

Deal with it!

“Stand up! What are you doing down on your face?” (Joshua. 7:10, NIV)

When I read this, I noted “quite humorous” down next to it in the margin of my Bible. Admittedly, the context to this wasn’t funny at all. Probably inspired by the extraordinary fashion in which Jericho was conquered, but perhaps also with a trace of arrogance the spies reported two to three thousand soldiers being enough to triumph over Ai, Israel’s next target (V 3). It didn’t work out though. The Hebrew troops were routed by those few enemies (V 3) and thirty-six of them killed, which doesn’t sound many, but caused all Israel to lose their complete hope (V 4-5)! Like they probably often had witnessed Moses doing, now Joshua and all the elders fell face down before the Lord, lamenting this whole negative outcome (V 6). Albeit Joshua’s assessment of why this happened was wrong (V 7-8).

So after watching how they dealt with this blow God said those words to Joshua and I sort of pictured Him being astonished, unable to believe His own eyes at what He saw. That’s why I chuckled a bit as His response sounded to me like, “Get up man, stop that nonsense down there, get your face out of the dust and deal with the problem!”

The problem was the greedy fellow Achan from the tribe of Judah who did not obey God’s clearly stated command to devote all the plunder of Jericho to the Lord. Instead he coveted some of the valuables and hid them underground inside his tent (V 1 and 20-21), which was enough to cause God burn in anger (V 1). Well, compared to the huge amount of loot these few pieces inside Achans wigwam might look petty, but according to Luke 16:10 we simply disqualify ourselves for handling much if we can’t even deal properly (based on God’s terms) with the small things.

As a consequence Joshua had a small problem with massive impact at hand. There is no doubt that the way he and the rest of Israel had to deal with Achan, his family and all his possessions was not a nice one (V 24-26) and I’m sure glad we live in NT-times. But they had to root the problem out from amongst their midst. Disobedience is highly infectious and works like slow poison. That’s why we read that light (obedience to God) and darkness (disobedience to God) just don’t go together (2 Corinthians 6:14). And Ephesians 5:11 even states, “Have nothing to do with the useless works that darkness produces. Instead, expose them for what they are.”

- So there we go. If you become aware of the problem that leads or led to defeats then deal with it! Root it out before it becomes poison to you and all the others. I don’t know your situation and what problems and defeats you have encountered, pondering what went wrong. But as I am frustrated with the ever so increasing darkness engulfing us I wonder how often I miss the obvious. Sure, I am not in charge of a nation, leading a people, or being responsible for employees or something like that. I am, however responsible for a family and can exercise some influence wherever I interact with others. So instead of lamenting all the evil rising around me, which admittedly I like doing from time to time, I sense its time to stand up and deal with it as much as I can. Even today its not a nice job to root the evil out from amongst us. But it has to be done.
- What about you? Are you dealing with it?