

## Life Lessons from Cain

### Genesis 4:1-9

The closing scene of the immortal drama enacted in Eden, pictures the tender care of our Lord God. Before He drives Adam and Eve out of the garden, God made them coats of skin and clothed them and then He sent them forth from the garden paradise.

They went out to a world of thorns and thistle, a tremendous contrast to the lovely Eden. Their days were filled with wearisome and exacting toil, pain and sorrow, and separation from God. No longer could they have God's personal presence in their home.

Yet, in the midst of God's wrath, there was merciful grace. There was the promise of redemption and reconciliation with God. The seed of woman would bruise the head of the Tempter. This was the glorious promise of a Savior, who in the fullness of time, would destroy the power of Satan. Adam and Eve believed that promise and hope was renewed in their hearts.

Children were born into the family. The scriptures do not tell of their childhood days and yet I feel sure Adam and Eve told their children about their first home; the joy and happiness of the days before disobedience destroyed their blissful existence.

In Chapter four of Genesis, we learn of the births of Cain and Abel. One commentator suggested that Cain and Abel were twins (Adam Clark, Chapter 4, Genesis). We do know that Cain became a farmer and Abel a rancher.

Genesis 4:3-5, ***In the course of time Cain brought some of the fruits of the soil as an offering to the Lord. But Abel brought fat portions from some of the firstborn of his flock. The Lord respected Abel and his offering, but He did not respect Cain and his offering. So Cain was very angry, and his countenance fell.***

Why did the Lord not respect Cain's sacrifice? Because Cain's sacrifice was not what God had established as the proper sacrifice. Cain had decided, on his own, that sacrifice to God would now be with fruits, or vegetables, or other crops and not even his best produce. Cain decided his way was just as good as God's way.

No one can show anything wrong with Cain's idea, except that it was Cain's idea, instead of God's. Yet one eternal truth of life is that your way, and my way, is no substitute for God's way.

**“Have Thine own way, Lord. Have Thine own way.”**

Part of verse five in Genesis the fourth chapter says, “...**Cain was very angry and his countenance fell.**”

We do not know how the brothers understood that God had accepted one sacrifice and rejected the other. But they did know, and jealous anger took control of Cain.

Does jealous anger come in your heart when family, friends, or others have successes or good fortune in their lives? Such feelings are a poison to the soul and must be dealt with through prayer and a recommitment to the Lord.

Verse five in the NKJ says Cain’s “**countenance fell.**” What is countenance? Webster defines countenance as the way one holds oneself, or demeanor, or one’s bearing. When God rejected Cain’s sacrifice, Cain’s shoulders dropped, his head hung low, his face was sad and distraught, his eyes feeling sorry for himself. Cain’s “**countenance fell.**”

God saw Cain’s fallen countenance and tried to advise and warn Cain in Genesis 4:7 to do what was right and not play around with what was wrong because....”***sin is crouching at your door, it desires to have you, but you must master it.***”

After Cain’s sacrifice was rejected, God gave Cain a chance to right this wrong and try again. God even personally encouraged him to do this!

For Cain to “**master**” the sin lurking at the entrance of his desires, he would have to give up his jealous anger so that sin would not find a foothold in his life. But Cain resisted and rejected this Godly advice and the rest of his life is a startling example of what happens to those who refuse to admit and correct their mistakes.

How do you react and how do I react when someone suggests we have done something wrong? Do we move to rectify the mistake or, like Cain, do we deny that there is any need for change and correction?

The next time someone suggests we are wrong, let each of us take an honest look at ourselves and choose God’s way instead of Cain’s way.

Sin is still “crouching at our doors” today. Like Cain, we will succumb to sin if we do not master it. But we cannot master or control sin in our own strength.

First, we must turn to God, and from the heart, trust the Lord will guide us, love us, and save our souls from hell. We will master sin with the strength of fellowship of other believers. The Holy Spirit and God’s Word will help us master the evilness of sin.

This will be a lifelong battle that will not be over until we are face to face with Christ. Sadly, more will fail than succeed to control sin, just like Cain.

Genesis 4: 8 & 9 tell us what many of us have known since we were children in Sunday School - Cain killed his brother and when God asked Cain where Abel was, Cain replied, “**I do not know. Am I my brother’s keeper?**” (Basically, Cain told God to get lost.)

What a brutal and selfish response was this! The utter depravity and selfishness of sin is evidenced here in a very ugly light.

When Adam and Eve were caught in their rebellion, they admitted it reluctantly, but Cain told an out-right lie, to God’s “face,” about his sin, showing the growing power of sin’s grip over the human race. Adam and Eve may have thought their sin, eating a piece of forbidden fruit, wasn’t very disobedient, but notice how quickly their sinful nature developed in their child. Simple disobedience quickly degenerated into outright murder. A small sin has a way of growing out of control.

Today, in your own heart, like Cain, do you feel your ways are every bit as good as God’s way? Do you suffer from the “Sinatra Syndrome”, which is “I did it my way!”

Do you give the Lord the best of your life, or like Cain, the leftovers of your life?

Do you resist Godly advice and correction, just like Cain? Do you play with sin, like a child playing with fire, allowing a small sin to take hold in your heart, where it may grow dangerously larger? Just like Cain?

Let us examine our lives honestly. Where we are weak and lacking, let us ask the Lord for forgiveness, strength, and renewal - for “**sin is crouching at (our) doors, it desires to have (us all).**”