
The Foundation for Forgiveness

Joshua 6:15-19; 7:1,10-12,24-26

“You're outta here!”

My teenager John is no different than most teens. Seeing only his own wants, he seems to miss the big picture. He'll argue with us because he thinks he knows it all. Sometimes he acts rebellious. And when he will have the best of intentions and motives, he will still blow it—again and again. When I have dared to expect something from him, he lets me down. So, he resolves to change his ways, only to return to the same behavior.

There usually comes a time that you tell a teen, “If you want to live in this house, and in harmony with this family, you'll follow the standards of the house. If not, you're outta here!” This demonstrates that your standards will reign over their desire to rebel. But when your teen asks forgiveness for walking in disobedience and unholiness, are you able to open your arms to him again?

Reflection

Once you have enjoyed the depth of relationship with the heavenly Father, you want more and more. You may turn back for a short time, thinking that life is easier to live on your own. Soon, though, you will run back to the Father who has known you, forgiven you, understood you, and made a place for you.

From the beginning, when Adam and Eve sinned in the garden, they were ashamed and could no longer walk in the coolness of the day with God. Again and again the Bible records that the Lord will not walk with those who continue to live in disobedience and unholiness.

Accountability and Application

The closer you walk with the Lord, the more sinful you will appear to yourself. There will always be times when you feel that walking with him is just too difficult, and certainly life on your own terms must be easier. These brief times soon bring a short period of repentance.

Do you honestly believe that the Lord welcomes you back when you ask forgiveness after you stray?

When you have been rebellious, what pierces your heart to return to him?

What can you do to keep yourself living his will and not your own will?

PRAYER: Lord, I have come to you many times when I've blown it, seeking your forgiveness. Still, I stray, living with my own agenda, and ignoring you. I've messed up so many times that it's embarrassing coming again. I trust that you will once again extend your mercy. Help me to find the strength to keep pursuing your holiness.

Joshua 6:15-19 (NIV)

¹⁵ On the seventh day, they got up at daybreak and marched around the city seven times in the same manner, except that on that day they circled the city [*Jericho*] seven times. ¹⁶ The seventh time around, when the priests sounded the trumpet blast, Joshua commanded the people, "Shout! For the LORD has given you the city! ¹⁷ The city and all that is in it are to be devoted to the LORD. Only Rahab the prostitute and all who are with her in her house shall be spared, because she hid the spies we sent. ¹⁸ But keep away from the devoted things, so that you will not bring about your own destruction by taking any of them. Otherwise you will make the camp of Israel liable to destruction and bring trouble on it. ¹⁹ All the silver and gold and the articles of bronze and iron are sacred to the LORD and must go into his treasury."

Joshua 7:1,10-12,24-26, Achan's Sin

¹ But the Israelites acted unfaithfully in regard to the devoted things; Achan son of Carmi, the son of Zimri, the son of Zerah, of the tribe of Judah, took some of them. So the LORD's anger burned against Israel. ... ¹⁰ The LORD said to Joshua, "Stand up! What are you doing down on your face? ¹¹ Israel has sinned; they have violated my covenant, which I commanded them to keep. They have taken some of the devoted things; they have stolen, they have lied, they have put them with their own possessions. ¹² That is why the Israelites cannot stand against their enemies; they turn their backs and run because they have been made liable to destruction. I will not be with you anymore unless you destroy whatever among you is devoted to destruction. ... ²⁴ Then Joshua, together with all Israel, took Achan son of Zerah, the silver, the robe, the gold wedge, his sons and daughters, his cattle, donkeys and sheep, his tent and all that he had, to the Valley of Achor. ²⁵ Joshua said, "Why have you brought this trouble on us? The LORD will bring trouble on you today."

Then all Israel stoned him, and after they had stoned the rest, they burned them. ²⁶ Over Achan they heaped up a large pile of rocks, which remains to this day. Then the LORD turned from his fierce anger. Therefore that place has been called the Valley of Achor ever since.