

From this particular passage of Scripture we learn:

I. The People of God Fail.

Seen in our text in the failure of Joshua and the princes in Israel (v.14-15).
Seen throughout the Bible in the lives of the people of God (Abraham, Moses, David, Peter).
There has only been one who belonged to the family of man who did not fail, He who was both God and man, the Lord Jesus Christ-"in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin." (Hebrews 4:15)

II. The People of God Fail in Places Where They Have Failed Before.

Here, in Joshua 9, in regard to the deceitfulness of the Gibeonites, just as in Joshua 7, in regard to the taking of the city of A-I, Joshua failed to seek the counsel of the Lord (v.14-15). He failed as he had failed before.
Such repeated failure is not unusual in the lives of the people of God (Abraham, Gen. 12:10-20/20:1-2; the people of Israel throughout the book of Judges; Peter's denial of Christ three times and then his actions in Antioch, Galatians 2:11-14).
Do we not all know something of this in our own personal lives?

III. Often It Is The Mature Saint Not The Young Convert Who Fails.

Seen in our text in Joshua and the princes of the congregation of Israel (V.14-15).
Again, seen throughout the Bible in the leaders of God's people (Abraham, Moses, David, Peter).

IV. Often The Primary Failure Of God's People Is The Failure To Seek Him, To Pray.

Seen in our text in verse 14, "And the men took of their victuals, and asked not counsel at the mouth of the Lord."
Stephen Brown, a well known and highly respected Presbyterian minister, once commented in a sermon on prayer, that "most Christians don't pray, but what is more alarming is that most ministers don't either." He was speaking of earnest engagement with God and not simply token types of prayers.
This failure in one sense is the root of all other failure. It is worthy of consideration that failure to seek, encounter, engage, behold, and be satisfied by the presence of the Lord, and that, particularly in prayer, is the root cause of our sinning in turning to the creature (something that belongs to the created order) for what we are to find in the Creator.

V. The Nature Of This Failure Of The People Of God.

As seen in the text (v.14-15);

1. This was more a sin of omission than commission.
2. This was a sin of acting independent of God.
3. This was a failure to use the means that God had appointed and provided.

May God be pleased to work in us that we might be sensitive, not just to that which we are not to do, but increasingly to that which we are to do.

May God by His mercy and grace in Christ Jesus help us to live the whole of our lives in the place of proper dependence upon Him.

May God help us to, and be pleased with us as we, faithfully use those means which He has appointed and provided for us for life in His Kingdom in this world.

May God be glorified in us, not only by our dependence upon Him for "so great salvation" in Christ Jesus our Lord, but as well, in our dependence upon Him in and for all things.