

temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it."

- 4) Do not fear, draw near to God and trust Him for grace to win the victory.

To maintain victory, God requires obedience, confession, dependence, then ...

4. Perseverance

a. Joshua followed God's word and won the victory.

- 1) The hidden ambush worked (8:17). Ai was totally defeated (8:22).
- 2) From that day forward, they defeated every enemy they encountered.

b. If you follow God's Word, you can be victorious.

- 1) Never give up. Do not quit. Run for the prize.
- 2) In the closing words of his first letter to Corinth, Paul wrote, (1 Corinthians 16:13) "**Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong.**"
- 3) In his last letter to Timothy, Paul urged, (2 Timothy 2:1) "**Thou therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus.**"
- 4) To the Galatian believers Paul wrote, (Galatians 6:9) "**And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not.**"

Conclusion: Wars are not won by winning a single battle, but by continuing to win battles until the enemy is defeated. Victory over sin is a difficult war, and maintaining that victory is a daily battle.

If you are seeking victory over a sinful enemy, but you have tripped and failed, do not quit the fight. You are not a failure as long as you do not stop trying to succeed. Follow Joshua's path to victory: 1) **Obedience** – obey the Bible, 2) **Confession** – confess all failures, 3) **Dependence** – fear not but trust God, 4) **Perseverance** – press on and never give up.

Song: There is Power in the Blood – 198 (the blood of Christ)

Maintaining Victory

27 August 2023 AM – Joshua 7-8 – Victory – Scott Childs

Introduction: A person who fails is not a failure; he only becomes a failure when he stops trying to succeed.

Jericho, the city of palm trees, was located about 16 km northwest of the Dead Sea, 243 m below sea level. Joshua and the armies of Israel had just conquered that secure fortress with high, formidable walls so thick that houses were built on top. God caused those massive walls to fall down flat and gave Israel victory over the inhabitants.

After that miraculous victory, Joshua sent spies to the nearby city of Ai. Finding Ai to be a much smaller city, they recommended that only 3,000 soldiers be sent to destroy it. Sadly, they were defeated and lost 36 soldiers. Joshua was devastated and cried out to the Lord (Joshua 7:6-9).

Suffering a defeat after a huge victory is common. Last week, we learned from Paul how we can have victory over sin. If you have not already tripped up, very likely you will. Breaking sinful habits is not easy. However, how you respond when you trip or fail will make all the difference. Remember, you are not a failure if you have failed; you are only a failure if you stop trying to succeed.

Transition: With God's help, you must maintain victory. By studying Joshua's reactions (Josh 7-8), we find what God requires.

To maintain victory, God requires ...

1. Obedience

a. God gave Israel clear instructions.

- 1) Before God gave Israel the victory over Jericho, He told them, (Joshua 6:18-19) "**And ye, in any wise keep yourselves from the accursed thing, lest ye make yourselves accursed, when ye take of the accursed thing, and make the camp of Israel a curse, 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.**"
- 2) Their problem was not knowing what was right. Their problem was doing what was right. Achan yielded to temptation and disobeyed God.

b. We have the Bible's clear instructions.

- 1) If God has given you victory over a temptation, very likely you know what you must do to maintain that victory.
 - a) When you are tempted to yield to your sinful habit, you know that you must say NO.
 - b) When you are about to spew out angry, unkind words, you know you must keep your mouth shut.
 - c) When your eyes long to take a peek at pornography, you know that you must flee.
 - d) The devil knows your weaknesses, and when he tempts you to give in, you know that yielding is sin.
- 2) Like Israel, our problem is not ignorance, it is one of obedience. (Psalms 119:9) "**Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? by taking heed thereto according to thy word.**" Memorise verses that address your weakness, quote them often, and most of all obey them.
- 3) Without question, temptation pulls us, like a powerful magnet. Obedience is not easy, but with God's help it is possible. (Romans 8:31) "**What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us?**"

To maintain victory, God requires obedience, then ...

2. Confession

a. Joshua wisely ran to God when Ai defeated Israel

- 1) He tore his clothes and fell to the earth on his face before God (7:6).
- 2) God pointed out the sinful problem that led to failure (7:11). Achan knew all along that he was the guilty party, but he kept his sin hidden until he was cornered (7:19).
- 3) God told Joshua the solution (7:12).

b. When defeated, you must wisely run to God.

- 1) Satan will try to get you to hid your failure and cover it up rather than to confess it to God. God knew Achan's secret sin, and He also knows our secret sins.
- 2) When we fail, the Lord is there to help us. (1 John 2:1) "**My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous:**"

- 3) Practice the **Victory Steps** in James 4:7-10.
 - a) (James 4:7) "**Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.**"
 - b) (James 4:8) "**Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you. Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye double minded.**"
 - c) (James 4:9) "**Be afflicted, and mourn, and weep: let your laughter be turned to mourning, and your joy to heaviness.**"
 - d) (James 4:10) "**Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up.**"
- 4) Claim the cleansing that God promises when you confess. (1 John 1:9) "**If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.**"

To maintain victory, God requires obedience, confession, then ...

3. Dependence

a. Joshua feared to pursue another victory (8:1)

- 1) Now that the sin was dealt with and forgiven, God told Joshua not to **fear** and not to be **dismayed** (terrified). He was the new leader of the nation, following the footsteps of Moses. They had suffered defeat during their second battle. What if it happened again?
- 2) With calm assurance, God told him to take ALL the soldiers, arise, and go to Ai for a victory.
- 3) He was to lay an ambush behind the city and God would give them the victory.

b. When you fail, you too may fear to try again.

- 1) That fear is the devil's lie. He wants you to think that giving up and quitting is less painful than attempting to defeat your enemy.
- 2) God wants you to trust Him. (Psalms 56:3) "**What time I am afraid, I will trust in thee.**"
- 3) God will not allow you to be tempted more than you can resist with His help. (1 Corinthians 10:13) "**There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the**