

# The Four D's

## Today's Message: "Spiritual Defeat"

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### Message Study Guide

#### Introduction

For several decades, ABC television ran a popular weekend series called "Wide World of Sports", that focused on recreational activities. Veteran announcer Jim McKay provided narration for the show's trademark opening: "Spanning the globe to bring you the constant variety of sport: the thrill of victory... and the agony of defeat".

"The thrill of victory" was seamed with various inspiring images over the years, such as little leaguers celebrating a victory. However, "the agony of defeat" had only one corresponding piece of footage for years and years: the sight of ski jumper Vinko Bogataj's crash on his third attempt at the International Ski Flying Championships on March 21, 1970. Midway down the ramp for the jump, he realized that conditions had made the ramp too fast. Trying to lower his center of gravity and stop his jump, he lost his balance and rocketed out of control off the end of the ramp, crashing through a retaining fence and finally coming to a halt. For a generation, he became synonymous with the phrase, "The agony of defeat".

In 1991, after living in relative obscurity for years, he was stunned when ABC Sports honored him by inviting him to be one of their special guests at the 30th anniversary of Wide World of Sports. Although he never finished better than 57th in his career, as he was being honored, he was quoted as saying, "I guess everyone deserves their time in the spotlight".

What comes to mind when you think of the word "defeat"? Better yet, who comes to mind when you think of the word? The landscape of all human history, including Bible history is littered with defeat. It is recorded for the entire world to see. Defeat is no respecter of people. It strikes the rich and poor, the strong and weak, the tall and short, the famous and common, individuals, and even nations. If you have ever participated in sports, you know that somebody has to be defeated.

In Scripture, the Bible talks about a more serious kind of defeat that far outweighs losing an election, losing at sports, or a myriad of other things. To be defeated in the spiritual realm is a very serious thing. Yet today, we see Christians and even churches being defeated on a regular basis.

#### Discussion Points

As we have seen in the first two messages, it seems that Christians are most vulnerable to depression, discouragement, and defeat after they have experienced a tremendous spiritual victory in their lives. As Christians, we must not only be aware of this, but we also must put measures in place to protect ourselves against it.

#### Discussion Questions

1. What lessons can we learn from realizing that we are evidently most vulnerable after a great spiritual victory or special blessing in our lives?
2. Although Achan was only one man, why do you think God held the entire nation responsible for the sin, including Joshua?
3. Have you ever found yourself feeling helpless and losing your daily battle with sin, discouragement, and defeat? What did you do? How would you help others experiencing the same things?
4. After Jesus heard the words of His father in Matthew 3:17 that said, "And lo a voice from heaven said, this is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased". John 4:1 says "Then was Jesus taken up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil". How does this help you in dealing with defeat in your life?

#### Think About It

"Spiritual defeat" are words that should frighten everyone of us. Remember, although it is important how you begin your spiritual journey, we must also finish victorious. Every spiritual defeat lowers the infinite value of God in the eyes of world.

#### Do Something About It!

Have a plan. Be prepared. Don't let defeat intrude into your life without a fight (See Ephesians 6:10-18).

#### Be Willing To Change

"Finally brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might" (Ephesians 6:10).