY little town! What are the rest of the fortified cities going to think and do? We know what Joshua thought they would do! Look in vs. 9.

Read vs. 10. God doesn't seem too alarmed. He tells Joshua exactly what the problem is! First three words of vs. 11. "Israel has sinned..."

Read Joshua 7:1

Storytell as if from Achan's viewpoint what was going through his heart as he was in Jericho fighting.

What must Achan have been thinking when he saw those rich clothes, all that silver, that huge bar of gold? (have students give answers and then summarize on the board by writing the four phrases)

Storytell about how God tells Joshua to find out who it is.

Does God know who it is?

Does God tell Joshua who it is?

Why do you think He doesn't?

Why is God going to leave it up to

casting lots? Why doesn't He just say, "Achan, the son of Carmi sinned by taking things..." (let students answer, but point out that God is making the point to all the Israelites that HE knows their secret thoughts and actions.)

Scripture:
Joshua 7:16-26

III. Achan is Discovered and Destroyed

- A. Lots are taken tribe by tribe and family by family
- B. Achan is finally chosen

- C. Achan is told to confess
- D. Achan confesses what he did
- E. The spoils are brought from his tent and given to the Lord.

- F. Everything Achan owns is destroyed

Joshua 8:1-29

IV. Israel Defeats Ai and Bethel

The next morning all the Israelites meet before Joshua. God knows who is guilty, and Achan knows who is guilty. What should Achan do at that moment?

The tribe of Judah is chosen. (write Judah on board)

The next lot is about to be cast. What should Achan do at that moment?

The family of the Zerahites is chosen. The next lot is about to be cast. What should Achan do at that moment?

The family of Zabdi is taken.

If you were Achan, how would you be feeling right then? What should Achan do? He waits. The next lot is taken. His father Carmi's household is taken. All the men are standing there. The last lot is about to be taken, and you know what Achan says? Nothing. The lot is taken. Achan is selected. And Joshua has to tell him to confess what he has done.

(if students ask why everything had to be destroyed, it is most likely that Achan's immediate relatives who shared a tent with him knew about what he had done.)

Achan had not gotten rid of his hidden sin, but the Israelites HAD—they completely got rid of Achan and his family and gave it completely back to God.

Quickly storytell through the events to conclude the battle with Ai.

Concluding the story:

Four things Achan believed turned out to be false. What were they? (review from board). There is a verse that fits this perfectly. (teach memory verse and then conclude with the application). Is there anything in your life that you knew was wrong, but you either thought it was too small or didn't matter or it didn't hurt anyone or no one would know? What must you do to get rid of it? Let's pray.

Boardwork (draw on back):

ACHAN'S SIN HELPS FOR THE TEACHER

Personal Application Questions:

1. Has there ever been something you have done that was wrong that no one knew about except you and God?
2. Is there something in your life currently that only you and God knows shouldn't be there?
3. What is keeping you from getting rid of it?
4. What steps will you take to get rid of it?
5. How does today's memory verse apply to you?

Application Questions to think through for your Students:

1. What might keep your students from confessing their sins to the right person or making restitution for something they have done wrong?
2. What part does shame play in bringing something hidden into the light?
3. What steps will your students take in getting rid of hidden things?

Memory Verse:

He who conceals his sins will not prosper, but he who confesses and forsakes them will find compassion. Proverbs 28:13

Write here which game you will use to teach this verse and any supplies you might need:

Post-Lesson Activity:

Make copies of *Hidden Word* (Bible Skills, p. 121) and have students complete in class.

Homework Ideas:

Have students come up with a plan for keeping "short accounts with God" so that sin does not become hidden.