

TOOLS FOR PARENTS



I'm Achan All Over

QUESTIONS FOR CUBS

NOTE TO PARENTS/TEACHERS:

The goal of this questions-and-answers section is to initiate interaction between you and your kids. Please do not just read the questions and answers to your kids. These answers are given for you at an adult level to think about and to process. Once that is accomplished, you can then translate them into appropriate answers for your kids.

LESSON

Learning how sin hurts us

KEY VERSE

**"Create in me a clean heart, O God,
And renew a steadfast spirit within me. . . .
Restore to me the joy of Your salvation
And sustain me with a willing spirit." (Ps. 51:10,12)**

EAR CHECK (STORY COMPREHENSION)

- Q: Gus tells C. J. and Ned the story about which soldier?
A: *Achan*
- Q: What is Marsha collecting for the needy folks of Wildwood?
A: *Food and blankets*
- Q: Who is bringing her doll collection to the "Bring Food and See the World Night"?
A: *Tiffany Rockler*
- Q: Because of Achan's sin, what happened at the battle of Ai?
A: *The army of Israel was defeated*
- Q: Why does Gooz interrupt the ceremony?
A: *She is carrying blankets to the needy people outside the library*

HEART CHECK (SPIRITUAL APPLICATION)

Q: Why would God have Achan and all of his family killed? He just stole a few forbidden things.

A: *This type of response shows up several times in the Bible. On the surface, it may seem shocking and unfair, but that is because we are not looking at it the way God does. We tend to think of sin merely as mischief or an occasional act of naughtiness. I have a feeling that Achan thought his*

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stealing was a little bit of mischief right up until the time that he and his family were killed for his sin. In reality, sin is an act of rebellion against God. It symbolizes shaking your fist and telling God, "I don't care what You want; I'm going to do what I want instead."

When God gives us a command, it is not some kind of loyalty test. God does not make up random laws just to see if we will obey. God gives us commands for our safety, for our good, and most importantly, so that our relationship with Him will not be damaged. When we sin, we rebel against God's love and all the good things He has planned for us.

Q: If God hates sin so much, why doesn't He punish all of us the same way He punished Achan?

A: One thing that many people don't understand about God is that He is not eagerly looking for opportunities to punish us. If He were, every one of us would have ended up like Achan a long time ago because, frankly, we all deserve it. The whole story of the Bible is that we have rebelled against God and He is reaching out to us with forgiveness and love. We have been given every chance to give up our sin and rebellion against God. Achan did not, but you can. We need to respond to God's gift of forgiveness and give up our rebellion every day.

"I" CHECK (PERSONAL APPLICATION)

1. Read the story of Achan in Joshua 7. What do you think of God's punishment of Achan? Do you think it was appropriate or too harsh? Why? What can we learn about how God looks at sin in this example of Achan?
2. Can you think of some things you missed out on because you disobeyed or did something wrong? Did you regret your behaviour after the fact? Did that incident change your future behaviour, or do you sometimes struggle with doing the very thing that got you into trouble? If you said that you still struggle with that same bad behaviour, what do you think it will take to finally stop your bad behaviour? Harsher punishment? Losing more privileges?
3. Marsha, like Achan, did something she knew was wrong. Her guilt caused her to tell Tiffany and ask for her forgiveness. How is she different from Achan?

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DIRECTOR'S NOTES

The story of Achan is one of the lesser-known jewels of the Old Testament stories. As great stories do, this one says a lot more than just what the characters are doing. It tells us about human nature and its folly. It tells us of the often-unseen consequences of sin, and most importantly, it tells us about the nature of God.

One of the things we strive for with Paws & Tales is to make a connection between a Bible story and a heart. That is why we show the parallel stories of Achan and Marsha. The people in the great stories from the Bible were not typically superheroes, nor were they villains. They were real people in real situations who got scared, angry, tired, and hurt. Sometimes we lose that truth in a dry read-through.

As their stories begin, Achan and Marsha are in the most enviable of places, right in the middle of the plans of God. They have seen what God wants, and they have stepped up to participate. This is an amazing condition to be in, but it is also a time when we need to be on our toes spiritually. In the middle of serving God, we tend to feel safe, even protected, because we are working for Him. We must remember that temptation can come at any time. It certainly came for these two. In this episode, I wanted to illustrate some of the thought processes that often take place while we are struggling with temptation. We don't really know what Achan was thinking, but since we all have the same sin nature, I imagined what he might have been thinking and gave those lines to Marsha. As believers a part of us truly does not want to sin, but we do know what we want, so we rationalize. This gives us the comfort we seek when we want to do something we know we shouldn't. I'm sure Achan rationalized his behaviour; I certainly do. The irony of this story is that the items Achan stole were useless to him. I love this! He traded the welfare of his nation and his relationship with God for stuff he couldn't use, sell, or even tell anyone about. That is the very essence of sin! Whatever else we call it, however else we make it look, the nature of sin is giving up the good that God wants for us in exchange for things that are useless or harmful.

This story also tells us about the nature of God. It is utterly shocking that God demands the deaths of Achan and his entire family for this seemingly minor bit of shoplifting. This is another moment that makes this story great. God punishes this sin so severely because He sees sin differently than we do. We are inclined to tell Achan not to do it again and to give him time out. God sees this sin as it really is—a threat to the very lives of his chosen people. The Lord had led them to this land, and He had given it to them. The very desire of their hearts—a land of their own—was finally given to them, but they had to fight for it. They were about to begin a decades-long campaign of war against all of the peoples of Canaan. It was a patently impossible thing to do without divine intervention, but that's exactly what God had promised them—divine intervention. He promised that they would never lose a battle and never lose a soldier if they kept the laws Moses had given them. The entire nation was standing on the greatest gift God had ever given them, but without utter devotion to God and obedience to his commands this great blessing would surely become their graveyard. By punishing Achan so severely, God was protecting his children from destruction. This is a precious truth to hold on to. The illustration of his family suffering death because

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of Achan's sin was a flash of spiritual reality for Israel. Hopefully it will be one for us as well. Sin always harms others—always. This act of capital punishment was an act of love from God to His chosen people.



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