

Augustine was credited with saying: Pray as though everything depended on God. Work as though everything depended on you... There is a healthy balance in that statement: There are parts of ministry that depend on you, but there is much of ministry that depends on God... Its not *either/or*... Its in harmony with...

**Joshua 7:2-5** ESV Joshua sent men from Jericho to Ai, which is near Beth-aven, east of Bethel, and said to them, "Go up and spy out the land." And the men went up and spied out Ai. <sup>3</sup> And they returned to Joshua and said to him, "Do not have all the people go up, but let about two or three thousand men go up and attack Ai. Do not make the whole people toil up there, for they are few." <sup>4</sup> So about three thousand men went up there from the people. And they fled before the men of Ai, <sup>5</sup> and the men of Ai killed about thirty-six of their men and chased them before the gate as far as Shebarim and struck them at the descent. And the hearts of the people melted and became as water.

### I THE BALANCE:

**A-** God has chosen to accomplish his purposes in the earth THROUGH PEOPLE!

1. Abraham was called out, and set apart from the world & for God
    - a. **Genesis 12:1-2** Now the Lord said to Abram, "Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you. <sup>2</sup> And I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing... Here God calls him out, to establish his will through the seed of Abraham.
  2. Once Gods people were established (The COI) they carried out Gods will in the earth.
    - a. **Deut7:6** For you are a holy people, who belong to the LORD your God. Of all the people on earth, the LORD your God has chosen you to be his own special treasure... A HOLY people.
    - b. This is what we see happening in our text: Under Joshua's leadership, the people of God are establishing God's nation & people.
  3. This is still true today: **Mt28:19** Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit... Now a kingdom in the hearts of people... carried out by the church.
- B-** So; this illustrates a PARTNERSHIP: **1Cor3:9** For we are labourers together with God... together with God!
1. Like our opening quote: We need God to do the miraculous... AND we have practical work to do.
  2. In the book of Joshua: Up until Ai... they had a partnership... They asked God, they sought God, and then acted.
    - a. But in Ai there was a shift: They became imbalanced and relied only on self.
      - i. **Josh7:3** And they returned to Joshua and said to him, "Do not have all the people go up, but let about two or three thousand men go up and attack Ai. Do not make the whole people toil up there, for they are few."
      - ii. Why inconvenience everyone... Just send a few... we got this... they're nothing compared to our previous fights
    - b. The issue is: THEY NEVER ASKED GOD... They didn't partner with God.
  3. See; Gods plan is for a partnership: **Jn15:5** I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing.
    - a. Partnership: Without me, you can do NOTHING... We need to remember this.

### II RELYING ON HUMAN STRENGTH

**A-** There is a pull to lean on our own strength.

1. Sometimes its in pride (We place confidence in self)... Sometimes its in ignorance (We operate in the natural)
2. Text: Its a little bit of both... They have won some good victories... AND... there's sin in the camp (wasn't known)

**B-** Lets think of some ways we rely on human strength:

1. Talent: That its all based on how talented you are... This is the men in our text- *We got this!!!*
2. Professionalism: That we focus on the appeal & logistics that we forget about anointing/Holy Ghost/Jesus...
  - a. Text: *We are PRO's at this... We just need a couple thousand...* they never ask/invite God.
3. Selfishness: Its more about US than it is for the Kingdom/God/Souls/Serving
  - a. Achan wasn't thinking about everyone else, he was only thinking of himself... This cost 36 men their lives!
4. There are consequences to having an imbalance towards ministry... **PG:** *You can't fight spiritual battles in the natural*

### III IN PARTNERSHIP WITH GOD

**A-** Our text is actually a reminder of how to be effective in ministry- Partnering with God!

1. In everything we do that is ministry; We must have the power of God at work in it!
2. See: After having an imbalance, they get back to the partnership: **Josh7:6** Then Joshua tore his clothes and fell to the earth on his face before the ark of the Lord until the evening, he and the elders of Israel. And they put dust on their heads....
  - a. Here, now he is getting God involved... and God gives him guidance and direction... Ultimately Victory!
    - i. Joshua 8 details the victory over Ai... in Partnership with God!

**B-** In everything we do: Pray as though everything depended on God. Work as though everything depended on you...

1. This goes for the Haunted House: We need God to anoint it, to anoint the actors, preachers, soundtrack, follow up...
  - a. This goes for Bible Studies, Regular Outreach, Follow Up, Church Services, Fruitfulness... We need God!