

Our Bible reading for today: **Joshua 7:1-15**

## “One of the Benefits of Prayer”

Prayer has a lot of benefits. The most obvious is that God answers prayer. Prayer is also fellowship with God – a fellowship He wants with us, and we should yearn for with Him. Prayer also makes us aware of sin in our lives. Like Isaiah (Isaiah 6), being in God’s presence allows Him to speak to our hearts about whatever sin we may have done or thought.

For years I have followed a prayer outline I call “**WRAP IT**”. It’s easy to remember since our lives should be “*wrapped*” in prayer, and we should “*wrap*” everything with prayer. After reading the Bible in the morning I follow this routine in prayer. The letters of the acrostic mean:

“W” – **Worship** – Reading God’s Word should move us to Worship Him.

“R” – **Repentance** – Whatever God speaks to me about any sin in my life I confess, claiming His cleansing and forgiveness.

“A” – **Activities** – Looking over my calendar for the day, I commit it to Him.

“P” – **Petition** – That is sharing with Him whatever I need.

“I” – **Intercession** – That’s praying for others, loved ones, friends and concerns.

“T” – **Thanksgiving** – This is a great way to close a time of prayer!

Before Jericho (Joshua 5:13-15) Joshua could be found in a lonely vigil, a vigil of surveillance and prayer. But before attacking Ai, there is no record of prayer, but instead, a feeling that Ai would be easy, and just a simple, “Go for it!” Then they had a defeat, which never should have happened. **“Then Joshua tore his clothes and fell facedown to the ground before the ark of the LORD, remaining there till evening. The elders of Israel did the same, and sprinkled dust on their heads.”** (<sup>NIV</sup> Joshua 7:6)

Alan Redpath, in his book on Joshua, “*Victorious Christian Living*”, made these observations: **“Had he prostrated himself in humility at the time the people shouted for victory at Jericho, he never would have been humbled to the dust over the defeat at Ai.” “If you pray in time of victory you will never have to plead in time of defeat.” “The moment of victory is the time for humility, not the time for pride.” “Failure to pray makes us insensitive to sin.”**

Between Jericho and Ai there should have been prayer. They should have knelt in thanksgiving. They should have praised God for the gift of victory. There should have sought God’s counsel before Ai. If Joshua and the people had been praying, they may have been in a place God could have spoken to them and revealed to them the problem of sin, before the battle and the needless defeat. God would have said to them what He said later: **“Israel has sinned; they have violated my covenant, which I commanded them to keep.”** (from Joshua 7:10-11)

One of the most valuable benefits of prayer is that it makes us sensitive to sin. In prayer we not only speak to God, but allow Him to speak to us.