

**PRAYER:**

Begin with a few moments of sharing thanks and praises in prayer.

**Leaders**, it's your call; you may choose to incorporate more information/scriptures as time allows for your small group lesson. **Reflecting:** What a great victory for Joshua and the armies of Israel at Jericho! From a human point of view, there was no way to explain the event. It was indeed another fantastic miracle – equal in intensity, drama and divine significance to the Red Sea experience and Israel's entrance into Canaan through the Jordan River. Jericho was the first city to fall under the judgment of God. The next would be Ai, another Canaanite city that lay about 10 miles west of Jericho. Whatever fear and anxiety the children of Israel may have felt when they first approached Jericho faded away in the light of their astounding victory.

**OPENER:** When you were 10 years old, where was your favorite hiding place?

Can you recall a time when someone did something wrong, but you were punished for it instead? How did you feel?

**Read:** Joshua 7:1-9

**DISCUSS:** Why was God angry with all the Israelites (see 6:18-19, for God's instructions on the capture of Jericho)?

When Israel attacked Ai, what apparently did they expect would happen? What instead was the actual outcome?

How would you describe Joshua's reaction to the stunning defeat at Ai? (Cowardly? Angry? Whining? Surprised? What?)

**Read:** Joshua 7:10-15

How did the Lord get Joshua and the Israelite back on track?

What emotions does God express in the conversation with Joshua?

What instructions did the Lord give to Joshua in order to find the one who had disobeyed?

**Read:** Joshua 7:16-19

Why was it so important for Israel to follow these instructions? Suppose they hadn't?

**Read:** Joshua 7:20-26

What exactly was Achan's sin?

Why do you think he did it even though he knew God's orders?

Describe his state of mind as he watched the tribes, clans, and families file past Joshua.

Who all suffered because of Achan's sin?

Why do you think the punishment was so severe?

**PLAN for ACTION:**

What kinds of things can happen in our lives when we sin and try to hide it? (We are most vulnerable following some great accomplishment or victory. It is easy at those time to midjudge, to become overly self-assured, to rely on our own strengths and abilities. We must maintain an intricate balance between having confidence in self and continually trusting in God to guide and help discern His perfect will.)

As with the Israelites, has the Lord ever had to "get tough" with you to get you back on track?

If you had been Joshua, would you have been tempted to let Achan go with a slap on the wrists? Send him packing? Punch him out? Or what?

What does this say about your style of disciplining those you feel responsible for at home or work?

If you had been Achan's wife or children, how would you have felt? How about the parents of one of the 36 killed in the attack on Ai?

Do you think it was fair for God to punish all Israel because just one person sinned? Why or why not?

How can this group pray for you this week?

*To view the complete teaching from the Sunday services  
go to [www.centralcommunity.org/media/index.html](http://www.centralcommunity.org/media/index.html)*