

Don't Lose To Ai

2026-03-22 • PASTOR MATT ROSE



Joshua 7

FOR THE LEADER

These questions help you run the conversation. They are not your study. Get into the passage yourself first, because your group needs what God taught you, not just a list of questions. These also lean on Sunday's message, so a few will not land for anyone who missed it. Watch it before you lead.

WHAT THE MESSAGE WAS ABOUT

Israel had just won its biggest victory at Jericho. Then it lost badly at little Ai. Joshua 7 gives the reason: one man, Achan, kept plunder that belonged to God and hid it under his tent. Pastor Matt named two problems in the story: unfaithfulness and a lack of preparation, because the scouts never sought God before the battle. And he pointed out something uncomfortable. The passage treats one man's hidden sin as the whole camp's problem. That is why God says consecrate yourselves before the next battle. Whatever holds more authority in your life than God does has to be dealt with, whether it is a device, a habit, or something hidden.

To get started

- What is a small thing you have kept far longer than it was useful?

Looking back at the message

The title is a pun on the city of Ai. Say so early if anyone missed it.

- 1 Pastor Matt used the city of Ai as a picture of anything we let take God's place. What did that framing open up for you?
- 2 Two problems sat behind Israel's defeat: unfaithfulness and being unprepared. Which one do you think is more common in our own failures?
- 3 Pastor Matt said good things become bad things when they take you away from God, and named sports and yard work as examples. Which of your good things could fit that description? OPTIONAL

Looking at the passage

Read Joshua 7:1-13 aloud. Verse 1 and verse 11 are both worth pausing on.

- 4 Read Joshua 7:1. What does one man do, and who does the verse say God's anger burned against?
- 5 Read verses 2-5. What do the scouts recommend about Ai, and what do they fail to do first?
- 6 In verse 11 God describes what happened as a sequence: they took, they stole, they lied, they hid. Why does the order matter?
- 7 Verse 13 says: consecrate yourselves in preparation for tomorrow. What has to happen before the next battle can be won?

Bringing it home

This is a hidden-things passage. Nobody needs to confess anything aloud here.

- 8 The story treats one person's hidden choice as the whole camp's problem. How do you react to that idea?
- 9 What makes something easier to accommodate than to remove?
- 10 What has quietly gained more authority over your week than you ever intended to give it?
- 11 What is the difference between consecrating something and just cutting back on it?

OPTIONAL

The group together

Ai came after Jericho. Success is where this went wrong.

- 12 The defeat at Ai comes right after the victory at Jericho. What does that timing tell you about when we are most careless?
- 13 How does a group talk about hidden things without turning into an inspection?
- 14 What would preparing well look like for something this group is about to take on?

BEFORE YOU FINISH

What is one thing you would name, even only to yourself, that has been taking a place it should not have?

You might pray about

- For honesty about what we have kept
- For the courage to remove rather than manage something
- For the people affected by choices they did not make
- For seeking God before the next decision rather than after it