

**Joshua 6:1-21 New Living Translation**

**1** But Israel violated the instructions about the things set apart for the Lord. A man named Achan had stolen some of these dedicated things, so the Lord was very angry with the Israelites. Achan was the son of Carmi, a descendant of Zimri son of Zerah, of the tribe of Judah.

**2** Joshua sent some of his men from Jericho to spy out the town of Ai, east of Bethel, near Beth-aven. **3** When they returned, they told Joshua, "There's no need for all of us to go up there; it won't take more than two or three thousand men to attack Ai. Since there are so few of them, don't make all our people struggle to go up there."

**4** So approximately 3,000 warriors were sent, but they were soundly defeated. The men of Ai **5** chased the Israelites from the town gate as far as the quarries, and they killed about thirty-six who were retreating down the slope. The Israelites were paralyzed with fear at this turn of events, and their courage melted away.

**6** Joshua and the elders of Israel tore their clothing in dismay, threw dust on their heads, and bowed face down to the ground before the Ark of the Lord until evening. **7** Then Joshua cried out, "Oh, Sovereign Lord, why did you bring us across the Jordan River if you are going to let the Amorites kill us? If only we had been content to stay on the other side! **8** Lord, what can I say now that Israel has fled from its enemies? **9** For when the Canaanites and all the other people living in the land hear about it, they will surround us and wipe our name off the face of the earth. And then what will happen to the honor of your great name?"

**10** But the Lord said to Joshua, "Get up! Why are you lying on your face like this? **11** Israel has sinned and broken my covenant! They have stolen some of the things that I commanded must be set apart for me. And they have not only stolen them but have lied about it and hidden the things among their own belongings. **12** That is why the Israelites are running from their enemies in defeat. For now Israel itself has been set apart for destruction. I will not remain with you any longer unless you destroy the things among you that were set apart for destruction.

**13** "Get up! Command the people to purify themselves in preparation for tomorrow. For this is what the Lord, the God of Israel, says: Hidden among you, O Israel, are things set apart for the Lord. You will never defeat your enemies until you remove these things from among you.

**14** "In the morning you must present yourselves by tribes, and the Lord will point out the tribe to which the guilty man belongs. That tribe must come forward with its clans, and the Lord will point out the guilty clan. That clan will then come forward, and the Lord will point out the guilty family. Finally, each member of the guilty family must come forward one by one. **15** The one who has stolen what was set apart for destruction will himself be burned with fire, along with everything he has, for he has broken the covenant of the Lord and has done a horrible thing in Israel."

***Discussion/Journal Questions***

What has been your experience with the idea that we "reap what we sow"? How have you reaped the consequences of your actions? How have you reaped the consequences of someone else's actions?

Read Joshua 7:1-15. How would you summarize this story in your own words?

American culture is saturated with the idea of individualism—what I do is about me and affects no one else. How does this story in Joshua challenge that idea?

What is accountability in Christian community? How would you explain it to someone unfamiliar with church terminology?

What happens when we practice accountability without love? What happens when we love without practicing accountability?

Who are the people in your circle whose behavior and poor choices are toxic and negatively impacting you or the Church community? What would it look like to confront them in love?

How can your group pray for you this week?

**Who are you praying for to accept Jesus, and what specifically did you do this week to interact with them?**

**Who are you currently discipling, and what specifically did you do this week to help them know, love, and follow Jesus?**

**Who are you considering for future discipleship relationships, and what specifically did you do this week to interact with them?**