

Title: Bait And Hook - Joshua 8 1-17

Read:

¹ God said to Joshua, "Don't be timid and don't so much as hesitate. Take all your soldiers with you and go back to Ai. I have turned the king of Ai over to you—his people, his city, and his land." ² "Do to Ai and its king what you did to Jericho and its king. Only this time you may plunder its stuff and cattle to your heart's content. Set an ambush behind the city." ³⁻⁸ Joshua and all his soldiers got ready to march on Ai. Joshua chose thirty thousand men, tough, seasoned fighters, and sent them off at night with these orders: "Look sharp now. Lie in ambush behind the city. Get as close as you can. Stay alert. I and the troops with me will approach the city head-on. When they come out to meet us just as before, we'll turn and run. They'll come after us, leaving the city. As we are off and running, they'll say, 'They're running away just like the first time.' That's your signal to spring from your ambush and take the city. God, your God, will hand it to you on a platter. Once you have the city, burn it down. God says it, you do it. Go to it. I've given you your orders." ⁹ Joshua sent them off. They set their ambush and waited between Bethel and Ai, just west of Ai. Joshua spent the night with the people. ¹⁰⁻¹³ Joshua was up early in the morning and mustered his army. He and the leaders of Israel led the troops to Ai. The whole army, fighting men all, marched right up within sight of the city and set camp on the north side of Ai. There was a valley between them and Ai. He had taken about five thousand men and put them in ambush between Bethel and Ai, west of the city. They were all deployed, the main army to the north of the city and the ambush to the west. Joshua spent the night in the valley. ¹⁴ So it happened that when the king of Ai saw all this, the men of the city lost no time; they were out of there at the crack of dawn to join Israel in battle, the king and his troops, at a field en route to the Arabah. The king didn't know of the ambush set against him behind the city. ¹⁵⁻¹⁷ Joshua and all Israel let themselves be chased; they ran toward the wilderness. Everybody in the city was called to the chase. They pursued Joshua and were led away from the city. There wasn't a soul left in Ai or Bethel who wasn't out there chasing after Israel. The city was left empty and undefended as they were chasing Israel down.

Think:

It's an interesting tactic that Joshua used when attacking the city. Just take a few men up to the city and when the King thinks he can cope with it, run away and trick him into leaving the city unguarded. Sounds like a tactic that someone else would use. Temptation comes in many ways into our lives, but just like Joshua's army, it doesn't show up in full force straight away. If Joshua's army had turned up to the city in full force, the King would have taken one look and would have held his ground, defending from a position of strength behind the city walls. Temptation does the same, you don't get tempted with the crack cocaine straight away, no, the temptation comes with less men to start with. You might get tempted with a little marijuana at a party, to start with the harder drugs will catch you off guard later. Temptation uses the same techniques in less obvious extreme parts of our life as well. You don't get tempted to dis all your mates' behind their backs, every time they are not around to start with. No it's starts with a little word here and a little word there. Temptation does not come from God, who only has good things for you, but watch out for it because it's a slippery character.

Pray:

Lord I know that it is not you that tempts me, so Father I ask that you give me the ability to turn away the temptations that try to sneak into my life. Amen.

Action:

Have you been tempted recently? Drink, drugs, gossip, dodgy sites on the internet. Whatever it may have been make a point of talking to someone you trust about it today. Bye.