

The Gospel Project



DailyLife
Five Oaks Church

Week 4: October 1–7, 2016

Day 1

October 3



Pray / Recognize God as the provider of everything you are and have.

GOD LOVES A cheerful giver (see 2 Corinthians 9:7).

In today's passage we see the first biblical example of a truth we see throughout the entire Bible, one that applies to our lives today as well. God is the source of all we have, and those who are in relationship with God give a portion back to him in acknowledgement of complete dependence on him. When it's real, that dependence is a source of great joy and freedom, producing a cheerful giver.

Cain and Abel both brought gifts to God, but God only found one that was acceptable. We cannot tell explicitly from the words of these verses why God did not find Cain's gift acceptable. However, Cain's reaction to God's inquiry revealed a heart of jealousy and anger. For Cain, the gift was about building himself up instead of bringing glory to God—evidence of self dependence and not God dependence.



Read / Genesis 4:1–5



Reflect / Choose one or more of the following for reflection.

Make a list of all the ways you return God's gifts to you back to God and reflect on the reasons you do each. If any are done out of obligation rather than joy and gratitude to God, come up with a concrete way you can change your heart in that area.

If you have mastered the practice of giving with a cheerful heart, congratulations! Many people in your sphere of influence have not. How are you influencing those around you to improve their hearts for giving?

What is your reaction when athletes or other celebrities publically give God the glory for their successes? Why do you react this way?

Day 2

October 4



Pray / Ask for the strength to “rule over” the temptations of sin.

SIN IS NOT conquered by ignoring it. It must be resisted.

In our passage today, we see confirmation that we serve a God whose grace is everlasting and whose love for creation is without bound. While Cain’s gift was unacceptable, God does not reject the giver. God knows Cain’s heart, and his love for Cain drives him to intervene. In very descriptive language, God exposes the root of the problem: *sin*. It is “crouching at the door,” and it desires to possess Cain. Because of Adam and Eve’s failure, God cannot just remove sin from Cain’s door; Cain must resist and rule over sin.

Our God is unchanging. He engages with each of us in the same way, reminding us of the need to resist the sin that “crouches at our door.” This engagement most often comes in the form of our consciences, which remind us of God’s truths that are written on our hearts.



Read / Genesis 4:1–7



Reflect / Choose one or more of the following for reflection.

In what area(s) of your life do you sense sin crouching at your door and trying to possess you? How are you resisting that sin?

In addition to your conscience, what other ways are you reminded of sin?

Why can't God intervene and just stop you from sinning?

Day 3

October 5



Pray / Confess a sin that separates you from God.

TRUE REPENTANCE IS matter of the heart, not of guilt.

We all experience the pain and hopelessness of regret. Whether it's for words spoken or left unspoken, for actions taken or not taken, the anxiety that regret raises in our hearts and minds can be debilitating. In the end, regret is a selfish emotion. It's primarily about our feeling bad about the consequences for ourselves. Regret brings no final resolution.

As with Cain in our reading today, when our regrettable words or actions negatively impact others or are an offense to God, repentance is the only path to true resolution. Repentance is a state of the heart and mind that recognizes and is truly sorry for the impact on others, and the offense to God. It acknowledges the flawed inner self that produced the situation and begs God and others for forgiveness and help. Unfortunately Cain never gets beyond regret, a sign that sin and Satan had full control of his heart.



Read / Genesis 4:8–16



Reflect / Choose one or more of the following for reflection.

Cain's response to God's confrontation is denial. His response to God's punishment contains at least six references to "I" and "me" and "my," and no confession of doing anything wrong. Take a few minutes to assess yourself. How would those around you say that you respond when confronted by God or others about a sin? If denial, redirection, and regret dominate, it's a good time to go to God and ask him to reveal your true heart and motives.

What does it mean to be "my brother's keeper," and what do you see as the significance of Cain asking this question?

Regret is a completely selfish emotion, whereas repentance can be seen as both selfish and selfless. Describe how repentance can be both.

Day 4
October 6



Pray / Praise God that there is always a path back to him.

GOD'S LOVE IS greater than your sin.

Jesus Christ has paid the price for all of our sins. Praise God for that! If we accept that free gift, we can have a relationship with God today and live with him forever in eternity. However, that does not mean our sins do not have consequences on earth. Our sins produce ripple effects in our lives and others' lives. These ripples may produce tears, pain, separation, loss, or death.

These ripples can seem overwhelming. That was the case for Cain as God delivered the curse that was his punishment for killing Abel. For Cain, the idea of no longer having his own land producing a great harvest seemed to be more than he could bear. As with everything God does, this punishment originated from God's love for Cain. Cain no longer had a heart for the things of God. Dramatic change was needed in order for Cain's heart to return to him.



Read / Genesis 4:8–16



Reflect / Choose one or more of the following for reflection.

Hindsight makes everything easier to see. We can see God's love in Cain's punishment, but it was not possible for Cain to see that, at least not immediately. Have you experienced consequences for a sin that seemed unbearable at the time? Were you able to eventually see God's hand in the consequences? Be prepared to share the story with your small group or with a friend who is going through something similar.

How should you react when you experience the consequences (a ripple) of the sin of someone else?

How does God's mark of protection on Cain encourage you?

Day 5

October 7



Pray / Praise Jesus for shedding his blood to pay for your sins.

JESUS' BLOOD IS enough to spare you from the curse of sin.

The amazing story of God's plan to return his creation to perfection, and humans back into perfect relationship with him, truly stretches from the beginning of the Bible to the end. Today we'll read a passage from Hebrews, near the end of the New Testament. The author of Hebrews links Abel's blood, the first human blood shed, with Jesus' blood.

After being shed, Abel's blood called for vengeance. A punishment was required. When Jesus' blood was shed on the cross, his blood instituted a new covenant in which punishment for sin is no longer required. In the analogy, Jesus is the new Abel, and we all are the new Cain. Our sin should demand vengeance, punishment, and final separation from God, but because of Jesus' sacrifice on our behalf, that separation is no longer required. Praise God!



Read / Hebrews 12:21–24



Reflect | Choose one or more of the following for reflection.

First John 1:5, 7 tells us, “God is light. . . . But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin.” Reflect on your life. What evidence is there that you are walking in God’s light? Are you living in the confidence that Jesus’ shed blood covers your sins?

Summarize the implications of being a “new Cain.” What lessons can you learn from the life of the “original Cain”?

Portions of this study were adapted from The Gospel Project Chronological: The Story Begins, Vol. 1, Adult Personal Study Guide ESV (Nashville, TN: LifeWay Christian Resources, 2015). Used by permission.

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