

VBS

2026

**GOD
CARES
FOR
ME**

WEDNESDAY

1ST-5TH GRADE

***God Cares About
Our Obedience***

CC PHILLY CHILDREN'S MINISTRY

God Cares About Our Obedience

The Objective is the key concept for this weeks lesson. It should be the main focus of the study

These are the key verses that you will find helpful in teaching your study this week. The "Main passage" is the basis of the study, where the other verse support the objective of the lesson.

There is a memory verse for the students that relates to every study. If a student can memorize the verse for the following week you may give them a prize from the "reward box" found on your cart.

An introductory activity or question that will settle the class, draw their attention to the study and prepare their hearts for God's Word

Objective To teach that God cares about and sees both our obedience and our disobedience. Nothing is hidden from God.

Key Verses

Joshua 7—Main Teaching Passage

Joshua 6:17-19

John 14:15

Ephesians 6:1

James 1

Memory Verse - Proverbs 15:3

"The eyes of the LORD *are* in every place,
Keeping watch on the evil and the good."

Hook

Before class, have a helper hide something in the room. Then at the start of class say, "someone hid something in their room before you came in." Give them 15 seconds to find it.

Whether it was found or not, use it as an example that you knew where it was the whole time, because you saw where it was hidden. It was never hidden from you.

What if you did something wrong and no one else knew? Would that mean you got away with it? Or is there Someone who still sees even when no one else does? Sometimes we may feel like we got away with something, but today, we're going to learn about someone else who thought he had hidden something, but God saw and knew the whole time.

What does the Bible say? This is where we will read a passage or series of passages that teach on the subject of the day.

BOOK

Today's passage comes right after the famous account of the battle of Jericho. Before the city was destroyed, Joshua told the people not to take anything from Jericho for themselves (see Joshua 6:17-19). But in Joshua 7, we are told that a man named Achan took some of the forbidden things from Jericho and hid them in his tent. Because of this, God was angry with the Israelites.

After the victory at Jericho, Joshua sent spies to the next city, Ai. The spies reported that there were not many people in Ai and told Joshua not to send the whole army. So Joshua sent about three thousand men, but the men of Ai defeated them, and the Israelites ran away.

Joshua tore his clothes and fell to the ground before the LORD. He cried out to the Lord asking Him how He could allow this to happen. The Lord told Joshua that Israel had sinned. Someone had stolen treasure from Jericho, hidden it, and lied about it. They would not be able to stand against their enemies until sin was removed.

The next day, Joshua gathered all the tribes of Israel. The tribe of Judah was set apart. From within Judah the clan of the Zerahites was taken, then the family of Zabdi. Finally, each member of Zabdi passed by, and Achan was selected. Joshua told Achan to admit what he had done, and Achan confessed that he took a cloak, silver, and gold and hid them in the ground inside his tent. Joshua sent messengers to search the tent, and they found the treasure just as Achan had said. Achan, the things he took, and all that belonged to him were brought to the Valley of Achor and destroyed. After this, the Lord turned from His anger against Israel.

LOOK

So far this week, we've learned that God sees us and cares for us. That's a really good thing! But today we see another aspect of God's care. God sees and cares about our obedience—and our disobedience.

Everyone had heard the command not to take anything from the city. But Achan saw something he wanted. He desired it in his heart, took it, and then hid it. He thought it was a secret—like no one would ever find out. But God knew exactly what Achan had done. Maybe Achan even thought, "It's not like it's going to hurt anyone." But his sin led to the death of 36 men when Israel was defeated at Ai.

Sin is anything that we think, say, or do that goes against God and His Word. And sin always has consequences. First, sin separates us from God (7:12). Because God is holy, there can be no sin in His presence. Second, sin doesn't just affect us, it affects others too, sometimes in ways we don't see or understand. And finally, sin leads to death (Romans 6:23)! We see all of those things in the story of Achan.

This is where things get serious. Achan's sin didn't just stay hidden,

The interpretation/exegesis of the passage. What does this passage mean? How does this passage apply to my life?

LOOK (Continued)

it had to be dealt with. He and everything he had were destroyed. That shows us something important: sin is not small to God. It must be punished. Someone has to pay for it. That might sound scary—and it should. If God sees everything, and sin must be punished, what hope do we have?

Here is the good news. God didn't leave us to face the punishment for our sin on our own. Instead, He sent His Son, Jesus. Achan's sin had to be judged. But for us, Jesus came to take the punishment our sins deserve. Jesus never sinned, yet He took our place. On the cross, Jesus paid for sin completely. Because of Him, we can be forgiven. We don't have to hide from God—we can come to Him and be made right with Him.

Often when we sin, we can fool ourselves into believing that no one, not even God, knows what we have done. But our story today shows us that this is a lie. We may be able to hide our sins from others, but we can never hide them from God. And that is actually a good thing. God does not ignore our sin. He corrects us, forgives us, and helps us turn away from it.

But God doesn't just see and care about our disobedience—He also sees and cares about our obedience. Have you ever been caught doing something wrong? Have you ever been caught doing something good? God sees it all. And now, because of Jesus, we don't obey just because we are afraid of punishment. We obey because we have been forgiven, because we belong to Him, and because He is changing our hearts.

Jesus said, "If you love Me, keep My commandments." When we trust in Him, He helps us live in a way that honors Him. And life is always better when we obey Him, because His ways are good and He knows what is best for us.

TOOK

As a class, memorize Proverbs 15:3.

Give a challenge: This week, when you are tempted to do something wrong, even if no one else would know, remember that God sees, God cares, and because of Jesus, you can choose to obey. Don't try to hide sin. Talk to God, and ask Him to help turn away from sin and do what is right.

Pray: God, You see everything—nothing is hidden from You. Thank You that even though we sin, You sent Jesus to take the punishment for us so we can be forgiven. Help us to turn to you in times of temptation. Amen.

Family Question: Why can't we hide our sin from God?

What is my response to this passage of Scripture? How should my life change according to what this passage teaches me? What are the practical things I can do throughout the week to make this true in my life?

FURTHER STUDY

Commentary on Joshua 7 by David Guzik

Defeat at Ai and Achan's Sin

A. Defeat at Ai.

1. ([Jos 7:1](#)) Not all of Israel obeyed the law of the devoted things.

But the children of Israel committed a trespass regarding the accursed things, for Achan the son of Carmi, the son of Zabdi, the son of Zerah, of the tribe of Judah, took of the accursed things; so the anger of the LORD burned against the children of Israel.

a. **The children of Israel committed a trespass regarding the accursed things:** Joshua commanded the nation in [Joshua 6:18](#) that they should not take of any of the accursed things, those things that were associated with the demonic and debasing worship and practices of the Canaanites.

b. **The accursed things:** The wars fought by Israel in Canaan were not to be plundering wars of personal gain; they were an unusual, sacred instrument in God's hand, used for judgment against a society ripe for judgment.

c. **So the anger of the LORD burned against the children of Israel:** Israel could not be defeated by the Canaanites, but they could defeat themselves by alienating themselves from God's plan and power.

2. ([Jos 7:2-3](#)) Spies report from the city of Ai.

Now Joshua sent men from Jericho to Ai, which *is* beside Beth Aven, on the east side of Bethel, and spoke to them, saying, "Go up and spy out the country." So the men went up and spied out Ai. And they returned to Joshua and said to him, "Do not let all the people go up, but let about two or three thousand men go up and attack Ai. Do not weary all the people there, for *the people of Ai are few.*"

a. The recommendation to send only **two or three thousand men** was either a response of faith or self confidence. In the end it did not matter; in their disobedience, they could have sent 100,000 troops and it would have made no difference.

b. Israel's success depended on their own state of being conquered by God; Achan's rebellion showed that in that respect, they were not conquered by Him - and therefore open to defeat.

3. ([Jos 7:4-5](#)) Israel is defeated at Ai.

So about three thousand men went up there from the people, but they fled before the men of Ai. And the men of Ai struck down about thirty-six men, for they chased them *from* before the gate as far as Shebarim, and struck them down on the descent; therefore the hearts of the people melted and became like water.

a. **So about three thousand men went up there from the people:** Joshua, a wise military leader, commands the larger number recommended by his military intelligence to be sent - but it makes no difference. **They fled before the men of Ai.**

b. **And the men of Ai struck down about thirty-six men:** The thirty-six men killed were thirty-six more than were killed at Jericho, which was thought to be a much more difficult city to conquer. Though this number was small from a military standpoint, what it meant was staggering to Israel. It meant that Israel *could* be defeated in the Promised Land.

i. The defeat at Ai showed that what mattered was not the strength of the opponent, but the help of God. Without God's help, all would be lost.

c. **Therefore the hearts of the people melted and became like water:** The people of Israel had good reason to be afraid. Their panic was completely logical, because if God did not fight for them, they had nothing to expect but defeat.

B. Joshua goes before the *LORD* in time of crisis.

1. ([Jos 7:6-9](#)) Joshua fears that it was unfaithfulness on God's part that had caused the defeat.

Then Joshua tore his clothes, and fell to the earth on his face before the ark of the LORD until evening, he and the elders of Israel; and they put dust on their heads. And Joshua said, "Alas, Lord GOD, why have You brought this people over the Jordan at all; to deliver us into the hand of the Amorites, to destroy us? Oh, that we had been content, and dwelt on the other side of the Jordan! O Lord, what shall I say when Israel turns its back before its enemies? For the Canaanites and all the inhabitants of the land will hear *it*, and surround us, and cut off our name from the earth. Then what will You do for Your great name?"

a. **Then Joshua tore his clothes:** To tear your clothes and to put dust on your head both displayed *mourning*. Joshua is not only mourning the death of thirty-six men, but more so, **he and the elders of Israel** mourn the loss of the blessing and guidance of God.

b. **Alas, Lord GOD, why have You brought this people over the Jordan at all:** For Joshua and the elders of Israel, this defeat was a national calamity. They do not take this defeat in stride; there is no "win a few, lose a few" mentality at work. They know that every battle matters, and there is always a *reason* for defeat, it doesn't "just happen."

c. **Oh, that we had been content, and dwelt on the other side of the Jordan!** Joshua well knows that if God's hand of blessing and guidance is not there, it would be better that they had come to the Promised Land. If God will not deliver them, all will be lost.

i. How different from so much of Christianity today! We are often so filled with *man's* programs and power, that if God withdrew His blessing and guidance, it wouldn't be missed for a long time.

d. **Then what will You do for Your great name?** This shows that Joshua's over-riding concern was for the glory of God. Our greatest disappointment when we stumble should be that we have possibly caused reproach on the **great name** of God.

2. ([Jos 7:10-11](#)) The real reason for defeat: Israel has sinned.

So the LORD said to Joshua: "Get up! Why do you lie thus on your face? Israel has sinned, and they have also transgressed My covenant which I commanded them. For they have even taken some of the accursed things, and have both stolen and deceived; and they have also put *it* among their own stuff."

a. **Israel has sinned:** The good news was that God had not failed the nation. The bad news was that this defeat was due to the sin of Israel. Joshua doesn't need to fear that the problem is with God - it is almost comforting to find that the problem is with us!

i. This is why God tells Joshua to **get up**. He doesn't need to beg God to change *His* heart towards Israel. Joshua must change Israel's heart before God.

ii. God's provision is for us to live a life of unbroken victory. But He will not make defeat *impossible*, taking away our ability to choose good or evil. He always makes it possible for us *not* to sin; here, Israel sinned, but they didn't have to.

b. **Israel has sinned ... they ... they ... they also**: God says that **Israel** had sinned, not only one man. It is staggering to think that the whole nation was found guilty, and thirty-six men were dead, all for the sin of one man and his family.

i. Paul speaks in similar terms concerning sin in the church; regarding sin among the Corinthian church, he says *Do you not know that a little leaven leavens the whole lump?* ([1 Corinthians 5:6](#)) A small amount of sin accepted and tolerated among believers can infect the whole group.

ii. In this sense, the acceptance and toleration of the sin is worse than the sin itself, so it must be dealt with strictly.

c. **For they have even taken some of the accursed things, and have both stolen and deceived**: We should understand exactly what the sin was. Someone in Israel took things that were devoted to God, devoted either by their giving to His tabernacle, or by their complete destruction. One man stole from God, in the same way we steal from Him when we do not give Him what he directs us to give.

i. [Leviticus 22:14](#), [27:15](#), [27:19](#), and [27:31](#) each demonstrate that in Israel, if you wanted to keep something that belonged to God, you had to pay a 20% (one-fifth) penalty. This was the same amount required for restitution in theft ([Leviticus 6:4-5](#)).

ii. The New Testament teaches us that giving should be regular and proportional ([1 Corinthians 16:1-2](#)), that it should be generous, purposeful, and cheerful ([2 Corinthians 9:6-8](#)). When we don't give as God directs us, we must regard it as sin and repent of it.

3. ([Jos 7:12-13](#)) The effect of the sin: they now have no power before their enemies.

"Therefore the children of Israel could not stand before their enemies, *but* turned *their* backs before their enemies, because they have become doomed to destruction. Neither will I be with you anymore, unless you destroy the accursed from among you. 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."*

a. **Therefore the children of Israel could not stand before their enemies**: Israel could not fight in God's power and presence unless they walked in obedience to God. Israel was under a covenant with God that promised blessing on their obedience, and also promised curses upon their disobedience.

i. We are not under that kind of covenant. Our position with God is made by the work of Jesus on our behalf, not our own works. Yet if we want God's power and presence in our own battles, we must walk in fellowship with Him, and this fellowship is hindered by our own sin and rebellion.

ii. Our position before God is secure in Jesus; but our fellowship with Him is hindered by our own sin ([1 John 1:6](#)). This fellowship with God is our wellspring of power to live in the Spirit.

b. **They have become doomed to destruction**: It is sobering to realize that a body in sin has no power before their enemies. It is wonderful to realize that once the sin has been dealt with, God's power can again flow in

our Christian life.

c. **You cannot stand before your enemies until you take away the accursed thing from among you:** When God deals with a particular area of sin, and when resist His work, His *mercy* makes us to fail in battle. We are most dangerous when we think we are "winning" battles with our own self-reliance.

4. ([Jos 7:14-15](#)) Instructions for judgment of the sin.

"In the morning therefore you shall be brought according to your tribes. And it shall be *that* the tribe which the LORD takes shall come according to families; and the family which the LORD takes shall come by households; and the household which the LORD takes shall come man by man. Then it shall be *that* he who is taken with the accursed thing shall be burned with fire, he and all that he has, because he has transgressed the covenant of the LORD, and because he has done a disgraceful thing in Israel."

a. **The tribe which the LORD takes:** Though the identity of the sinning family was unknown to Joshua, it was known to God. Secret sin on earth is an open scandal before God. Therefore, we should therefore live our lives with "one set of books," with one kind of life that can be seen by anybody, anywhere.

b. **Then it shall be that he who is taken with the accursed thing shall be burned with fire:** Once God dealt with the one sinning individual, blessing could come again on the whole nation.

C. Achan's sin publicly judged.

1. ([Jos 7:16-18](#)) God exposes the identity of the head of the family that had sinned.

So Joshua rose early in the morning and brought Israel by their tribes, and the tribe of Judah was taken. He brought the clan 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. Then he brought his 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.

a. **Achan the son of Carmi, the son of Zabdi, the son of Zerah, of the tribe of Judah, was taken:** This must have been an excruciating experience for Achan. How much better to simply walk in obedience to God!

b. All this time, Achan certainly remembered exactly what he had taken, and how he wished he had not taken it. But he - and we - should remember the regret of sin *before* we sin, not after.

i. Sin does have its pleasures. Taking those things gave Achan a good feeling. But the penalty of sin, both within us and upon us, outweighs any of the fleeting pleasures of sin.

2. ([Jos 7:19-21](#)) Joshua confronts Achan, and he confesses.

Now Joshua said to Achan, "My son, I beg you, give glory to the LORD God of Israel, and make confession to Him, and tell me now what you have done; do not hide *it* from me." 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."

a. **My son, I beg you, give glory to the LORD God of Israel, and make confession to Him:** Even when we sin and try to cover our sin, we can still **give glory to the LORD** by openly and honestly confessing our sin. Hidden sin always has a special power over us.

b. **A beautiful Babylonian garment, two hundred shekels of silver, and a wedge of gold weighing fifty shekels:** Measured against the lives of thirty-six men and the welfare of the entire nation, what Achan gained was pretty insignificant. Truly, *the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, for which some have strayed from the faith in their greediness, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows* ([1 Timothy 6:10](#)).

c. Think of how Achan could have rationalized his sin: "No one will know." "These things won't be missed." "Think of how I'll be admired in this beautiful Babylonian garment." "I'm not hurting anyone." "I deserve this." The excuses can go on and on, but they all fall short.

d. When we are at the terrible place Achan is, we all feel terrible about our sin, wishing we had never done it - may God help us to feel terrible about our sin *before* we do it!

2. ([Jos 7:22-26](#)) The confession confirmed and judgment executed.

So Joshua sent messengers, and they ran to the tent; and there it was, hidden in his tent, with the silver under it. And they took them from the midst of the tent, brought them to Joshua and to all the children of Israel, and laid them out before the LORD. Then Joshua, and all Israel with him, took Achan the son of Zerah, the silver, the garment, the wedge of gold, his sons, his daughters, his oxen, his donkeys, his sheep, his tent, and all that he had, and they brought them to the Valley of Achor. And Joshua said, "Why have you troubled us? The LORD will trouble you this day." So all Israel stoned him with stones; and they burned them with fire after they had stoned them with stones. Then they raised over him a great heap of stones, still there to this day. So the LORD turned from the fierceness of His anger. Therefore the name of that place has been called the Valley of Achor to this day.

a. **His sons, his daughters:** Achan's sons and daughters had specific knowledge of the sin, because it is unlikely that he could bury so much under their tent without their knowledge. At the same time, they were not necessarily stoned with Achan. Instead of being killed with their father, Achan's children were probably called forth to witness the judgment against their father.

i. We notice the use of the singular in [Joshua 7:25](#) and [7:26](#) (**you ... you ... him ... him**), in reference to a person being stoned. The use of the plural in [Joshua 7:24](#) and [7:25](#) (**them ... them ... them**) probably has reference to Achan's possessions, not his children.

b. The Israelites aptly named this place **Valley of Trouble** (or, *disaster*, as it is in the NIV).

c. **So the LORD turned from the fierceness of His anger:** Even this kind of sin, when it is dealt with, can be a spring board to victory again. Now Israel was again in position to walk in the power and guidance of God, after they had been conquered by God again.

i. This kind of victory only comes after a *death*. We need to die to such besetting sins, know that *those who are Christ's have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires* ([Galatians 5:24](#)) - the power and victory of Jesus' resurrection are ours as we crucify our flesh with Him every day.