

# LESSON 10



## CONQUERING THE CITIES OF JERICHO AND AI

### OBJECTIVES

1. To learn to trust and obey God, even when it may not make sense.
2. To analyze the process of sinning, and learn how we can overcome temptation.
3. To understand the importance of repentance and holiness.

### MEMORY VERSE

“There is an accursed thing in your midst, O Israel; you cannot stand before your enemies until you take away the accursed thing from among you.”

(Joshua 7:13b)

### PRAYER

1. Thank God for gathering us here so that we may worship the Lord and learn more about His word.
2. We ask God to help us trust and obey Him, even when it is hard.
3. We ask God to reveal our wrongs so that we may repent and become holy.
4. We ask God to help us overcome the temptations that we face every day.



### Overview

1. Jericho Is Defeated
2. The Defeat of the Israelites at Ai
3. Achan Is Punished for His Sin
4. The Israelites Defeat the City of Ai
5. Linking to the Ten Basic Beliefs—Rely on the Holy Spirit
6. Life Application
  - a. The Four Stages of Sinning
  - b. Breaking the Cycle of Sin
7. Activity—Group Discussion



### Background Knowledge for Teachers

The city of Jericho is also known as the city of the palm trees (Deut 34:3) and is found about ten miles north of the Dead Sea on the west side of the Jordan River. Archaeologists claim that it is the oldest city in the world. The city of Ai means “heap” or “ruin.” It is named so because, in the end, the people of Ai were killed, and their city was burned and made into a “heap.” Ai was about twelve miles west of Jericho, at a higher elevation.



## Reaching Out to Your Students

Your students are starting to face and possibly fall into temptations on a weekly basis. Perhaps they have to overcome lying, stealing, video game addiction, media addiction, laziness, a short temper, etc. Encourage them with the message in today's lesson. We can conquer our temptations to live a victorious life, but only if we rely on God. When we sin, we should wholeheartedly confess our sins to God before our sins grow and get worse.



## Opener

5 Minutes

Stand up and play a round of Simon Says. Attempt to do some unusual, as well as nonsensical, motions. Connect these "strange" motions to how strange it was for God to tell the Israelites to walk around Jericho thirteen times to cause the walls to fall flat. Lead into how the Israelites followed God's every command in conquering Jericho, even when it may not have made sense. Afterward, tie into how, after their success at Jericho, the Israelites failed to follow God's command, so their conquest for Ai initially failed.



## Vocabulary

**covenant:** an agreement God initiates and makes with man



## Bible Discovery & Spiritual Teaching

30-35 Minutes

In the previous lesson, we learned about the Israelites crossing the Jordan River. Joshua led the Israelites with courage and God's instructions. To receive God's grace, the people of Israel needed to cleanse themselves spiritually first. And when God showed wonders among them by letting them walk across the Jordan River on dry land, they made a point to remember God and what He did. In the city of Jericho, Rahab recognized and seized an opportunity to save herself and her household from the coming attack by the Israelites. She helped the spies sent by Joshua and followed their instructions so that she and her family would be spared when the Israelites battled against Jericho. Today, we will continue on and learn what the people of Israel did after they arrived at the city of Jericho.

promised land. The first city they attacked was the city they spied out: Jericho. Because of the spy incident and because of what they had heard about God, Jericho closed its city walls so that no one could come in and out. How do you attack a city that is completely locked up? God gave Joshua instructions but it was a strange strategy: "You shall march around the city, all you men of war; you shall go all around the city once. This you shall do six days. And seven priests shall bear seven trumpets of rams' horns before the ark. But the seventh day you shall march around the city seven times, and the priests shall blow the trumpets" (Josh 6:3-4). Class, how would you react in this situation? The faith of the Israelites had grown considerably in the wilderness and after the crossing of the Jordan River, so they were able to obey God at this time.

### FOR TEACHERS

Give the students the Bible Discovery worksheet now. Ask the students to look at the worksheet and fill in the answers as you go over the Bible story. The answers have been underlined.

### FOR TEACHERS

Ask students to refer to Part I of the worksheet and fill in the blanks.

### Jericho Is Defeated

After the Israelites had crossed the Jordan River, they camped at Gilgal, waiting to start their conquest of the

God commanded that after the last march around the city, the trumpets would blow, the people of Israel would give a large shout, and the walls would fall flat. Only the family of Rahab would be spared because of the promise given previously to her by the two spies. Every

person was to be completely destroyed and the precious metals saved. The people of Israel followed the instructions exactly. Consequently, the walls fell, the enemies were killed, both young and old, and Rahab's household was saved. The bronze, silver, and gold were put into the Lord's treasury. The Israelites were completely victorious!

### The Defeat of the Israelites at Ai

After the victory at Jericho, Joshua sent men to spy out the city of Ai, their next target. When the spies came back, they reported to Joshua that only two or three thousand men were needed to attack Ai since it was a small city. They did not inquire of God on how to attack this small city. When they entered the city, the Israelites realized that they were no match. In a brief time, thirty-six men were killed and their army was chased far away.

When Joshua heard this news, he tore his clothes and came before the Lord to pray. Joshua's response shows us the need to reflect on the events in our day-to-day life. If something isn't going as smoothly as we wish, it may be God's way of telling us something. Joshua cried out to God asking why the Israelites suffered defeat. God gave a very clear answer: "Israel has sinned." The main reason why they lost was because they had sinned against God and trespassed God's covenant with them.

Today, how should we respond to sin? That's right, we must repent. It is the same today as it was back then. Therefore, God told them in Joshua 7:13, "Get up, sanctify the people, and say, 'Sanctify yourselves for tomorrow, because thus says the LORD God of Israel: "There is an accursed thing in your midst, O Israel; you cannot stand before your enemies until you take away the accursed thing from among you.'"" Later, God told them how to identify who had sinned against God's covenant.

#### FOR TEACHERS

Ask students to refer to Part 2 of the worksheet and fill in the blanks.

What the people of Israel learned about this defeat was that their sin was the primary cause. In addition, Israel made other mistakes, too. The Bible records that Joshua listened to the spies that scouted Ai without asking the Lord for directions. Moreover, the spies clearly underestimated their enemies at Ai. It is very likely that after experiencing a huge success at Jericho, the people of Israel became overly confident in themselves and forgot about relying on God for the next challenge.

### Achan Is Punished for His Sin

The next morning, Israel was arranged by their tribes and lots were cast to uncover who had violated God's covenant. It turned out to be Achan, the son of Carmi, the son of Zabdi, the son of Zerah, of the tribe of Judah.

Though it may seem to be entirely up to chance, we can see that God was at work in the casting of lots to identify correctly who was guilty. Achan confessed to Joshua that he indeed had sinned against God. Joshua 7:20-21 reads, "And Achan answered Joshua and said, 'Indeed I have sinned against the LORD God of Israel, and this is what I have done: When I saw among the spoils a beautiful Babylonian garment, two hundred shekels of silver, and a wedge of gold weighing fifty shekels, I coveted them and took them. And there they are, hidden in the earth in the midst of my tent, with the silver under it.'" The consequence of this sin was great. Achan and his entire household were stoned to death at the Valley of Achor. After the sin was removed, "the LORD turned from the fierceness of His anger" (Josh 7:26).

#### FOR TEACHERS

Ask students to refer to Part 3 of the worksheet and fill in the blanks.

### The Israelites Defeat the City of Ai

After Israel's sin was properly dealt with, the Lord God commanded Joshua not to be afraid and to go and attack the city of Ai. "Now the LORD said to Joshua: 'Do not be afraid, nor be dismayed; take all the people of war with you, and arise, go up to Ai. See, I have given into your hand the king of Ai, his people, his city, and his land. And you shall do to Ai and its king as you did to Jericho and its king. Only its spoil and its cattle you shall take as booty for yourselves. Lay an ambush for the city behind it'" (Josh 8:1-2).

God wanted them to lay an ambush for the city. God gave Joshua a plan for conquering the city of Ai, and he had to follow it. When we need to regain the victory, we must follow God's plan. God reassured Joshua not to be afraid, and He allowed them to keep the spoils from the city of Ai. Achan sinned and acted foolishly. He could have shared some of the spoils, if only he had waited on the Lord for it.

#### FOR TEACHERS

Ask students to refer to Part 4 of the worksheet and fill in the blanks.

Let's read Joshua 8:3-13 together. God had encouraged Joshua to take the city of Ai once again, so Joshua obeyed Him and devised a strategy. Joshua would lead a group of Israelites to lure the people of Ai out of the city, and then the rest of the army would ambush and seize the city. God was going to deliver the city of Ai into the hands of the Israelites.

Students, we can learn that God wanted the Israelites to take the offensive. Notice that Joshua didn't wait for Ai to bring the battle to them, but instead, brought the battle to Ai. We often see that in the battle against sin, it is

imperative for us to take the offensive against the powers of temptation, and be alert in our actions.

#### FOR TEACHERS

Ask students to refer to Part 4, and have the students write down the cities' names: Bethel, Ai.

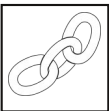
Let's see what happened next, in Joshua 8:14-17. Joshua's strategy worked just as he had planned. Every man in Bethel and Ai had gone out after Israel, leaving the city open and vulnerable to attack.

The time to attack and seize the city had come. Let's read Joshua 8:18-29. With the stretching of his spear, Joshua ordered the army to seize the city. God had given Ai into the hands of the Israelites. Joshua and his men set the city on fire and utterly destroyed everything in the city, except for the livestock and the spoils of the city. Joshua did not lower his spear until the city had become a desolate, burning heap. In addition, Joshua hung the king of Ai until

sundown, and then ordered his body to be thrown at the entrance of the city and raised over a large pile of stones. God delivered Ai into the hands of Joshua, so that day, everyone in Ai died at the hands of the Israelites.

#### Conclusion

What did you learn today? Yes, we learned that victory is only possible when we follow God's instructions, even if they appear unusual or make little sense to us. The Israelites overwhelmingly defeated Jericho in this manner. But later on, they failed to overtake the city of Ai on their first try. The spies overestimated their own ability to fight the enemy. Joshua did not inquire of God for His instructions. Most of all, a hidden sin among the people of Israel greatly angered God. God knows everything, even sins we make and try to hide in secret. Achan broke God's covenant by keeping a portion of the plunder from Jericho. Because of it, he and his household were punished with death. Only after this sin was removed did God help the Israelites to defeat the people at Ai.



### Linking to the Ten Basic Beliefs

2-5 Minutes

Our ninth Article of Faith reads, "Salvation is given by the grace of God through faith. Believers must rely on the Holy Spirit to pursue holiness, to honor God, and to love humanity." In the story of Jericho and Ai, we see that Achan was unable to enjoy the inheritance in the promised land because he saw, coveted, and took of the plunder, which was specifically against the commandment of God. Though we have been baptized, and some of us may have received the Holy Spirit, we must learn to continually rely on the power of the Spirit to overcome our weaknesses (Gal 5:16-26).



### Check for Understanding

5 Minutes

- 1. How many times did the Israelites walk around Jericho during the first six days? On the seventh? In total?** 1 time each day for the first six days = 6 times; 7 times on the seventh day; 13 times total.
- 2. Can loud trumpet sounds normally blow down city walls? What enabled the walls of Jericho to fall down?** Normally, a loud trumpet sound would not be able to blow down a city wall. This was a miracle from God.
- 3. Why were the Israelites told to kill everything in Jericho, except for Rahab's family? What does this represent spiritually?** God knows the future. He is kind, just, and fair; He gives people time to repent. We must believe that if there were even a few righteous people in a city or place, He would try to save them. In Jericho's case, we must trust that the inhabitants indeed were very wicked. Now that the Israelites were beginning to conquer the promised land, God was using them as a tool to dispense punishment. The ruthlessness the Israelites were instructed to show reminds us about how ruthless we should be concerning our sin and lusts. We should show no mercy to our temptations or to Satan. The young who were killed represent the little sins and desires that we think may be innocent. The old who were killed represent our bad habits and addictions. These all need to be removed.
- 4. Why did the initial attack at Ai result in defeat?** There was sin among the Israelites. Achan stole things and hid them. Another reason is because they did not inquire of God for His instruction before going out to battle.
- 5. From the severe punishment of Achan and his family, what can we learn about the importance of holiness?** Holiness is absolutely essential before we engage in spiritual battles or do God's work. One man's sin can affect the rise and fall of the nation. Similarly, our personal sin can indirectly influence the prosperity of the church.
- 6. In comparison to the first assault, how many more men did Joshua bring the second time they attacked Ai?** Over ten times more; the first time they brought two to three thousand men, while they brought 30,000 men the second time.



## Life Application

10 Minutes

### 1. The Four Stages of Sinning

[Pass out Life Application Worksheet #1 and go over the diagram with the students by discussing what each of the four stages means. Ask the students to fill out the diagram based on the scenario on the worksheet. Then, go over the discussion questions as a class. Afterward, ask the students to post up the worksheet at home to remind them of today's lesson. The answers have been provided below.]

Based on Achan's confession, let us analyze how we may typically fall into temptation and sin against God. It looks something like this:

- 1. SAW:** We should avoid seeing tempting things if we can, but it is impossible not to see things that attract us. However, the first line of defense is to stay away from tempting environments, which reduces the number of sinfully attractive things we see (cf. Job 31:1; Ps 119:37).
- 2. COVETED:** The second line of defense involves our heart. Achan coveted the goods that he saw and felt a desire for them. We must guard our heart with the word of God (cf. Prov 4:23; Jas 1:14).
- 3. TOOK:** The third line of defense involves self-control. If ungodly desires linger too long in our heart, they will inevitably result in sinful action. We must discipline our body so that we do not commit sin and be disqualified from our heavenly inheritance. We must remember the final destination we are aiming for (cf. 1 Cor 9:26-27)!
- 4. HID:** When we sin against God, we often like to hide our wrongdoing from everyone. Achan did the same thing with the goods he stole. His conscience was picking at him. Usually, if we want to hide something, it is because we know it is wrong. But when we do sin against God, we must reveal the sin before God and confess (see 1 Jn 1:9; Jas 5:16). In response, God will forgive us.

#### Discussion Questions

- 1. Are Mike's actions right or wrong in God's eyes? Why?** Mike's actions are wrong in God's eyes because he is sneaking behind his parents' backs to play video games. He is also not keeping the Sabbath holy by playing video games on the Sabbath. Furthermore, he is asking his mother to break a commandment for him.
- 2. Look at the diagram and think about how the different stages apply to this example. What are the four stages (saw, coveted, took, hid) involved in Mike's wrongdoing—what tempted Mike and what wrongful actions did he take?** He saw the video game; he coveted the time he spent playing video games; he took the initiative to spend more time playing games; and he hid his extra playing time from his parents.
- 3. In order for Mike to avoid going down the path of sinning, he would have to deal with each of the four stages of sinning successfully. What could Mike do to address each of the four stages effectively?** He could put away the video games so that he can't see them. He could think about other things that he likes doing other than playing video games. He could try to spend more time doing something else so that he won't want to play video games. He could realize that lying to his parents is wrong and not hide anything from them.

### 2. Breaking the Cycle of Sin

[Pass out Life Application Worksheet #2, and go over the diagram by explaining how sinning can become a cycle and how we can break that cycle. Then, ask the students to read the scenario. When they have finished, go over the discussion questions as a class. The answers have been provided below.]

#### Discussion Questions

- 1. How did Ricky know that he had fallen into a cycle of sin?** He committed the same sin repeatedly. He wanted to stop, but he didn't know how to stop.
- 2. Why was it important for Ricky to break that cycle? What could have happened if Ricky did not take steps to break the cycle?** It was important for Ricky to break that cycle because it would have worsened over time. If Ricky did not break the cycle, then he might be caught one day and go to a juvenile detention center. Then, his future would be changed forever.
- 3. What can we do when we feel like we may be falling into a cycle of sin?** We can repent of the sin and do our best not to commit it again.



## Activity

### Group Discussion

10-15 Minutes

**Objective:** To give students the chance to think about and discuss how they can avoid temptation and sinning.

Ask the students how they would advise the following Bible characters when they are thinking about doing the following things:

1. Eve: Eating the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil
2. Gehazi: Lying and taking Namaan's gifts
3. Judas: Betraying the Lord Jesus Christ
4. Achan: Taking the spoils of Jericho
5. David: Committing adultery with Bathsheba

Ask the students to answer the following questions in small groups or as a class.

1. What is our main temptation in our life? How can we try to overcome it?
2. What advice can we give to one another right now?

#### HOMEWORK ANSWER KEY

1. The ruthlessness the Israelites were instructed to show reminds us about how ruthless we should be concerning our sin and lusts. We should show no mercy to our temptations or to Satan. The young who were killed represent the little sins and desires that we think may be innocent. The old who were killed represent our bad habits and addictions.
2. There was sin among the Israelites. Achan stole things and hid them. Another reason is because they did not inquire of God for His instruction before going out to battle.
3. Holiness is absolutely essential before we engage in spiritual battles or do God's work. Our personal sin can indirectly influence the prosperity of the church.
4. 1) Turning stones into bread while He was fasting and hungry.  
2) Testing God by intentionally putting Himself in a dangerous situation (throwing Himself down from the pinnacle of the temple).  
3) Worshipping the devil to obtain all the kingdoms of the world and their glory.
5. By challenging us to face the desires and wishes that we want most.
6. 1) By using Bible verses, every single time, in the correct way.  
2) Through fasting prayer.

## CONQUERING THE CITIES OF JERICO AND AI

### 1. Jericho Is Defeated

"You shall \_\_\_\_\_ around the city, all you men of war; you shall go all around the city \_\_\_\_\_. This you shall do six days. And seven priests shall bear seven trumpets of rams' horns before the ark. But the \_\_\_\_\_ day you shall march around the city seven times, and the priests shall blow the \_\_\_\_\_."

### 2. The Israelites Are Defeated at Ai

"Get up, \_\_\_\_\_ the people, and say, 'Sanctify yourselves for tomorrow, because thus says the LORD God of Israel: "There is an \_\_\_\_\_ thing in your midst, O Israel; you cannot stand before your \_\_\_\_\_ until you \_\_\_\_\_ the accursed thing from among you.'"

### 3. Achan Is Punished for His Sin

"And Achan answered Joshua and said, 'Indeed I have \_\_\_\_\_ against the LORD God of Israel, and this is what I have done: When I \_\_\_\_\_ among the spoils a beautiful Babylonian garment, two hundred shekels of silver, and a wedge of gold weighing fifty shekels, I \_\_\_\_\_ them and \_\_\_\_\_ them. And there they are, \_\_\_\_\_ in the earth in the midst of my tent, with the silver under it.'"

### 4. The Israelites Defeat the City of Ai

"Now the Lord said to Joshua: 'Do not be \_\_\_\_\_, nor be dismayed; take \_\_\_\_\_ the people of war with you, and arise, go up to Ai. See, I have given into your hand the king of Ai, his people, his city, and his land. And you shall do to Ai and its king as you did to Jericho and its king. Only its spoil and its cattle you shall take as booty for yourselves. Lay an \_\_\_\_\_ for the city behind it.'"

### The Battle of Ai

Please draw a simple map of the Battle of Ai. Write down the cities of **Bethel** and **Ai** on the map.

According to God's instruction in Joshua 8:2, Joshua set an ambush by dividing his troops into three groups.

- The first group was sent by night to hide just west of the city, between Bethel and Ai. They would rush in and seize it when the soldiers left to join the main battle.
- The second group camped on the north side of the city.
- The third group was a decoy group led by Joshua, meant to draw the soldiers of Ai away from the city.

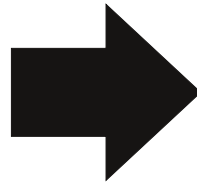
### The Four Stages of Sinning

Based on Achan's confession, let us analyze how we may typically fall into temptation and sin against God. It looks something like this:

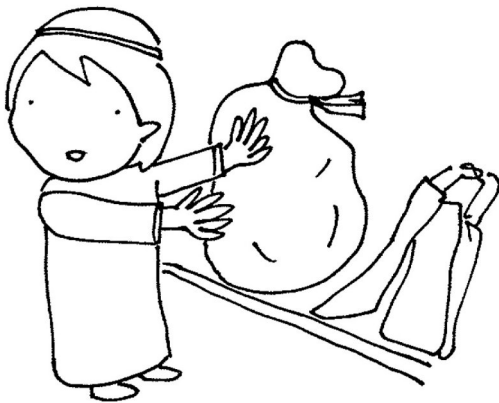
1) SAW



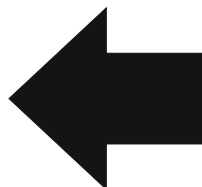
2) COVETED



4) HID



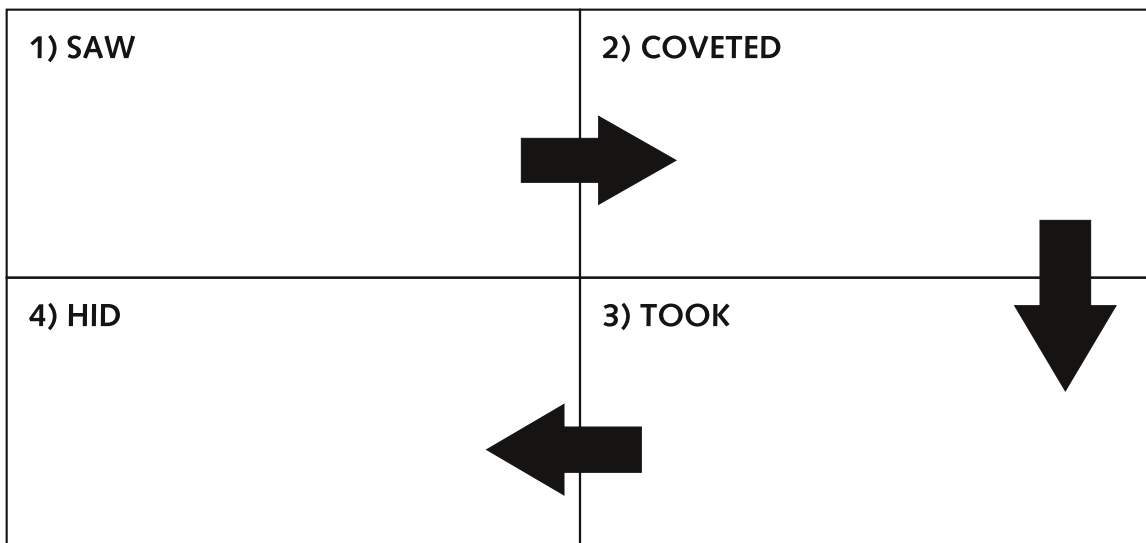
3) TOOK





**Instructions:** Read the following scenario, and then fill out the chart below using details from the scenario.

Mike is an honor student in his 5th grade class. He loves doing well in school, and he brings the same intensity to playing video games at home. In addition to setting limits on how much he can play each week, Mike's parents prohibit him from playing any games on the Sabbath. For the most part, Mike has followed the rules. This year, though, is different. At the beginning of the school year, Mike discovered a way to outsmart his parents so he could spend more time playing. At first, Mike just played for half an hour more each day. But as he got more into his games, he found himself spending more and more time playing. Somehow, he has managed to keep up his grades at school. But his mind is mostly preoccupied with video games and little else. Mike doesn't think it is a problem, because he still earns good grades, but his ability to focus during prayer and Bible reading is suffering. One Saturday morning, he secretly gets up very early to play video games. An hour later, his mom unexpectedly walks in on him. He begs his mother not to tell his father about this.

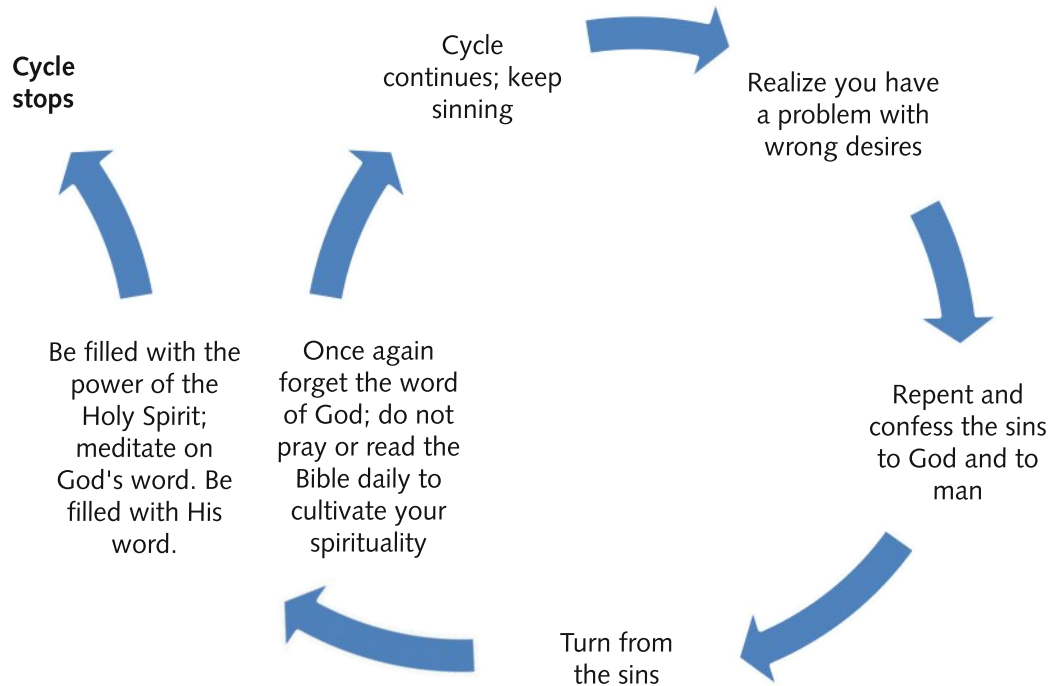


### Discussion Questions

1. Is Mike's action right or wrong in God's eyes? Why?
2. Look at the diagram and think about how the different stages apply to this example. What are the four stages (saw, coveted, took, hid) involved in Mike's wrongdoing—what tempted Mike and what wrongful actions did he take?
3. In order for Mike to avoid going down the path of sin, he would have to deal with each of the four stages of sinning successfully. What could Mike do to address each of the four stages effectively?

### Breaking the Cycle of Sin

How can we break the cycle of sin?



Some time ago, Ricky went to the local candy store with his friends after school. When he arrived, he saw so many different kinds of candy that he wanted to buy. He looked in his pocket and realized that he didn't have enough money to buy it all. Then he thought to himself, "Why don't I just hide some in my pocket? It's only candy, after all. It's not going to harm anyone if I take it." As Ricky went around filling his plastic bag with candy, he would take some and put it in his pocket. After Ricky went home, he took the candy out of his pocket and put it in his plastic bag. He ate the candy, satisfied that he was able to get all the candy that he wanted. He knew that it was wrong, but he didn't think it was that bad.

Over the next year, Ricky gradually started stealing more and more things, including things that were more valuable than candy. At this point, Ricky knew that he should stop, but he didn't know how to stop. Then, one day, he was doing his Bible reading and came across the story of Achan. Ricky realized that he needed to confess his sins and repent to God. Ricky repented in his prayers to God and told his parents about the things he had stolen in the past year. They were shocked, but they told him that they were proud of him for confessing and admitting his sins. They told him to make sure never to let himself fall into a cycle of sin like this again, and that if he started slipping again, he could always turn to the Bible and to them for help. After that day, Ricky never stole anything ever again and always read the Bible diligently to help keep alert.

#### Discussion Questions

1. How did Ricky know that he had fallen into a cycle of sin?
2. Why was it important for Ricky to break that cycle? What could have happened if Ricky did not take steps to break the cycle?
3. What can we do when we feel like we may be falling into a cycle of sin?

## E2 Year 1 Book 4 Lesson 10—Conquering the Cities of Jericho and Ai

# Homework Assignment

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Parent signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Bible Reading:** Please put a check mark in the space when you complete the reading each day.

**Prayer:** Please put a check mark in the space on the days you prayed to God.

### What I Learned from the Bible This Week

1. \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

|      | Sun | Mon | Tue | Wed | Thu | Fri | Sat |
|------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| Read |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |
| Pray |     |     |     |     |     |     |     |

### Memory Verse

Please write down this week's memory verse. **(Joshua 7:13b)**

\_\_\_\_\_

**Short Answer**

1. What did the destruction of Jericho represent spiritually?
  
  
  
2. Why did the initial attack at Ai result in defeat?
  
  
  
3. From the severe punishment of Achan and his family, what can we learn about the importance of holiness?

**Life Application: Overcoming Temptations**

4. Read Matthew 4:1-11. What are the three temptations Jesus faced?
  
  
  
5. How does Satan usually tempt us?
  
  
  
6. How did Jesus overcome His temptations?