

Joshua 7—8: Defeat, Confession and Victory

Success can lead to complacency. We feel confident, in control, optimistic—then suddenly the bottom drops out of our lives. Israel had tasted success. They had entered the Promised Land, they had won an important battle, and God was obviously with them. Conquering the city of Ai would be a piece of cake! But their confidence collapsed when they attacked the city and were routed. What had gone wrong? Had God failed them? Why hadn't God kept his promise?

Warming Up to God

Think of a time when you failed at something. How did you feel, and why?

- **Read Joshua 7-8**

Discovering the Word

- What are Joshua's concerns after this defeat (7:6-9)?
- How do God's concerns differ from Joshua's (7:10-15)?
- Joshua urged Achan to "give glory to the LORD" by admitting his crime (7:19). How does confession glorify God?
- How did the second attack on Ai differ from the first (8:1-29)?
- If you had been an Israelite, what thoughts would have come to mind each time you saw the rock piles mentioned in 7:26 and 8:29?
- What impact would the reading of the law have had on the Israelites (8:32-35)?

Applying the Word

- Joshua stated that Achan was being stoned because he had brought disaster on the Israelites (7:25). Thirty-six Israelite warriors had already died because of Achan's sin. How might our sins affect others?
- What reminders can help keep us from sinning?

Responding in Prayer

Bring any sin in your life before God. Confess it to him with a penitent heart.