

## Turning Defeat Into Victory

### Joshua 8

Joshua 8 helps believers see **four understandings** that will help them turn defeat into victory.

- **Understanding #1: VICTORY – LARGE OR SMALL – COMES FROM GOD.**

*Then the LORD said to Joshua, “Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged. Take the whole army with you, and go up and attack Ai. For I have delivered into your hands the king of Ai, his people, his city and his land. <sup>2</sup>You shall do to Ai and its king as you did to Jericho and its king, except that you may carry off their plunder and livestock for yourselves. Set an ambush behind the city.”*

Joshua 8:1-2 (New International Version)

*If the LORD delights in a man’s way, he makes his steps firm; <sup>24</sup>though he stumble, he will not fall, for the LORD upholds him with his hand. Psalm 37:23-24 (NIV)*

*“ . . . this all-surpassing power is from God and not from us.” 2 Corinthians 4:7 (NIV)*

*Were not the Cushites and Libyans a mighty army with great numbers of chariots and horsemen? Yet when you relied on the LORD, he delivered them into your hand. <sup>9</sup>For the eyes of the LORD range throughout the earth to strengthen those whose hearts are fully committed to him. . . . 2 Chronicles 16:8-9 (NIV)*

- **Understanding #2: GOD’S PLAN FOR SUCCESS OFTEN INCLUDES OUR PARTICIPATION.**

*So Joshua and the whole army moved out to attack Ai. He chose thirty thousand of his best fighting men and sent them out at night <sup>4</sup>with these orders: “Listen carefully. You are to set an ambush behind the city. Don’t go very far from it. All of you be on the alert. <sup>5</sup>I and all those with me will advance on the city, and when the men come out against us, as they did before, we will flee from them. <sup>6</sup>They will pursue us until we have lured them away from the city, for they will say, ‘They are running away from us as they did before.’ So when we flee from them, <sup>7</sup>you are to rise up from ambush and take the city. The LORD your God will give it into your hand. <sup>8</sup>When you have taken the city, set it on fire. Do what the LORD has commanded. See to it; you have my orders.”*

Joshua 8:3-8 (NIV)

*The men of the ambush also came out of the city against them, so that they were caught in the middle, with Israelites on both sides. Israel cut them down, leaving them neither survivors nor fugitives . . . <sup>28</sup>So Joshua burned Ai and made it a permanent heap of ruins, a desolate place to this day . . . <sup>29</sup>He hung the king of Ai on a tree and left him there until evening. At sunset, Joshua ordered them to take his body from the tree and throw it down at the entrance of the city gate. And they raised a large pile of rocks over it, which remains to this day.*

Joshua 8:22, 28-29 (NIV)

*To this end I labor, struggling with all his energy, which so powerfully works in me. Colossians 1:29 (NIV)*

- **Understanding #3: GOD GIVES GENEROUSLY WHEN YOU MAKE HIM YOUR TOP PRIORITY.**

*“You shall do to Ai and its king as you did to Jericho and its king, except that you may carry off their plunder and livestock for yourselves . . .” <sup>27</sup>But Israel did carry off for themselves the livestock and plunder of this city, as the LORD had instructed Joshua. Joshua 8:2, 27 (NIV)*

*Honor the LORD with your wealth, with the firstfruits of all your crops; <sup>10</sup>then your barns will be filled to overflowing, and your vats will brim over with new wine. Proverbs 3:9-10 (NIV)*

- **Understanding #4: SUCCESS MUST DRIVE US TO GOD AND HIS WORD.**

*Then Joshua built on Mount Ebal an altar to the LORD, the God of Israel, <sup>31</sup>as Moses the servant of the LORD had commanded the Israelites. He built it according to what is written in the Book of the Law of Moses—an altar of uncut stones, on which no iron tool had been used. On it they offered to the LORD burnt offerings and sacrificed fellowship offerings. <sup>32</sup>There, in the presence of the Israelites, Joshua copied on stones the law of Moses, which he had written. <sup>33</sup>All Israel, aliens and citizens alike, with their elders, officials and judges, were standing on both sides of the ark of the covenant of the LORD, facing those who carried it—the priests, who were Levites. Half of the people stood in front of Mount Gerizim and half of them in front of Mount Ebal, as Moses the servant of the LORD had formerly commanded when he gave instructions to bless the people of Israel. <sup>34</sup>Afterward, Joshua read all the words of the law—the blessings and the curses—just as it is written in the Book of the Law. <sup>35</sup>There was not a word of all that Moses had commanded that Joshua did not read to the whole assembly of Israel, including the women and children, and the aliens who lived among them. Joshua 8:30-35 (NIV)*

(See Deuteronomy 28:1-14 and Deuteronomy 27:14-26)

Projectionist: please project these passages under “Understanding #4” –

*If you fully obey the LORD your God and carefully follow all his commands I give you today, the LORD your God will set you high above all the nations on earth. <sup>2</sup>All these blessings will come upon you and accompany you if you obey the LORD your God:*

Deuteronomy 28:1-2 (NIV)

*“Cursed is the man who carves an image or casts an idol—a thing detestable to the LORD, the work of the craftsman’s hands—and sets it up in secret.” Then all the people shall say, “Amen!”* Deuteronomy 27:15 (NIV)