

# LESSON 12

## ACHAN'S SIN

### BEFORE YOU TEACH

#### Achan

Achan was an Israelite from the tribe of Judah. He coveted the plunder taken from Jericho that was to be devoted to the Lord. Achan took a robe, 200 shekels of silver, and a wedge of gold weighing fifty shekels and hid them under his tent (Josh 7:21). His name means "troubler." His sin caused God not to aid the Israelites, resulting in the military defeat at Ai and the death of thirty-six Israelites.

After revealing Achan's sin, the Israelites stoned Achan and his family and burned their remains. Many question the severity of the punishment. However, the battles of Jericho and Ai emphasized to the Israelites the necessity of having God to obtain victory over their enemies. If God had not dealt with Achan's disobedience with such severity, other Israelites may have started disobeying God as well. Achan's disobedience also led to the death of thirty-six of his countrymen. Achan hid his plunder in the ground inside his tent, where his family members would have known. They died not merely for Achan's sin but for indirectly conspiring with him.

#### Stoning

Stoning was the method of execution used in Israel to punish capital offenses. Moses' law specified that the Israelite community stone the guilty for serious crimes such as failing to observe the Sabbath (Num 15:32-36), practicing idolatry (Lev 20:2; Deut 13:6-11; 17:2-7), being a sorcerer (Lev 20:27), cursing God (Lev 24:10-16), dishonoring one's parents (Deut 21:20-21), and committing adultery (Deut 22:23-24). The community was responsible for executing the guilty. This demonstrates that all members of the community were responsible for maintaining God's law.

### BIBLE TEXT

Joshua 7

### BIBLE TRUTHS

1. We should not steal. God sees everything.
2. Our actions affect those around us: our family, our church, and our community.

### LESSON OBJECTIVES

1. To be holy in all things and say "No" to temptations.
2. To remind ourselves of sin's terrible consequences.
3. Not to greed after things that do not belong to us.

### MEMORY VERSE

"If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him."

(1 John 2:15b)

### PRAYER

In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, we pray. We thank You, Lord, for Your wonderful love and mercy. You are a holy God, and You want us to be holy, too. Please help us to be pure and to say "No" to temptations. May Your Spirit guide today's class as we learn about someone who did not say "No" to temptation. Hallelujah! Amen.

## UNDERSTANDING YOUR STUDENTS

At one time or another, we have all done something wrong and hoped that no one would find out. Our students might have taken something they were not supposed to take, or they might have broken a toy and hid it deep in the closet hoping that no one would find it. Ask the students how they felt when they were doing something they shouldn't have. Invariably, there will be feelings of guilt and a struggle between right and wrong.

But no matter how much we are tempted to sin, our students need to be reminded that sin always causes trouble for us and for others. They may think that God's rules in the Bible or listening to our parents are not important, or that if others don't know what they've done then no one will be hurt. The Book of James reminds us

that "when desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, brings forth death" (Jas 1:15). Our students need to know that when sin is allowed to exist, it will snowball, getting bigger and bigger, and eventually cause tremendous damage. Apparently, Achan didn't think about the consequences of disobeying God as he buried the stolen treasures under his tent.

Our students need to learn that in the midst of struggling between right and wrong, they should immediately pray to the Lord and ask Him for forgiveness. They need to be reminded that they have a heavenly Father who loves them dearly and will embrace them with open arms when they return to Him.

### VOCABULARY

**sin:** something that we do, say or think that is wrong in God's sight and goes against God's commandments

**stone:** to kill someone by throwing stones at them

**covet:** to want and own something very badly

**accursed:** something that is cursed and brings trouble

### REVIEW

Last week, we learned how the Israelites conquered Jericho by marching around the city. For six days, the Israelite army followed the ark and marched around the city once a day. Then on the seventh day, the ark and the army marched around Jericho seven times. The army shouted and Jericho's walls fell. By trusting in the power of God, the Israelites conquered a strong city like Jericho. We learned that we can rely on God's strength when we encounter difficulty. Out of the whole city, who was saved? (Rahab and her household.) And what did God instruct the Israelites to do with all the things in the city? God instructed the Israelites not to take anything from Jericho and to burn everything. God considered everything in Jericho "accursed things." This meant that everything in Jericho was cursed and would bring trouble.

### BIBLE STORY

#### The Israelites Battle the City of Ai

After the Israelites won the battle in Jericho, they thought the rest of their battles would be just as easy. Joshua could see that God was helping them and knew that with His help, no enemy could stand before them. The next city they were going to battle was called Ai. [Show where Ai is on a map.] According to the report that the spies came back with, Ai was a small city with few people living there. When Joshua heard this, he felt that since it was such a small city, they should send only 3,000 soldiers. Unfortunately, things were not as easy as they seemed. Imagine their surprise when the men of Ai killed thirty-six of the Israelites and chased the rest of them back down the hill. The people of Israel were so frightened that their hearts melted and became like water. Joshua was so sad and grieved that he tore his clothes. How could it be that

they won the battle of Jericho, which was a huge and mighty city, and lost in the battle against a small city such as Ai?

#### Joshua Prays to God

Joshua went to the Lord to find out what was wrong. Joshua prayed to God and asked, "Alas, Lord God, why have You brought us here to allow our enemies to destroy us? Now when the nations of Canaan hear about Ai, they will wipe Israel off the earth. How then will Your name be praised?" Joshua asked God these questions because he didn't understand why God did not help them. Joshua was afraid that other countries would think that God was not with the Israelites anymore.

God then told Joshua, "Get up! Why do you lie on your face? Israel has sinned. Israel has not followed My

commands." Before the battle of Jericho, God told His people that everything in Jericho was accursed and should be destroyed. No one was to keep any of its riches for himself. Even all the flocks and herds were to be killed. They were to save only the gold, silver, and vessels of iron and bronze, which were to be offered to God. But someone had not followed those instructions and had taken some of the accursed things for himself. That person had stolen and lied. That was why Israel was beaten and trouble had come upon them. God told Joshua that He would no longer be with them unless the stolen things were destroyed.

### **The Tribes and Families Come Forward**

God then told Joshua, "Go and prepare the people for tomorrow. They will not be able to win against their enemies unless they remove the accursed thing from among them. In the morning, I will tell a tribe to come forward, and from that tribe I will tell a group of families to come forward. From that family, whoever is found to have the stolen things will be stoned and burned by fire. Everything that belongs to him will also be burned. He has disobeyed Me and has done a shameful thing in Israel." What did God want Joshua to do? He wanted Joshua to get all the Israelites together. Then God would call each family to come forward, one by one, until the person who stole the things was found.

So early the next morning, Joshua told each tribe of Israel to come forward, and the tribe of Judah was chosen. From the tribe of Judah, a group of families called the Zarahites was chosen. From that group, the family of Zabdi was chosen. Every person in Zabdi's family came forward, until Achan, the grandson of Zabdi, was chosen.

### **Achan and His Family Are Punished**

When Achan was revealed, Joshua said to Achan, "My son, give glory to the Lord God of Israel and tell me what you have done."

Achan replied, "It's true! I have sinned against the Lord. When I saw among the spoils a beautiful garment, silver, and gold, I coveted them and took them. They are hidden in the ground in my tent."

Achan admitted that he had stolen the things. A

garment is a piece of clothing. He thought it looked beautiful. He also saw a lot of silver and gold, which is like money today. He knew what God had said, but he could not resist. So he stole them and hid them.

Joshua sent some messengers and they ran to the tent. They found the stolen things under Achan's tent. They brought these things to the Israelites and to the Lord.

Then Joshua, along with the rest of the Israelites, brought Achan, the stolen things, his family, and all that he had, to the Valley of Achor. Joshua said, "Why have you brought this trouble on us? The Lord will bring trouble on you today."

Then all of Israel stoned him, his family, his animals and everything that belonged to Achan. Then they put a large pile of rocks over Achan's body.

After Achan and his family were stoned, the Israelites called that place the "Valley of Achor" or the "Valley of Trouble." Achan's name means "Troubler." Achan's disobedience and greed brought great trouble not only upon himself, but upon his whole family and the people of Israel. It caused the Israelite people to lose the battle at Ai and also caused thirty-six men to die in that battle.

After the sin was discovered, all the Israelites knew how important it was to obey God and follow His commands. After Achan was stoned to death, 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." Now God told His people that He was going to be with them once again. They did not have to be afraid anymore. So Joshua did as he was commanded and there was a great victory over the city of Ai that day.

The first time Joshua and the Israelites fought the battle at Ai, they lost. This was because Achan had sinned against God and God was not with the Israelites as they fought. Now, the second time Joshua and the Israelites attacked Ai, the result was different. God was with them this time, and they won the battle mightily. This is the biggest difference. When God is not with us because we have done something we are not supposed to, then our lives will be empty. We will not feel power or strength from God. But when God is with us, we will always be victorious.

### **CHECK FOR UNDERSTANDING**

1. **Ai was a huge city just like Jericho.** False; it was a small city with few people.
2. **After defeating Jericho, fighting the city of Ai was "a piece of cake."** False; the Israelites lost.
3. **The Israelites were not supposed to take anything from Jericho.** True.
4. **God knew that someone had disobeyed Him.** True.
5. **Achan, his family, and all his things were destroyed.** True.
6. **What does Achan's name mean?** "Troubler."
7. **How did Achan bring trouble to the Israelites?** Achan's greed for the accursed items taken from Jericho caused the Israelites' loss in the battle, the death of thirty-six men during the battle, and the death of himself, his family, and all his animals.
8. **How was Achan punished for his disobedience?** He was stoned to death.

### MEMORY VERSE PRACTICE

Please reinforce the memory verse every week.  
You can practice the memory verse with your students anytime during class.

**"If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him." (1 John 2:15)**

### HOMEWORK ANSWER KEY

1. C
2. A
3. C
4. B
5. False; the spies said the people of Ai were few.
6. True
7. True
8. We hurt God, ourselves, our family, brothers and sisters, and friends.
9. He regretted doing it; he was probably scared and sad.
10. They won because God was with the Israelites. Answers may vary.

### SPIRITUAL TEACHING & LIFE APPLICATION

#### 1. Sin has terrible consequences. Say "NO" to sin.

When the people of Israel found out Achan had disobeyed and sinned against God, they stoned him to death and removed the sin that had brought trouble upon them. Today, do we have an "Achan" in our heart that causes us to disobey God and sin against Him? Maybe the "Achan" in our heart likes to steal, lie, fight with others, or disobey our parents. [Allow students to share.]

What should we do if we find an "Achan" in our heart? [Allow students to answer.] The "Achans" in our hearts are much more difficult to remove. We can't stone Achan like how the Israelites stoned him, but we definitely have to get rid of him. Otherwise he will bring trouble upon us. God hates such sins and He will not be with us. We can only overcome our sins through prayer. Romans 8:13 tells us that through the power of the Holy Spirit we can put to death the things of the flesh. We can ask our parents, brothers and sisters, and friends to pray for our weakness so that we can quickly remove it from our hearts.

What happens if we don't remove "Achan" from our heart? [Allow students to answer.] If we allow sin to remain in our heart, it will grow and eventually lead to death. Let's read James 1:15. Here the Bible describes sin as being like a baby in a mother's womb. At first the baby is very small. Each day the baby grows bigger and bigger, until one day, it's time for the baby to come into the world. It's the same with wrong desires. If we allow these desires to remain inside us, they will grow and mature, until one day, they give birth to death. Sin always has bad consequences. So before our desire gives birth to sin, we have to remove it.

#### 2. Do not greed after things that don't belong to us.

Achan took things that God instructed the Israelites not to take. Why is it wrong to take things that do not belong to us?

Let's find out what made Achan take the things.

Read Joshua 7:21. Achan **saw** the garments, gold and silver, he **coveted** them, and then he **took** them. [Write these three words on the board.]

What did Achan do first? He saw the things that were forbidden by God.

Achan kept looking at the garment, silver, and gold. How did he feel when he kept looking at the beautiful things? He began to covet, or want, them. Because he kept looking at them, his heart began to want these things for himself.

What did Achan do next? He took these forbidden things and buried them in his tent. So he sinned against God.

Today, if our parents and God tell us of things we are not allowed to have or see, what should we do?

[Allow students to share.] We should turn our eyes away and walk away from them. If we keep looking at the things we are not allowed to have, as Achan did, we will want them and then disobey God and our parents by taking them.

In Psalm 119:37, the psalmist teaches us to pray and ask God to turn our eyes from looking at the worthless things in the world. We must ask God to also guard our hearts from sinful desires.

3. No one saw Achan take the garment, gold, and silver. Not even Joshua saw him. But God saw Achan and He told Joshua. God sees everything, even things that are done in secret, when no one is looking. Has there been a time when you thought God was not looking?

Proverbs 15:3 says, "The eyes of the Lord are in every place, keeping watch on the evil and the good." God sees when we do good things and when we do bad things. God sees deep into our hearts. We cannot hide from Him. When God sent Jonah the prophet to Nineveh to preach to the people there, Jonah thought that he could run away from God and hide from Him by taking a boat in the opposite direction. But God knew exactly where Jonah had gone and He used a giant fish to swallow Jonah and bring him back to Nineveh.

### Story

Phil looked up from his puzzle as his mother walked into the house with two bags of groceries.

"Hi, honey," she said. "There are two more bags of groceries in the car. Will you get them, please? And I need you to get some other things, too. When I picked up my purse along with these bags, it was upside down, and several things fell out. Pick up that stuff, too, okay?"

"Sure, Mom," Phil nodded and hurried out to the garage. He took the bags of groceries into the house and set them on the counter. Then he went back to get the things that had spilled from Mom's purse. Along with several other items, he found four one-dollar bills. Phil picked them up and looked at them thoughtfully. Then he put one of the bills in his pocket.

"Here's your stuff," he said when he returned to the house.

"Thanks, Phil," said Mom. "Now I'd like you to take the swatter and get rid of these flies."

She frowned. "Where do they come from?"

Phil grinned and got the swatter. "Gotcha!" he exclaimed after a moment.

Then he saw a fly sunning itself on a windowsill.

"Mom, come see this fly," he called. "It looks like it is cleaning its face—just like our cat does."

"It does look that way," agreed Mom. "A man on TV was talking about flies the other day. He mentioned some interesting things. He said the flies' legs have brushes that they use to clean their eyes."

"Oh, yuck!" groaned Phil, making a face.

"The man also said that a fly's individual eye is composed of 4,000 simple eyes. Amazing!"

"Wow!" exclaimed Phil. "That's weird."

"When I heard that, it made me think of a verse in the Book of Psalms," said Mom. "David wrote, 'He who formed the eye, shall He not see?'"

As Phil put his hand into his pocket, he felt the bill. "God sees this, too," he thought. "I better give it back. God will not be pleased if I steal this from my mother." He gathered all his courage and went up to his mother, "Mom, I am really sorry... I took this dollar bill from you without asking. Will you forgive me?"

She looked at Phil and said, "Oh my son, I am so glad that you did the right thing!"

Phil felt a huge relief in his heart. "Thank God for giving me the courage. I want to make things right in the eyes of God."

### What can we learn from this story?

Phil had a moment of greed and desired to keep that dollar bill. He didn't feel right after reflecting upon what he should do. Thank God that he was brave enough to return the money to his mother. What can we learn from this story?

1. Desiring something that doesn't belong to us is a sin in the eyes of God.
2. Stealing is a sin in the eyes of God. Stealing is like coveting. If we steal or covet, we are breaking the 10th commandment.
3. We need to always ask ourselves, "What would Jesus do?"
4. When we sin, there is always a consequence that follows.
5. Always have a clean conscience in front of man and in front of God. When we live a life of righteous deeds, we will have strength and victory.

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 ACTIVITIES
 

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1

**There's an Achan in the Camp****Objective:** To learn through song and game that stealing is wrong.**Materials**

Pictures or items representing the following objects:

- Moses' staff
- Mary's jar of nard
- The little boy's five loaves of bread and two fish
- Abraham offering Isaac
- Dorcas' needle and thread
- Miriam's timbrel
- The gold that David used to build the temple
- Abel's sheep
- Women offering spices

[You may include or exclude items that you believe will be more fitting to your students.]

**Instructions**

1. Have the students sit in a circle and place the objects in the middle. Explain to the students how the owners of each item offered them for use by God.
2. When the game begins, have the students close their eyes and sing the hymn: "O Be Careful, Little Eyes."
3. Secretly choose one student to be "Achan." "Achan" will steal one of the objects and hide it.
4. After finishing one verse of the hymn, the students will open their eyes and figure out which item "Achan" stole.
5. The student who answers correctly becomes the next "Achan."

**"O Be Careful, Little Eyes"**

O be careful little eyes what you see  
 O be careful little eyes what you see  
 There's a Father up above  
 And He's looking down in love  
 So, be careful little eyes what you see

O be careful little ears what you hear  
 O be careful little ears what you hear  
 There's a Father up above  
 And He's looking down in love  
 So, be careful little ears what you hear

O be careful little hands what you do  
 O be careful little hands what you do  
 There's a Father up above  
 And He's looking down in love  
 So, be careful little hands what you do

O be careful little feet where you go  
 O be careful little feet where you go  
 There's a Father up above  
 And He's looking down in love  
 So, be careful little feet where you go

O be careful little mouth what you say  
 O be careful little mouth what you say  
 There's a Father up above  
 And He's looking down in love  
 So, be careful little mouth what you say

**2****What Would You Do?**

**Objective:** To educate the students that stealing is not just taking something that doesn't belong to us.

**Instructions**

In each of the scenarios below, the teacher acts out the first part of the scenario. Ask students to think about what they would do, and then invite students to act out their individual responses. At the end of each scenario, discuss what would be the right thing to do given the situation. Have students consider the following questions:

1. Would it be wrong to take small things and not big things?
2. If we found some money on the ground and picked it up and kept it, would that be considered stealing?
3. Would it be considered stealing if we borrowed things and did not return them and the other person had forgotten all about it?

Allow students to realize that stealing is not only the action of taking something that's not ours. Stealing involves disobedience and greed. [Prepare a piece of candy, fake dollar bills, a cookie jar, and a toy for props.]

**Scenarios**

1. You and your mom are shopping in the candy store. You see your favorite candy. You see that nobody is looking and you think about taking it. What would you do?
2. You find a \$10 bill on the ground. You pick it up and ask those around you if it belongs to them. No one claims it. What would you do?
3. A little girl sees her mom's big cookie jar. She thinks, "Mom says not to take a cookie without first asking. But if I ask, she will not let me have one before dinner. There are so many in there that Mom won't notice if one is missing." What would you do?
4. You are at a toy store and you see a toy. You really want it but it costs \$5 and you only have \$4. Your mother is not with you. What would you do?
5. You notice your older sister has bought a packet of erasers. She has left them on her desk. You think, "It's only an eraser and besides she has so many of them, she will not mind if I take one." What would you do?
6. A boy is playing with an action figure. He thinks, "I have had this action figure for a month. When I asked Jimmy about borrowing it, he said that I could borrow it for only a week. He hasn't asked for it back. Maybe he has forgotten about it. Jimmy and I are good friends. Maybe he wants me to keep it." What would you do?

## E1 Year 1 Book 3 Lesson 12—Achan's Sin

# Homework Assignment

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

**Bible Truths:** 1. We should not steal. God sees everything.  
2. Our actions affect those around us: our family, our church, and our community.

**Lesson Objectives:** 1. To be holy in all things and say “No” to temptations.  
2. To remind ourselves of sin’s terrible consequences.  
3. Not to greed after things that do not belong to us.

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

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

	Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
Bible Reading							
Prayer							

### Memory Verse

Please write down this week's memory verse.

(1 John 2:15)

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### What I Learned from the Bible This Week

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

# Homework Assignment

Understanding What You Have Learned

## Multiple Choice

1. \_\_\_\_ : What did God command the Israelites to do to the things from the city of Jericho?
  - a. Burn everything that was in the city including all the gold, silver, and vessels
  - b. Take whatever they want and destroy the rest
  - c. Destroy and burn everything except the gold, silver, and vessels
  
2. \_\_\_\_ : What did Achan take from the city of Jericho?
  - a. A beautiful garment, silver, and gold
  - b. Five beautiful garments, silver, and gold
  - c. Silver, gold, and a diamond ring
  
3. \_\_\_\_ : The Israelites were victorious over Ai in their second battle because \_\_\_\_\_.
  - a. They took more people to fight this time.
  - b. They thought of a better plan to destroy the enemies
  - c. They had removed sin from the camp and God was with them again.
  
4. \_\_\_\_ : When the Israelites discovered Achan's sin, \_\_\_\_\_.
  - a. Only Achan was stoned to death
  - b. Achan, his family, his animals, and everything that he owned were stoned and burned.
  - c. Only Achan and his family were stoned and burned

## True or False

5. After spying out the city of Ai, the spies told Joshua that the city was large like Jericho and he needed to send everyone to fight. \_\_\_\_\_
6. Achan brought trouble upon himself, his family, and all the Israelite people. \_\_\_\_\_
7. Achan saw the beautiful garment, silver, and gold, coveted them and then took them. \_\_\_\_\_

## Life Application

8. Who is hurt when we disobey God? \_\_\_\_\_
9. How do you think Achan felt when he was found out? \_\_\_\_\_
10. The first time Joshua and the Israelites fought the battle at Ai, they lost. This was because Achan had sinned against God and God was not with the Israelites as they fought. Now, the second time Joshua and the Israelites attacked Ai, the result was different. What was the result? What can we learn from this?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_