



THE KEY TO UNBROKEN VICTORY

Preaching and Teaching Resources

ADRIAN ROGERS





The Key to Unbroken Victory

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The Key to Unbroken Victory

SERMON REFERENCE: Joshua 7:1-4

LWF SERMON NUMBER: #2021

God has planned a life of victory for each one of us, yet many Christians live in defeat. They have saved souls and lost lives. Defeat is possible, but not necessary.

Joshua 7 reminds us of the pitfalls of defeat we could face, and the key to unbroken victory.

“But the children of Israel committed a trespass regarding the accursed things, for Achan... of the tribe of Judah, took of the accursed things; so the anger of the Lord burned against the children of Israel” (Joshua 7:1).

After a huge victory, the Israelites pitched tents outside of a fallen city. In the night, Achan snuck into the city and stole the goods which were dedicated to God. Having taken what belonged to God, he brought a curse upon himself and Israel.

This passage first tells us that great victories are often followed by great defeats.

Though one man’s sin led to the ultimate downfall, Israel was guilty of plenty. The people’s carelessness and prayerlessness revealed the pride in their hearts. They did not feel the need to pray before heading into battle, presuming God was with them.

But it was Achan’s sin of covetousness that caused them to fall, as he confessed himself, “I coveted... I took... I hid...” (see Joshua 7:21).

Adrian Rogers says, “Covetousness is an unlawful desire that grows in the soil of an unsatisfied heart.”

Second, private sin is never really private.

Achan’s sin dishonored God and brought defeat to his brothers. He disgraced his family and brought on the ultimate destruction to his loved ones, as they were stoned and burned with fire.

Our “hidden” sins do not just affect us; they affect everyone around us.

Third, every sin that we cover, God will uncover.

The things done in secret will be shouted from the rooftops. Whether by revelation, confession or retribution, every sin must be judged.

Finally, every sin that we uncover, God will cover.

Proverbs 28:13 says, “He who covers his sins will not prosper, But whoever confesses and forsakes them will have mercy.”

Adrian Rogers says, “The key to unbroken victory is not perfection; it is continual, perpetual confession, keeping your heart right where there is no unconfessed sin.”

Life Application

Do you have any unconfessed sin in your heart? Bring it before God and ask for His forgiveness. Don’t live in defeat any longer; live in unbroken victory.



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1) INTRODUCTION

- a) God has planned for us a life of unbroken victory.
 - i) God has programmed us for a life of victory.
 - ii) However, many Christians are not living in unbroken victory.
 - iii) Many Christians are saved, but they are being defeated day-by-day.
 - (1) They have a saved soul and a lost life.
- b) The Bible always admits the possibility of defeat, but the Bible never teaches the necessity of it.
 - i) It teaches to the contrary.
 - (1) 2 Corinthians 2:14
- c) The seventh chapter of Joshua takes place right after the defeat of mighty Jericho.
 - i) The children of Israel had marched around the city of Jericho for seven days.
 - ii) On the seventh day, seven times they gave a shout, and the walls came tumbling down.
 - iii) The children of Israel had come into the Promised Land to conquer it, and they had won a mighty victory.
- d) Joshua 7:1-4
 - i) Ai was a small city.
 - ii) The children of Israel had conquered mighty Jericho, and now this insignificant little city sent them running.
 - (1) They had failed.
- e) Why had they failed?
 - i) Over the ruins of Jericho, a man named Achan took two hundred shekels of silver, a wedge of gold, and a Babylonian garment.
 - (1) Joshua 7:21
 - (2) He thought that no one had seen what he had done.
 - (a) But there was one who had seen the whole thing: Almighty God watching from Heaven.
 - ii) Achan had committed a terrible trespass.
 - (1) It was God's victory, and to God was to go the spoils.
 - (a) Joshua 6:18-19
 - (2) He had taken that which belonged to God.
 - iii) Achan brought to himself a curse.
 - (1) Israel, that was to have gone from victory to victory, was defeated.
- f) In today's message, we will look at four principles that will help us live a life of unbroken victory.

2) GREAT VICTORIES ARE OFTEN FOLLOWED BY GREAT DEFEATS (JOSHUA 7:2-3)

- a) There were two that sinned that day:
 - i) Israel



- ii) A man named Achan
- b) Israel's sin was carelessness.
 - i) How was their carelessness shown?
 - (1) Pride
 - (a) Joshua 7:2-3
 - (i) When they went out to conquer, they looked at Ai and said that they didn't need to pray, they didn't need to find God's will, and they didn't need a spiritual plan.
 - (ii) They had done it before, and they thought they could do it again.
 - (b) There was pride in their hearts.
 - (c) Proverbs 16:18
 - (d) Has God blessed you, and are you spiritually coasting?
 - (i) You say, "Well, God gave me a blessing yesterday. I did this yesterday, so I can do it today."
 - (2) Presumption
 - (a) The child of pride is presumption.
 - (b) They presumed that God was with them.
 - (i) They never stopped to check.
 - (c) They never sought to see if there was any unconfessed and unrepented of sin in the camp.
 - (3) Prayerlessness
 - (a) The grandchild of pride is prayerlessness.
 - (b) They didn't pray.
 - (c) Joshua prayed after he got in trouble.
 - (i) Joshua 7:10
 - ii) Are there some of us who are about to fall?
 - (1) Some who have been great Christians and are now coasting?
 - (a) They are filled with pride.
 - (i) They think that they are wonderful, Spirit-filled, godly people because they can look back to a string of victories.
 - (b) They presume that everything in the future will be like it was in the past.
 - (c) They have stopped praying, stopped seeking the face of God, and stopped asking God to guide and lead them.
 - (d) They are guilty of the same three things that Israel was guilty of when Ai defeated them:
 - (i) Pride
 - (ii) Presumption
 - (iii) Prayerlessness
- c) The sin of Achan was covetousness.
 - i) Covetousness will cause us to fall and to stumble.
 - ii) It is when we are not satisfied with the lot that God has given us.
 - (1) We want that which does not belong to us.
 - iii) There is nothing wrong with having gold, silver, or Babylonian garment.



- (1) Except when it belongs to Almighty God, and we covet that which belongs to Him.
- iv) Joshua 7:19-21
 - (1) Achan saw these things, and he coveted them.
- d) What is covetousness?
 - i) We never hear of anyone confessing the sin of covetousness.
 - (1) Yet, it was the sin that brought the great Apostle Paul to his knees before God and showed him the wickedness of his heart.
 - ii) It is an unlawful desire that grows in the soil of an unsatisfied heart, and we think that we need something else to satisfy us, to make us whole, and to give us joy.
 - iii) Covetousness becomes an octopus that comes around our souls and cannot be shaken off.
 - iv) In the New Testament, the Bible calls it “the love of the world.”
 - (1) 1 John 2:15
 - (a) It doesn’t say that the love of the Father is not in us because we love the world.
 - (i) It is the opposite of that.
 - (b) If we love the world, it is because the love of the Father is not in us.
 - v) Israel as a nation and Achan as an individual had taken their eyes from the Lord.
- e) We see the evolution of the sin of covetousness in Joshua 7:21.
 - i) “I saw.”
 - (1) Achan saw something that he should not have been looking at.
 - (a) Had he been in the right place, then he would not have been looking at that.
 - (2) Many of us will get into trouble simply because of what we have put before our eyes.
 - ii) “I coveted.”
 - (1) An unlawful desire began to build in his heart.
 - (a) This was the time when he should have confessed, but he didn’t confess.
 - (2) Achan was a thief in his heart first.
 - (a) A man is not a thief because he steals; he steals because he is a thief.
 - (i) It began in his heart.
 - (b) Out of the heart these things come.
 - (3) It is covetousness that the Bible calls “idolatry”.
 - (a) Colossians 3:5
 - iii) “I took.”
 - (1) He probably never thought that he would have done such a thing.
 - (2) There are some of us who feel that we would never do such a thing, but we put ourselves in that situation.
 - (a) We begin to look at unlawful things.
 - (b) We let that thing brood in our hearts until it becomes covetousness.
 - (i) Then when opportunity comes, we take.
 - (3) Sin is an undetected weakness, an unexpected opportunity, and an unprotected life.
 - (a) Achan had an undetected weakness.
 - (i) He was not satisfied with the things of God.
 - (b) He had an unexpected opportunity.



- (i) There it was.
 - 1. "I saw it."
 - (c) He had an unprotected life.
 - (i) He was not praying.
 - (ii) He was not seeking God's covering.
 - 1. And so, "I saw, I coveted, I took."
 - iv) "I hid."
 - (1) Joshua 7:21
 - (2) This is the worst thing of all.
 - (3) This step is to hide, to cover it up, and to say that it never happened.
 - (4) Some of us have buried some unclean thing in our hearts and lives.
 - (a) The worst thing of all is to hide it, to deny it, to alibi, to excuse, and to keep it hidden.
 - (b) Is there in your life an unconfessed, unrepented of sin that is hidden?
 - (5) Achan could not have dug deep enough into the molten core of this Earth to hide that sin, yet he tried.
 - f) Many times, our greatest defeats will come after our greatest victories.
 - i) This happens when we coast and take our eyes off the Lord and get presumptuous or fail to be satisfied with God.

3) PRIVATE SIN IS NEVER REALLY PRIVATE (JOSHUA 7:1, 8-9)

- a) The Bible called this thing that Achan did "the accursed thing."
 - i) Joshua 7:1
 - ii) The curse of God is upon sin, and sin that is hidden will bring us to ruin.
 - (1) It will keep us from the unbroken victory that God wants us to have.
- b) If we are bound to sin, then we are bound to suffer; but we will not suffer alone.
 - i) Romans 14:7
 - ii) Our sin will affect other people.
- c) Private sin brings dishonor to God.
 - i) Joshua 7:8-9
 - (1) They had disgraced God's name.
 - (a) Do you care about the name of your God?
 - ii) If there is hidden sin in our life, then we will cause the people of God to stumble and fall.
 - iii) That is the reason David prayed.
 - (1) Psalm 51:4
 - iv) People have laughed at, joked about, and ridiculed the things of God because of scandals in the church.
 - (1) The name of our great God has been dragged through the dust, mire, and filth because of hidden sin.
- d) Private sin brings defeat to our brothers and sisters in Christ.
 - i) Joshua 7:12
 - ii) We are in this together.
 - iii) When someone's heart is not right with God (when there is unconfessed and unrepented



of sin), they not only dishonor God and bring dishonor to Him, but they also bring defeat to their brothers and sisters in Christ.

(1) When one member suffers, every member suffers with him.

(a) 1 Corinthians 12:26

(b) One drop of poison hurts the whole body.

e) Private sin brings disgrace to our family.

i) Joshua 7:1

(1) "The children of Israel" is the entire nation.

(2) Achan's family was dragged into this thing.

ii) Some of us are giving our fathers gray hair and pinching wrinkles into our mothers' faces.

iii) Some teenagers are disgracing their parents.

(1) Your mother and father would die for you, yet you have this sin in your heart and life.

f) Private sin brings destruction to our loved ones.

i) Joshua 7:24-25

(1) He corrupted his family.

(a) Where did he hide what he stole?

(i) He hid these things not outside the tent but in the tent.

(b) They had become partakers of this crime.

(2) His children were destroyed because of his lie.

ii) If you go to Hell, that is one thing; but God have mercy upon you if you drag your sons and daughters into Hell, too, because of your sin.

(1) Children can read their parents like a book.

(a) They know what is important to them.

g) Private sin is never private.

i) None of us live to ourselves; none of us die to ourselves.

4) EVERY SIN THAT WE COVER, GOD WILL UNCOVER (JOSHUA 7:16-19)

a) Joshua 7:16-19

b) If one sin goes uncovered, then Satan has conquered.

c) There is the ultimate revelation of that sin.

i) Every sin that we cover, God will uncover.

d) There is the ultimate confession of that sin.

i) Joshua 7:19

(1) He wasn't giving glory to God so that he could get mercy.

(a) Achan didn't get mercy; he was stoned.

(2) Yet, Joshua said to confess it, and give glory to God.

ii) Every sin that we cover will be uncovered to the glory of God.

iii) Philippians 2:10-11

(1) If God does not get glory in mercy, then God will get glory in judgment.

iv) What is done in secret will be shouted from the rooftop.

(1) Things that you have done that you think nobody knows about will one day be totally revealed.



- v) One day, you will meet the Lord.
 - (l) Every knee shall bow, and every tongue shall confess.
 - (a) Philippians 2:10-11
- e) There is the ultimate retribution of that sin.
 - i) Here was a man who was judged, stoned, and put to death.
 - ii) Romans 6:23
 - iii) Ezekiel 18:20
 - iv) If any one-half of one sin ever goes by unpunished, then Satan will have won.

5) EVERY SIN THAT WE UNCOVER, GOD WILL COVER (PROVERBS 28:13)

- a) God would have forgiven Achan.
- b) Justice is God giving us what we deserve.
- c) Mercy is God not giving us what we deserve.
 - i) We don't need justice; we need mercy.

6) CONCLUSION

- a) Unbroken victory is God's plan for you.
- b) The key to unbroken victory is not perfection but continual and perpetual confession.
 - i) It is keeping your heart right where there is no unconfessed sin, no private sin, and no buried sin.
 - ii) When "we walk in the light as He is in the light," God blesses us.
 - (l) 1 John 1:7
- c) Your greatest failure may come after your greatest victory.
- d) Private sin is never really private.
- e) What you cover, God will uncover; but what you uncover, God will cover.
 - i) Romans 4:7
 - (l) How are our sins covered?
 - (a) They are covered by the precious blood of Jesus Christ.
- f) You cannot have victory if you don't know the Lord Jesus.
 - i) Are you saved?
- g) Do you know Jesus personally? If not, you can pray to Him today by asking Him to come into your life.
- h) Call upon Jesus today. Repent (turn) from your sins, and turn to Jesus. Ask Him to forgive you of your sins, and acknowledge Him as Lord of your life.
 - i) Romans 3:23
 - ii) Romans 10:9-10
 - iii) Romans 10:13
 - iv) Acts 16:31
 - v) John 3:16



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Would you take God's Word and turn to Joshua chapter 7? And when you've found it, let me tell you something about you. God has planned; God has programmed for you a life of victory, unbroken victory. However, many Christians are not living in unbroken victory. Many Christians are saved but they're being defeated day by day. They have a saved soul and a lost life. I want to talk to you today about the key to unbroken victory.

Now the Bible, the Bible always admits the possibility of defeat, but the Bible never teaches the necessity of it. To the contrary, the Bible says in Second Corinthians 2:14, "Thanks be unto God, who causeth us always, always, always to triumph in Christ Jesus." Read with me Joshua chapter 7 and beginning in verse 1. Now this chapter takes place right after the defeat of mighty Jericho. You remember the story; the children of Israel marched around the city of Jericho for seven days. On the seventh day, seven times, they gave a shout and the walls came tumbling down. They have come into the land, the Promised Land, to conquer it, and they have won a mighty, mighty, mighty victory. Now this episode takes place. Joshua chapter 7 and verses 1 through 4, it begins with a conjunction in the negative, "But the children of Israel committed a trespass in the accursed thing. For Achan, the son of Carmi, the son of Zabdi, the son of Zerah, of the tribe of Judah, took of the accursed thing and the anger of the Lord was kindled against the children of Israel. And Joshua sent men from Jericho to Ai, which is beside Bethaven on the east side of Bethel, and spake unto them, saying, 'Go up and view the country.' And the men went up and viewed Ai, and they returned to Joshua and said unto him, 'Let not all the people go up, but let about two or three thousand men go up and smite Ai and make not all the people to labor thither, for they are but a few.'" It's a small city, Ai; small name, small city. "And so they went up thither of the people about three thousand men," now watch this, "and they fled before the men of Ai." They had conquered mighty Jericho and now this insignificant little city sends them running like whipped puppies. They had failed. Now why had they failed? Why was Israel defeated? What is the key to constant and perpetual victory? How did they miss it? What happened?

Well use your imagination. I can imagine a scene like this. It's midnight now. Over the ruins of Jericho, the city lies in rubble, there're broken columns and crumbled walls, disarray. Outside Jericho the camp of Israel is pitched and here is each tribe in its place and the tents are there. The moon is looking down on that that scene of desolation as the walls came tumbling down. Everybody is asleep, it's quiet. Did I say everybody was asleep? There's one man who's not asleep. He's a man whose name is Achan. I see him as he comes to the door of his tent and opens it, and quietly, stealthily makes his way from that tent and out of the place where his tribe is encamped. He makes his way over those fallen brick and rock, over that fallen wall. He makes his way into the city there, into the marketplace, and he begins to look around and the moonlight shines down on something that is silvery. And he notices that there's a bag there and the mouth of that bag is open. He picks up the bag and looks and there are 200, 200 shekels of silver. He is a soldier, he's never held that much money in his hand in one time. He picks it up and it runs through his fingers like water.

He puts it back in the bag and holds it in his trembling hand and there he sees something now flashing like fire. Is it a piece of cheese? No! It's a wedge of gold, pure gold! He picks it up, shines it, holds



it. He's never seen that much gold at one time. He's got the silver, he's got the gold. And then there's something else, flashing, sparkling. It's an ornament, a beautiful ornament. It's on a garment, he picks it up, shakes the dust off it, why, that came from Babylon, why that's, that's beautiful. He holds it up. His heart is beating wildly. He says, "This I want, this I will have," and he takes the silver and the gold, wraps it up in the Babylonian garment, makes his way back over the rubble, back to his tent, looks around, nobody has seen him yet he thinks. He goes into his tent and rolls back his sleeping mat and scoops out the dirt and he puts the Babylonian garment in there and he puts the 200 shekels of silver and he puts the wedge of gold and he covers it, then rolls out his sleeping mat and lies down and goes to sleep, at least he tries to sleep. There's a smile on his face, he says, "I have done it, and nobody has seen me."

And he was right, almost. There was one who had seen the whole thing; Almighty God, watching from Heaven. What had he done? He had committed a trespass and a terrible trespass. You say, "Well, Pastor Rogers, after all it was a victory and to the victor go the spoils." That's right; it was God's victory and to God was to go the spoils. Go back and look if you will to Joshua chapter 6 verses 18 and 19, "And God gave command concerning Jericho and He said this, 'And ye in any wise keep yourself from the accursed thing, lest ye make yourselves accursed when you take of the accursed thing and make the camp of Israel accursed and trouble it. But all the silver and gold and vessels of brass and iron are consecrated unto the Lord. They shall come into the treasury of the Lord.'" Now this belonged to God and what Achan had done, had taken that which belonged to God, he took it unto himself and he brought to himself a curse and now Israel that was to have gone from victory to victory to victory is defeated.

Now, I want us to look at that passage and I want us to apply this Old Testament passage to our hearts as we live in this day and in this age. I want to give you four principles and I pray God that He will etch these upon your consciousness today and help you to remember them if you want to live in unbroken victory. The very first thing, the very first principle I want to lay on your heart is this; that **great victories may be and are often followed by great defeats**. Great victories are often followed by great defeats. Now what caused this defeat? Well there were two that sinned that day, or two categories. There was **Israel** itself and then there was this man in specificity whose name was **Achan**. Now what caused Israel's sin? Well, look if you will in this passage of Scripture and you're going to find out that **Israel's sin was carelessness**. Are you listening? Just sheer carelessness.

Now, how was their carelessness shown? Well, first of all, when they went out to reconnoiter and they looked at Ai, they said, "Hey, we don't need to pray, we don't need to find God's will, we don't need a spiritual plan, we have done it before and we can do it again. You don't need to send a whole army, Josh, just send a handful. Send two, maybe three thousand, because they are insignificant and we can do it." You can see here that there was **pride in their hearts**. And the Bible teaches in Proverbs 16:18, does it not, that, "Pride goes before destruction." So first of all there was pride.

I wonder if today God has blessed you spiritually and you're coasting. You say, "Well God has given me a blessing yesterday, God has helped me yesterday, I did this yesterday and so I can do it today." "Pride goes before destruction."

And the child of pride is what? **Presumption**; they presumed that God was with them. They never stopped to check, they never looked, they never sought out to see if there was any unconfessed, unrepented of sin in the camp.

After pride comes presumption and then, if the child of pride is presumption, what is the grandchild of pride? **Prayerlessness**, they didn't pray. We're going to find out later that Joshua prayed, he prayed after he got in trouble, he prayed a whole lot and God said, "Joshua, get up, you're wasting your breath, why



are you praying to Me now?" I wonder today if there's some of you who are about to fall, and you've been great Christians because now you're coasting, now you're filled with pride. You think you are a wonderful, spirit-filled, godly person because you can look back to a string of victories and now you're presuming that everything in the future is going to be just like it was in the past and you've stopped praying, you've stopped seeking the face of God, you've stopped asking God to guide you and lead you. And you are guilty of the same three things that Israel was guilty of when little Ai defeated them: pride, presumption, and prayerlessness?

All right, now, what about this man **Achan** that I just described a little while ago? We said that the sin of Israel was carelessness. What was the sin of Achan? His sin was **covetousness**. And that also is something that will cause you to fall and to stumble. When you're not satisfied with the lot that God has given you, when you want that which does not belong to you. There's nothing wrong with having gold or silver or a Babylonian garment, except if it is something that belongs to Almighty God and you are coveting that which belongs to Almighty God.

Look if you will, beginning in verse 19 here of this passage of Scripture, "And Joshua said unto Achan, 'My son, I pray thee give glory to the Lord God of Israel and make confession unto Him and tell me now what thou hast done and hide it not from me.' And Achan answered Joshua and said, 'Indeed I have sinned against the Lord God of Israel and thus and thus have I done.'" Now watch this, "When I saw among the spoils a goodly Babylonish garment and 200 shekels of silver and a wedge of gold of fifty shekels' weight, then I coveted them." Now just underscore that. If carelessness was Israel's sin, covetousness was Achan's sin. He said, "I saw these things and I coveted them."

What is covetousness? You know, you never hear anybody confess the sin of covetousness and yet it was the sin that brought the great apostle Paul to his knees before God and showed him the wickedness of his heart. What is covetousness? It is an unlawful desire that grows in the soil of an unsatisfied heart, a heart that is not finding the glory of His presence, and we're thinking now that we need something else to satisfy us, something else to make us whole, something else to give us joy. And covetousness becomes an octopus that comes around our souls and cannot be shaken off. The Bible calls it in the New Testament, "The love of the world." And then the Bible says in First John chapter 2 verse 15, "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world, for if any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him." Now notice it doesn't say that the love of the Father is not in you because you love the world, it's just opposite of that. If you love the world it is because the love of the Father is not in you. That's the reason that I said that, "Covetousness is an unlawful desire that grows in the soil of an unsatisfied heart." The things of Earth will grow strangely dim in the light of God's glory and God's grace. And I can tell you that both Israel as a nation and Achan as an individual had taken their eyes from the Lord. With Israel it was pride, presumption, and prayerlessness. With Achan it was covetousness.

And I want you to see **the evolution of this sin**. Listen to this man as he's confessing now and look in Joshua 7 verse 21. First of all, what's the first step? "**I saw,**" look at it, "And when I saw among the spoils a goodly Babylonish garment." You see, he saw something that he ought not to have been looking at. Now had he been in the right place, he would never have been looking at all of that at that time. Many of you are going to get in trouble simply because of what you have put before your eyes. Some of you men are staying up late at night, watching ungodliness on television while your wife is already gone to bed. Some of you businessmen are looking at things in a hotel room that you have absolutely no business looking at. Some of you teenagers are watching things now in cybersex on the internet that you have absolutely no business looking at. You say, "Well, I just want to see." You feed your mind on these dirty movies and filthy magazines, you get your recreation in a nightclub atmosphere and you're setting yourself up for a fall.



Now notice. First of all, he said, "I saw." Then look if you will, he said, "**I coveted.**" Now a desire, an unlawful desire is beginning to build in his heart. This octopus is beginning to wrap its tentacles around his soul. This was the time when he should've confessed. This was the time when he should've said, "Oh, God, there's something growing in my heart that is wrong, it's unclean, it's impure," but he doesn't do this. You see, Achan was a thief in his heart first. A man is not a thief because he steals, he steals because he's a thief. It began in his heart! Out of the heart these things come. It is covetousness that the Bible calls idolatry.

Now watch this, "I saw, I coveted," now watch, "**I took.**" Do you see that? He probably never would've thought at another time he would've done such a thing. There're some of you who feel, "I would never do such a thing." You put yourself in that situation, you begin to look at unlawful things, you begin to let that thing brood in your heart till it becomes covetousness and then at that moment, when that opportunity comes, you're going to take.

Remember what I told you sin was? An undetected weakness, an unexpected opportunity, and an unprotected life. An undetected weakness, an unexpected opportunity, an unprotected life. Here he was, he had an undetected weakness, he was not satisfied with the things of God. An unexpected opportunity, there it was, "I saw it." An unprotected life, he was not praying, he was not seeking God's covering. And so, "I saw, I coveted, I took."

And now continue to read this. Look at it again in Joshua 7 verse 21. And he said, "I coveted them, I took them," "And behold, they are hid in the earth in the midst of my tent and the silver under it." "**I hid.**" This is the worst thing of all. The next step is to hide, to cover it up, to say it never happened. There're some of you right now who don't want to think about what I'm talking about because in your heart, in your life, in your tent, there's buried some unclean thing, and the worst thing of all is to hide it, to deny it, to alibi, to excuse, to keep it hidden. So he digs down into his tent and he hides it and smooths the dirt over it. Are you trying to do that today? Is there in your life an unconfessed, unrepented of sin that is hidden? I'm telling you that Achan could not have dug deep enough into the molten core of this Earth to hide that sin. And yet he tried.

Now, put it down. Many times your greatest defeats are going to come after your greatest victories. If you begin to coast and take your eyes off of the Lord and get presumptuous or fail to be satisfied with God. And here's the second principle. The second principle is this; that **private sin is never really private.** Now the Bible called this thing that Achan did, "The accursed thing." Why? Because the curse of God is upon sin and sin that is hidden, it will bring you to ruin, it will keep you from victory, that unbroken victory that God wants you to have. But now listen to me very carefully, if you are bound to sin, you're bound to suffering, just as surely as you put your uncovered hand on a hot stove, you're going to be burned. If you're bound to sin, you're bound to suffer, but you will not suffer alone. The Bible says in Romans 14:7, "No man lives unto himself and no man dies unto himself." Your sin, my friend, will affect other people. Private sin is never really private.

Let me show you what Achan's sin did. Look if you will in Joshua verses 8 and 9 of this same chapter. Joshua is praying and he says, "Oh, Lord, what shall I say when Israel turneth their backs before their enemies? For the Canaanites and all the inhabitants of the land shall hear of it and shall environ us 'round and shall cut off our name from the Earth. And what wilt Thou do unto Thy great name?" Joshua said, "Look, we're defeated, Oh, God, disgrace to Your name." Do you care about the name of your God? I had rather die by torture than to bring disgrace to the name of Jesus Christ. If there's hidden sin in your life, you're going to cause the people of God to stumble and to fall and you're going to bring disgrace to Almighty God. That's the reason that David prayed. He said in Psalm 51 verse 4, "Against Thee and Thee



only have I sinned and done this evil in Thy sight." I think about the scandals that were in the church with some they call televangelists. Can you imagine how much fodder that was for the late night obscene talk-show people as they laughed and joked and ridiculed the things of God, and the name of our great God was dragged through the dust and the mire and the filth, because of hidden sin? What does it do? Friend, I want to tell you, **it brings dishonor to God.**

But I'll tell you what else it does; it brings defeat to your brothers. Look if you will in verse 12 of this same chapter, "Therefore, the children of Israel could not stand before their enemies but turned their backs before their enemies because they were accursed." You see, don't tell me it's none of my business what you do. And, I can't tell you it's none of my business what I do. Folks, we are in this together and when your heart is not right with God, when there's unconfessed, unrepented of sin in your heart and in your life, not only do you dishonor God and bring dishonor to God, you bring defeat to your brothers and your sisters. In First Corinthians 12 verses 25 through 27, the Bible says, "When one member suffers, every member suffers with it." One drop of poison hurts the whole body.

I'll tell you what else he did. Not only did he bring dishonor to God, not only did he bring defeat to his brothers, **he brought disgrace to his family.** Notice in chapter 7 verse 1, "But the children of Israel committed a trespass and the accursed thing," that's the entire nation, but watch this, "for Achan, the son of Carmi, the son of Zabdi, the son of Zerah, of the tribe of Judah, took of the accursed thing." Do you see how his family's dragged into this thing? I'm not a perfect man, but I would hate to bring disgrace to my parents and I would hate to bring disgrace to my children, but here was a man who sinned and he might've thought, "I'm doing this all by myself", but he dishonored God. "I'm doing this all to myself", but his brothers were defeated. "I'm doing this all to myself", but he disgraced his family. Some of you are giving your dad gray hairs. Some of you are pinching wrinkles into your mother's face. Some of you kids, some of you teenagers, there's sin in your life and you're disgracing your parents; your mother, your dad would die for you, and yet you've got this sin in your heart and in your life.

I'll tell you what else it did, **it brought destruction to his loved ones.** Look if you will in Joshua 7 verses 24 and 25, "And Joshua and all Israel with him took Achan, the son of Zerah, and the silver and the garment and the wedge of gold and his sons and his daughters, his oxen and his asses and his sheep and his tent and all that he had, and they brought them into the valley of Achor and Joshua said, 'Why hast thou troubled us? The Lord shall trouble thee this day.' And they stoned him with stones and burned them with fire after they had stoned them with stones." Not just the man, but his sons, his daughters, his wife, they're all stoned and burned with fire. You say, "That's not fair, that's not right!" Well you see, what happened is, he corrupted his family. Where did he hide this? Not outside the tent, in the tent. They had become partakers of this crime and now his children are destroyed because of his lie. And, mister, if you go to Hell, that's one thing, but God have mercy upon you if you drag your sons and daughters into Hell, too, because of your sin. Hidden sin, wicked sin, vile sin destroys loved ones.

A soul winner was going out to speak to a man about Jesus Christ. That man was a man like so many modern sophisticates today, he was in the living room, he was acting icily nice to that man who was witnessing for Jesus. And he was, you know, coy as some people, if you've ever witnessed much, you can see this man in your mind's eye. And, he just said to the man, "Well, thank you, appreciate your coming, thank you for giving us those things to consider. Good day, we may come down there to the church sometime," and so forth. A little guy, who had not yet even started into school, was watching this whole episode. The father was not even aware that the little boy was watching. He saw his dad and saw the soul



winner and all of that. He saw the soul winner with his shoulders humped over walking out in seeming defeat. That little boy jumped up into his daddy's lap, rubbed his daddy's beard and said as he looked into his daddy's face, "Dad, we don't want to be an old Christian, do we? Dad, we don't want to be an old Christian, do we?" They can read you like a book. They know what's important to you. Here was a man that drug so much down with him. Your greatest defeats may come after your greatest victories when you get careless and dissatisfied. I'll tell you something else. Private sin is never private. None of us live to ourselves; none of us die to ourselves.

Here's the third thing, and I want you to listen very carefully to me, dear friend; **every sin that you cover, God will uncover.** Have you got it? Every sin that you cover, God will uncover. Look if you will now in Joshua 7 verses 16 through 19, "So Joshua rose up early in the morning and brought Israel by their tribes and the tribe of Judah was taken, and he brought out the family of Judah and he took the family of the Zarahites. And he brought the family of the Zarahites, man by man, and Zabdi was taken, and he brought the household man by man, and Achan, the son of Carmi, the son of Zabdi, the son of Zerah of the tribe of Judah, was taken. And Joshua said unto Achan, 'My son, I pray thee, give glory to the God of Israel and make confession unto Him and tell me now what thou hast done. Hide it not from me.'"

Now, if one sin goes uncovered, Satan has conquered. Listen to me, every sin that you cover, God will uncover. There is **the ultimate revelation of that sin, the ultimate confession of that sin.** When Joshua said, "Give glory to God, now confess." Now, he wasn't giving glory to God so that he could get mercy, he didn't get mercy, he didn't get any mercy. He was stoned, and yet Joshua said, "Confess it, give glory to God." Did you know that every sin you cover will be uncovered to the glory of God? Every sin you cover will be uncovered to the glory of God. You know, that's what the Bible says, read Philippians chapter 2 and verses 10 and 11, "Every knee shall bow and every tongue shall confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God." One of these days, if God does not get glory in mercy, God will give glory in judgment.

Are you listening? Every sin that you cover, God will uncover and that which is done in secret will be shouted from the rooftop. Things that you've done in your bedroom, things you've done on business trips, things that you have done, that you think nobody knows about. One of these days it will be totally revealed; everything you cover God will uncover. Can you imagine, give glory to God? I can see Judas as he stands before the Lord. "Judas, you denied Him, you sold Him for 30 pieces of silver. Deny Him now." I can see the blasphemer, those of you who take God's name in vain and curse Him. I wonder when you stand before Jesus Christ, will you curse Him to His face? Those of you who have made your obscene jokes, you blasphemers? When you stand before Him, your obscene jokes are not going to be so funny. You're going to meet the Lord. I'm telling you, "Every knee shall bow and every tongue shall confess."

There is the ultimate revelation of that sin, the ultimate confession of that sin, and **the ultimate retribution of that sin.** Here was a man who was judged, who was stoned, who was put to death. "For the wages of sin is death." Romans 6:23. And then Ezekiel 18:20, "The soul that sinneth, it shall surely die." And if any sin, one half of one sin, ever goes by unpunished, Satan will have won.

I must go to the last and final principle very quickly. I've given you four. Your greatest defeats may come after your greatest victories. Private sin is never really private. Every sin that you endeavor to cover, God will uncover. That which is done in secret shall be shouted from the housetop. A newspaper had this motto; if you don't want it printed, don't let it happen.

Now here's the final thing, and I love this; **every sin that you uncover, God will cover.** Every sin that you uncover, God will cover! I want you to imagine a scene, that did not happen. I want you to see Achan as he plants all of that in his tent there and covers it up, rolls out his bed mat over it and tries to sleep and



then he says, "My God, what have I done? How could I have been so foolish? Wife, wake up, children, get up. Pray, look what we've done, how could we do such a thing? Dig it up, give it to me. Where's Joshua's tent? Joshua, get up, get up, Joshua. Joshua, let me tell you what I've done. Oh, Joshua, I was a fool! God said not to do this but I've done it. Joshua, here's the silver. Joshua, here's the gold, here's the garment. Pray for me, Joshua, I've sinned against God. Pray for me, Joshua, I've sinned against God. Joshua, let's get an animal, let's make a blood sacrifice. I need to be forgiven."

Let me tell you what the Bible says in the book of Proverbs, and listen carefully, Proverbs 28 verse 13, "He that covereth his sin shall not prosper, but whoso confesseth and forsaketh it shall have mercy." Would God have forgiven him? Absolutely. "He that covereth his sin shall not prosper, but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy." Justice is God giving us what we deserve. Mercy is God not giving us what we deserve. We don't need justice, we need mercy. "He that covereth his sin shall not prosper, but whoso confesseth and forsaketh it shall have mercy." Now let's come back to where we started. I said to you unbroken victory is God's plan for you. The key to unbroken victory is not perfection, it is continual, perpetual confession, keeping your heart right, where there is no, no unconfessed sin. No private sin. No buried sin.

I'm going to give you a testimony. You might think I'm bragging, but in my heart there's no hidden sin. You see, I would be a sheer fool to try to minister and preach with sin in my heart. I'd hurt you. I would hurt this church. I would hurt my family, I would hurt my parents, I would hurt my children, I would disgrace my God, but when we walked in the light as He is in the light, God blesses us.

Your greatest failure may come after your greatest victories. Private sin is never really private. What you cover God will uncover. But what you uncover God will cover. And that's the reason Paul says in Romans chapter 4 verse 7, "Blessed is the man whose iniquities are forgiven, whose sins are covered." How? By the precious blood of Jesus Christ.

Would you bow your heads in prayer? Heads are bowed and eyes are closed. Father God, I pray that You will help us today, Lord, to walk in victory before You. Lord, if there's some who don't know Jesus, that today they might come to know Him as Lord and Savior and help those of us who know You, Lord, not to be careless and prayerless. In Your name we pray. Amen.

Now, if you're not certain that you're saved, would you like to be saved, would you? Would you like to know that you really do have life? Jesus said, "I've come that you might have life." Could I lead you in a prayer? We'll call this prayer the sinner's prayer. And you can pray and accept Christ as your personal Lord and Savior. You can do it right now. Would you pray this prayer? "Dear God, I know that You love me. Thank You for loving me. And I know that You want to save me. Jesus, You died to save me and You promised to save me if I would trust You. Jesus, I do trust You. I believe You're the Son of God. I believe you paid for my sin with Your blood on the cross. I believe that God raised You from the dead. And now I receive You as my Lord and Savior. Forgive my sin. Cleanse me. Come into my life. Take control of my life and begin today to make me the person You want me to be. And Jesus, give me the courage to make it public. Help me never to be ashamed of You. In Your name I pray, Amen."



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