

Stand Up! What are you doing down on your face¹?

Joshua 7:1-15

The Israelites escaped from slavery in Egypt, spent a generation in the wilderness, and finally crossed the Jordan River to take possession of Canaan. They attacked and defeated Jericho in obedience to the Lord's careful instructions (Joshua 6). Jericho was to be destroyed, and nothing was to be looted, except that silver, gold and articles of bronze and iron were to be set apart for the Lord's treasury (Joshua 6:18-19). *Read Joshua 7:1-10.*

1. The writer of Judges reveals in advance that there is secret sin in the Israelite camp (v.1), but Joshua and the elders do not yet know about it. How does the attack on Ai go terribly wrong?
2. Before the attack on Jericho, Joshua met the "commander of the army of the Lord" and "fell facedown to the ground in reverence" (Joshua 5:14). Then it was a posture of worship and awe; now he is "facedown to the ground" before the ark of the Lord in desperate prayer and petition. God asks Joshua why he has fallen on his face. Why is Joshua on his face?
3. Paraphrase Joshua's complaints in each part of his desperate plea (v. 7-9).
4. When have you asked similar questions or made similar statements in the face of an unexpected bad turn of events?
5. The Lord's sharp command "Stand up!" (v. 10) was certainly meant physically: get up off the ground and onto your feet! How might the action of standing up physically lead Joshua to stand up in other ways?
6. *Read Joshua 7:11-15.* Joshua begged for an explanation, and the Lord gave him an immediate and clear answer. Identify the specific sin(s) committed.
7. Achan was singled out and specifically identified in verse 1. Then why do you think the Lord says, "Israel has sinned" (v. 11)?
8. How can the sin of one person affect an entire church, Christian fellowship, or ministry?
9. When have you been facedown before the Lord – literally or figuratively – asking him "Why?" and then you realized that the "Why?" was because of sin, either someone else's or your own, or both? What did you do with this realization, and what were the results?
10. Where and how do you need to step-up and take responsibility for things that seem to be going wrong in your church fellowship, your family, or in your own life?
11. What steps will you take this week to help repair those situations?

¹ Based on Life Guide Bible Study material. "Questions God Asks" by Dale and Sandy Larsen