

SPIRITUAL WARFARE 11

Focused Living Ministries

We often regard our sins as no big deal. But sin kills us the same way that Eskimos kill wolves. First, they coat a razor sharp knife blade with layer upon layer of frozen caribou blood until it is completely concealed. He then secures his blood covered knife in the ground with the blade up poking up through the snow. A wolf eventually tracks the scent to this raw blood 'popsicle' and begins to slowly lick away layer after layer of blood until they are cutting their own tongue as they viciously lick the knife. The frozen blood numbs the wolf's tongue as it continues to feverishly lick, cutting itself ever more deeply. Soon its mouth is so badly shredded that its own blood pours out from the wounds. So great becomes its insatiable craving that the wolf fails to recognize that it is being satisfied by its own fresh, warm blood. Weakened, it does not take long until it collapses and dies in the arctic night. We are often like that wolf drawn by the scent of a sin that tastes so good we just can't stop licking. Small, innocent 'licks' blinds our hearts to God's truth resulting in a voracious appetite for some sin that eats away at our own lives until we too become weak, collapsing alone in the arctic cold. **What cold, bloody knife are you currently sniffing at or licking?**



Joshua 6:18-19; 7:1-26 The first battle fought in the Promised Land was at Jericho (Josh 6) where God taught His men that **victory in great things starts with obedience in little things**. So He ordered 40,000 soldiers to simply and silently do a little thing by marching around the city 13 times over 7 days trusting Him to bring a great victory as they focused on His character.

(Joshua 6:18-19) Great moves of God are always preceded by small acts of obedience and great defeats come from disobedience in the little things. In their first battle at Jericho what little thing did the Lord command of His people not to do before they encountered another enemy? Why was this so important? How did one dude's disobedience in a little thing affect the next big battle at Ai? In what 'little thing' have you not obeyed God?

(Joshua 7:20-21) What parallels do you see between Achan (Lit 'Troubler') and the opening wolf illustration?

(Joshua 7:1-5; Gen 12:1-9) Like us, what fundamental decision did the people fail to make that day and each day before every spiritual battle? (Hint: "Ai" = heap of dung/ruin. "Bethel" = House of God.)

(Joshua 7:2-3; 8:25) How many times does it record that they prayed, focused on God's character and humbly depended on His power as they ran into battle? What basic lessons did they forget from the battle of Jericho? What lessons have you so quickly forgotten? Where do you see overconfidence in your own abilities instead of the Lord's as you head into battle this week?

(Joshua 7:5-9; John 21; Psalm 51) What was Joshua's response to the first defeat in the promised land? What is your response to defeat? How do you grow through it?

(Joshua 7:10-13) What was God's response and what did He say was the main reason for their first defeat? In what way did God's people really fight the wrong enemy? Where was the real battlefield and what was the biggest enemy?

TAG TEAM DISCUSSION

- T/F A man's character is only as solid as the secret things in his life.
- T/F There is no such thing as a private sin. (Luke 12:3; Prov 5:21; 16:2)
- T/F Personal, private and hidden sin affects/hurts only me.
- T/F Psalm 139:23-24 would be an awesome prayer to recite before heading into spiritual battle each day. Why?

(Joshua 7:22-26; Acts 5:1-11) Why do you think our just (Dt 32:4), loving (I John 4:8), patient (Ex 34:6-7) and righteous (Ps 145:17) God dealt so harshly with the sin in this family?

ASSIGNMENT

1. Text one friend in the Forum for accountability.
2. Memorize Psalm 139:23-24.