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**THE MURDER**

**Story:** Cain kills Abel

**Scriptures to study:** Genesis 4, James 4:17

This discussion is based on the Friday Morning Men’s Fellowship study “Genesis”, available at <https://leadmin.org/genesis>.

After God turns Adam and Eve out of the Garden, we begin to see a narrative in the Bible of what is right and wrong, good and bad. In the story of Adam and Eve’s children, Cain and Abel, we see that God identifies three actions—called sins—with which He is displeased.

**Giving God less than your best is sin.** God expects us to give Him our very best. In Cain’s case, he chose to give God a lesser offering than his brother Abel. The Bible says of God, “but on Cain and his offering he did not look with favor” (Genesis 4:5). This upsets Cain. God responds: “Why are you angry? Why is your face downcast? If you do what is right, will you not be accepted? But if you do not do what is right, sin is crouching at your door” (Genesis 4:6-7). The word *sin* in verse 7 is the very first time sin is mentioned in the Bible.

**Jealousy is sin.** God is also displeased with Cain’s reaction, not to God but toward his brother, Abel. The Bible says, “So Cain was very angry, and his face was downcast” (Genesis 4:5). As a result of his jealousy, Cain reacts: “ While they were in the field, Cain attacked his brother Abel and killed him” (Genesis 4:8). The anger wasn’t sin—Jesus Himself got angry but didn’t sin. Rather, God is showing here that jealousy was sin and resulted in further sin.

**Lying is sin.** Cain tries to cover up the murder by lying to God. When God asks Cain where Abel has gone, Cain replies, “Am I my brother’s keeper?” (Genesis 4:9). God then confronts Cain, telling him that He knows exactly what happened. As a result, God tells Cain, “Now you are under a curse and driven from the ground, which opened its mouth to receive your brother’s blood from your hand” (Genesis 4:11).

After Adam and Eve sin, God banishes them from His presence. Here again, we see Cain is present with God, then sins, and is then banished from God’s presence. In this story we see the first murder recorded. We see a pattern of sin and response. Man begins to learn what displeases God is always wrong—sin. And God responds to sin with punishment, the most severe of which is banishment from the presence of God. Eventually, as the population grows, people begin to understand the importance of God’s presence, and the high cost of their sins. Chapter 4 ends by saying, “At that time people began to call on the name of the Lord” (Genesis 4:26).



Use one of these to get the group talking about today’s topic:

* Do you have brothers and/or sisters? Was there any sibling rivalry at your house growing up? Did you get along with your siblings or were you fighting constantly?
* How do you know when someone isn’t telling you the truth? Do people have “tells” that reveal they are lying? How do you handle it when someone lies to you?
* What is your reaction when you see someone else who is successful or prospering? Are you genuinely happy for them? Do you ever react with envy toward others? Why or why not?



Go in-depth with these questions. Based on your available time, choose 3-4 that you believe are most thought-provoking:

* Read Genesis 4:3-5. Why was God displeased with Cain’s offering? What does this tell us about what is acceptable and not acceptable to God? Do you believe God is satisfied with less than our best today?
* Read Genesis 4:6-7. What is God trying to teach Cain in these verses? This is the first time “sin” is mentioned in the Bible. What do you believe, based on this account, the definition of “sin” is?
* Do you believe Cain knew that killing his brother Abel was wrong? Why or why not?
* God’s punishment for Cain’s sin was not to kill him, but for Cain to continue to walk the earth as cursed. Why do you believe God gave this punishment?
* What do you think God wants man to understand about sin?
* Does sin always have a punishment? Is it always the same punishment? Why do you believe God punishes sin?
* Read James 4:17. Do you believe leaders innately know what is right and wrong? Why or why not?
* What role does sin play in the leader? When a Christian leader is conscious of sin and its consequences, how might this affect his leadership?



* Is there an area of your life or leadership where you are not giving God your very best? How might you adjust in the coming week to give God your best?
* Have you ever had jealous thoughts or committed actions out of jealousy? What does the Bible teach about jealousy, and how can you avoid jealousy going forward?
* Are you succumbing to an area of sin in your life and leadership on a regular basis? Ask Jesus to help you now to overcome that sin and formulate a plan to deal with that sin on a daily basis.



• Commentary on Genesis 4: <https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/mhc/Gen/Gen_004.cfm>

• What does Genesis 4 mean? <https://www.bibleref.com/Genesis/4/Genesis-chapter-4.html>

• *Study Guide for Genesis 4* by Chuck Smith: <https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/smith_chuck/StudyGuides_Genesis/Genesis.cfm>

• *The Virgin Birth* by Moody Bible Institute: <https://www.moodybible.org/beliefs/virgin-birth/>

• Precept outline and commentary on Genesis 4: <https://www.preceptaustin.org/genesis-4-commentary>

• *Genesis 1-11: Creation, Sin, and the Nature of God* by John MacArthur: <https://churchsource.com/products/genesis-1-to-11-creation-sin-and-the-nature-of-god>

• *Exalting Jesus in Genesis* by Phillip Bethancourt: <https://www.amazon.com/Exalting-Genesis-Christ-Centered-Exposition-Commentary/dp/0805496556/>

• *Genesis: A 12 Week Study* by Mitchell M. Kim: <https://www.amazon.com/Genesis-12-Week-Study-Knowing-Bible/dp/1433535017>

• *BibleProject Guides: Book of Genesis:* <https://bibleproject.com/guides/book-of-genesis/>

**More ways to apply “The Murder” to your life and leadership:**

• Conduct a “family devotional” with your wife and/or children on Genesis 4. Talk about how God mentions sin for the first time, and discuss what God considers sin in this chapter. Talk about the consequences of sin for us today.

• In your prayer time this week, write out sins that you are having difficulty with in your own life. Ask Jesus to help you overcome these sins. Read Scriptures including 1 Corinthians 10:13, Galatians 5:16, 1 John 1:9, James 4:17.

• Consider the “seven deadly sins” mentioned in Proverbs 6:16-19. Do you have personal issues with any of these: pride, greed, lust, envy, gluttony, wrath, sloth?

• Write out a plan for how you as a leader can move or motivate people within your sphere of influence to give their best effort, and to avoid sins against one another.

• Consider how your business or company might be a Gospel influence with your employees, customers or in your community.

• Get involved in prayer ministry at your local church.