
What Is Hindering You?

Scriptural Reference: Joshua 7:1, 5-6, 10-21

Key Verse: The Israelites were unfaithful in regard to the devoted things; Achan son of Karmi, the son of Zimri, the son of Zerah, of the tribe of Judah, took some of them. So the LORD's anger burned against Israel. (*Joshua 7:1, NIV*)

Life Principle

In the world in which we live, it is countercultural to list sins that keep us separated from the fullness of God's kingdom; however, we need to recognize that sin has a corrosive effect upon all who come into contact with the one who commits the sin.

Introduction

We learn from Romans 6:23 that the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ. Each of us has a personal battle with the arms of sin. Even when we try to do our best, the evil of this world is ever present. Sin brings about consequences that affect not only the individual, but also all those that are around.

Israel was certainly familiar with the unruly nature of sin and, after a successful campaign into Jericho, found themselves embattled again. Romans 3:23 reads, "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God." Before we launch a campaign against anyone who is caught in sin, we must remember that we are all susceptible to the grip of sin. Our eyes deceive us, our ears mislead us, and our misguided hearts misinform us.

As God leads us, He is certain that sin is not a partner for our journey. He will not share us with our unhealthy, earthly desires. This is what hinders us from accomplishing all that God has for our lives. Let us be diligent in avoiding the harshness of sin, understanding the abhorrent consequences of sin, and acknowledging and accepting the shame of sin.

BIBLICAL EMPHASES FOR STUDY

I. Avoiding the Abrasive Nature of Sin (*Joshua 7:1*)

Israel was successful in conquering Jericho, but they were charged not

to take any of those things that were cursed before God (see Joshua 6:18). Israel went among a nation with whom God had forbidden them to have any interaction. They were to avoid taking anything, which became a battle of the mind. To see and not touch, to hear and not want became the challenge; and, unfortunately, there was one who failed.

There being one that failed left a stain on Israel, and all were held under the same disobedience. When we fail to act accordingly in this life with God as our Lord, we open the door that will affect others who are connected to us. Sin does not just change the life of one person, but anyone who stands alongside a person.

With a culture that rejects the reality of the consequences of sin, so many have damaged lives due to their not avoiding the abrasive nature of sin in our communities. We have a responsibility as servants and believers in God to honor His Word and commandments over our lives. We know that none of us is perfect; but because we serve a perfect God, and His DNA flows within us, let us hold one another accountable to avoid falling into sin.

II. Abhorrent Consequences of Sin (*Joshua 7:5-6*)

God was angry with Israel for allowing sin to have control and bring in cursed novelties within the congregation. Because of this act, God removed His hand of protection over Israel; and this led to three thousand soldiers being defeated in battle. The hearts of the congregation were in awe. How had this happened? A small number chased an army that shouted a wall down with God's hand. An army that was confident they would be victorious in any situation fell.

When sin enters, arrogance corrodes the mind. Israel was unaware, but the individual responsible knew the consequences but ignored them. None of us is above the painful hand of sin. It grips us all! Sin damages and destroys what may have taken decades to build. Joshua's heart was heavy; he lamented to understand what went wrong.

Doubt creeps in as an attachment to sin. Fear of others' hearing of your weakness and taking advantage of the situation becomes a reality. This is how dark the night gets when sin enters. Our society is at those crossroads. We are wrestling feverishly with how to eradicate the pungent smell of sin in our society. Wrong has become right, and right is frowned upon. The church is no longer viewed as a hospital but rather as a morgue. These are the repercussions of when we have allowed the abrasive nature of sin in. We are left with abhorrent consequences.

III. Acknowledging and Accepting the Shame of Sin (*Joshua 7:10-21*)

Everyone tries to get away with the deeds they commit. Unfortunately, before God we are not so fortunate. Joshua was told what caused God to turn away from Israel and was given instructions to remove the accursed things and the individual that were responsible. Whatever goes on in the dark God will bring forth and expose.

The revealing of Achan was unfortunately a grievous process. The investigation went tribe by tribe, then house by house, then family by family—until eventually the individual was revealed. When asked to confess, Achan did so, explaining his yielding to fleshy desires. He admitted to covering the items and selfishly hiding them for His personal use. How easy it is to be deceived by sin's nature!

God in His sovereignty cannot be challenged. Achan was stoned and burned due to his actions. We can only surmise that the rigid and gruesome nature of sin leaves us in a worse situation than when it met us. There is a joy that we can look toward knowing that God demonstrated His love for us in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us (see Romans 5:8).

Conclusion

Sin leaves a chasm that none of us can cross except by the forgiveness we find in Jesus Christ. May we find comfort in knowing that God's love is richer and more precious than anything we may desire. Let God's covering be a staple in our lives, that we may avoid the tumultuous pitfalls that sin produces.

Biblical Principles for Men

1. Is it easy to avoid sin today? Society has watered down the behaviors that are considered sin. How does that affect our view of what is right and what is wrong?
2. How have the consequences of sin affected you? Do people really suffer for the wrong they do?
3. What does the grace of God through Jesus mean to you now? How does God's grace cover our sins?

Closing Prayer

Lord, we humbly thank You for forgiving us of all our sins. We ask that You reach ahead of us and shelter us from that which seeks to entangle us. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.