

Resonate

BIBLE STUDY

“BUILDING BLOCKS: COLD BLOOD”

Have you ever killed anyone? Most of you would answer “no”. So what can we learn from a story about murder? Sadly, we can learn a lot about our own human, selfish, evil nature.

DAY 1

Today's Scripture:

Genesis 4:1-5; Romans 12:1

The Word

Genesis 4:1-2

¹ Adam lay with his wife Eve, and she became pregnant and gave birth to Cain. She said, "With the help of the LORD I have brought forth a man." ² Later she gave birth to his brother Abel.

Now Abel kept flocks, and Cain worked the soil.

Verse 1-2: Cain was the first son ever born. He was the first baby ever held. Imagine all the firsts that Adam and Eve witnessed as ever parent does: first step, first words, first smile, and so much more. Another first experience was that Cain was the first person to have a little brother.

These two brothers had different interests. Cain was the farmer and Abel was the rancher. In the musical *Oklahoma* one of the more popular songs goes like this: “Oh, the farmer and the cowman should be friends, one man likes to push a plow the other likes to rope a cow but that’s no reason why they can’t be friends...”. Yet, in the movie there are extreme dislikes and prejudices between the two groups. This rivalry is as old as Cain and Abel.

Genesis 4:3-5

³ In the course of time Cain brought some of the fruits of the soil as an offering to the LORD.

⁴ But Abel brought fat portions from some of the firstborn of his flock. The LORD looked with favor on Abel and his offering, ⁵ but on Cain and his offering he did not look with favor. So Cain was very angry, and his face was downcast.

Verse 3-5: This was not a matter of favoritism. God did accept Abel’s offering because He liked Abel more than Cain. This had nothing to do with fruits and vegetables. Instead, the issue was about obedience. The acceptable sacrifice to God was animals not produce.

Animal sacrifices were the symbols that the Lord created to represent the future sacrifice of Jesus Christ. To bring an animal sacrifice was to place faith in the Lord who would provide a way to forgive our sin. Abel brought the prescribed offering to God. However, Cain brought what he wanted to bring. He was saying, “I’m proud of what I

have done and I am going to offer this to God.” But our desire of what to offer the Lord is not what He requires. He decides what the offering should be.

Today, we do not deal with animal sacrifices. The blood of Jesus has been shed on behalf of our sins. However, we are still required to make other types of sacrifices.

Romans 12:1

¹Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God—this is your spiritual act of worship.

Verse 1: Our lives are to be offered to God. Abel worshipped the Lord by presenting an animal sacrifice; we worship the Lord by giving ourselves to Him. But just like Abel, we cannot choose what or how to give. Instead, the Lord determines the sacrifices we must bring. For example, if the Lord called someone to give the sacrifice of time by ministering to people at the homeless shelter, he cannot decide to just give money to the shelter instead. We do not determine what is offered. We are just called to be obedient.

Up Close and Personal

Ask the Lord to show you what “sacrifice” He desires from you.

How do you discover what God is calling you to offer to Him?

In what ways are you making sacrifices for the Lord?

How have you ignored the sacrifices that God has called you to make?

DAY
2

Today's Scripture:

Genesis 4:5-8; James 1:14-15

The Word

Cain's sacrifice was rejected by the Lord. There are many ways we can handle the Lord's rebuke. Cain shows us the wrong way to respond.

Genesis 4:5

⁵ *but on Cain and his offering he did not look with favor. So Cain was very angry, and his face was downcast.*

Verse 5: Cain got mad. Cain pouted. There are few things worse than being around someone acting like that. Cain threw an adult version of a temper tantrum. His heavenly Parent did not let Him get away with it.

Genesis 4:6

⁶ *Then the LORD said to Cain, "Why are you angry? Why is your face downcast?"*

Verse 6-7: Why do we get mad when we do something wrong? We know that what we did was wrong yet we get angry at everyone else. Cain knew that his sacrifice was not what God had asked from him. The Lord was not going to change His standard for Cain. God decides what is right and wrong, not us. Cain knew that he was doing wrong yet he went ahead and did it anyway. He was mad that God did not change his mind for him. This anger built up. God confronted it and warned Him to get his emotions under control.

Genesis 4:7

⁷ *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; it desires to have you, but you must master it."*

Verse 7: We are faced with the opportunity to sin on a daily basis. However, we can choose to overcome it. It is a matter of our will. Cain's emotions were out of control. But he could will himself to do what was right even if he did not feel like it. He could master his thought processes which would have mastered his feelings. But if it is not mastered, sin will breed more sin.

James 1:14-15

¹⁴ *but each one is tempted when, by his own evil desire, he is dragged away and enticed.*

¹⁵ *Then, after desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, gives birth to death.*

Verse 14-15: It is our own choice to be led away by our own evil desires. By going down the wrong path, sin awaits us. The sin is destructive. In Cain's cause, it was murderous.

Genesis 4:8

⁸ Now Cain said to his brother Abel, "Let's go out to the field." And while they were in the field, Cain attacked his brother Abel and killed him.

Verse 8: Cain went from anger to murder. We may read that and think, "I would never do that." You may not murder physically, but have you killed someone's emotions with harsh words? Have you murdered someone's reputation through gossip? Whenever we do not master our emotions, sin will be committed. From murder to meanness, sin is destructive.

Up Close and Personal

Confess anything in your life which you are brooding over. Ask for the Lord's help in mastering over the sin that is crouching at your heart's door.

In what ways have you experienced the truth of James 1:14-15?

How can sin be mastered?

DAY
3

Today's Scripture:

Genesis 4:8-9; Proverbs 9:1-19, 10:1

The Word

It is futile to hide sin. It will be exposed. God knows what you have done.

Genesis 4:8-9

⁸ Now Cain said to his brother Abel, "Let's go out to the field." And while they were in the field, Cain attacked his brother Abel and killed him.

⁹ Then the LORD said to Cain, "Where is your brother Abel?"
"I don't know," he replied. "Am I my brother's keeper?"

Verse 8-9: I find these verses weirdly humorous. There are a handful of people on the earth, yet somehow Cain thought he would get away with murder. He was so deceived

by this illusion that He even lies to the Lord about it. Sin causes distorted thinking in our lives.

In the book of Proverbs, the way of sinner is called foolish.

Proverbs 9:13-18

¹³ *The woman Folly is loud;
she is undisciplined and without knowledge.*

¹⁴ *She sits at the door of her house,
on a seat at the highest point of the city,*

¹⁵ *calling out to those who pass by,
who go straight on their way.*

¹⁶ *"Let all who are simple come in here!"
she says to those who lack judgment.*

¹⁷ *"Stolen water is sweet;
food eaten in secret is delicious!"*

¹⁸ *But little do they know that the dead are there,
that her guests are in the depths of the grave.*

Verse 13-18: It does not make sense to choose folly over wisdom. Yet, when we sin, that is exactly what we are doing. We will come up with strange thoughts to justify our choices. Yet, this distorted thinking which stems from sin only leads to death. This foolishness hurts others around us.

Proverbs 10:1

¹ *The proverbs of Solomon:
A wise son brings joy to his father,
but a foolish son grief to his mother.*

Verse 1: Adam and Eve, the first two parents on earth, experience the horror of having a son murder his brother. The death of a child is heart-wrenching but it is compounded by the killer being a child as well. I cannot imagine their grief. I wonder if they thought back to the garden. Their foolish choice there led to their sons being born with a sin nature. Their foolishness bred more foolishness. Our distorted thinking can hurt those even of the next generation. Adam and Eve went from being the first to having children to being the first to bury a child.

In our lives, sin leads to heartache. We can choose to stop acting foolishly. We can make wise decisions.

Proverbs 9:1-9

- ¹ *Wisdom has built her house;
she has hewn out its seven pillars.*
- ² *She has prepared her meat and mixed her wine;
she has also set her table.*
- ³ *She has sent out her maids, and she calls
from the highest point of the city.*
- ⁴ *"Let all who are simple come in here!"
she says to those who lack judgment.*
- ⁵ *"Come, eat my food
and drink the wine I have mixed.*
- ⁶ *Leave your simple ways and you will live;
walk in the way of understanding.*
- ⁷ *"Whoever corrects a mocker invites insult;
whoever rebukes a wicked man incurs abuse.*
- ⁸ *Do not rebuke a mocker or he will hate you;
rebuke a wise man and he will love you.*
- ⁹ *Instruct a wise man and he will be wiser still;
teach a righteous man and he will add to his learning.*

Verse 1-9: To go from foolishness to wisdom, we must be willing to learn. We must accept rebuke from the Lord and change our ways. We must be diligent in pursuing the ways of righteousness, which comes from the Word. Then, we will make wise decisions and prevent have to live with the terrible heartache that sin brings to our lives.

Up Close and Personal

Confess any sin that you have been justifying or hiding.

How is foolishness and sin connected?

How does sin lead to distorted thinking?

How can wisdom be gained?

DAY 4

Today's Scripture:

Genesis 4:8-16; 2 Samuel 12:7-23

Sin steals from us and from others. The world says that sin gets you ahead but it is not true. Sin has devastating consequences. The effects of sin cannot be undone. We can be forgiven but the consequences will still take place.

Genesis 4:8-10

⁸ Now Cain said to his brother Abel, "Let's go out to the field." And while they were in the field, Cain attacked his brother Abel and killed him.

*⁹ Then the LORD said to Cain, "Where is your brother Abel?"
"I don't know," he replied. "Am I my brother's keeper?"*

¹⁰ The LORD said, "What have you done? Listen! Your brother's blood cries out to me from the ground."

Verse 8-10: Sin destroys relationships. In one way or another, others are hurt by our sin. Not only does our sin affect others but it affects us as well.

Genesis 4:11-12

¹¹ Now you are under a curse and driven from the ground, which opened its mouth to receive your brother's blood from your hand. ¹² When you work the ground, it will no longer yield its crops for you. You will be a restless wanderer on the earth."

Verse 11-12: Cain loved to work the land. His love for farming overrode his love for God. His sin began when he brought produce as a sacrifice instead of an animal. This sin bred out of control and resulted in Abel's murder. The very thing he loved, working the land, was taken from him.

I watched a news story about a baseball player. After high school, he was signed by a professional team. He received a huge salary. He was being watched as the potential next "all-time great" player. Sadly, he began using drugs. Everything he had was taken

from him. Due to the consequences of sin, his dreams were destroyed. Sin takes so much from us. We allow it in and all it does is destroy us. Our decision to sin wreaks havoc in our lives.

When we are faced with the consequences of our sin, we can choose to turn to God or away from Him. Cain chose to turn away from the Lord.

Genesis 4:13-16

¹³ Cain said to the LORD, "My punishment is more than I can bear. ¹⁴ Today you are driving me from the land, and I will be hidden from your presence; I will be a restless wanderer on the earth, and whoever finds me will kill me."

¹⁵ But the LORD said to him, "Not so; if anyone kills Cain, he will suffer vengeance seven times over." Then the LORD put a mark on Cain so that no one who found him would kill him. ¹⁶ So Cain went out from the LORD's presence and lived in the land of Nod, east of Eden.

Verse 13-16: Cain never acknowledged his wrong doing. Instead, he complained about his punishment. The one who murdered his brother was upset that he could be killed. He was concerned only about what would happen to him. He had no remorse.

King David, however, gives us a better example of how to respond to God when suffering through the consequences of sin.

2 Samuel 12:7-23

⁷ Then Nathan said to David, "You are the man! This is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says: 'I anointed you king over Israel, and I delivered you from the hand of Saul. ⁸ I gave your master's house to you, and your master's wives into your arms. I gave you the house of Israel and Judah. And if all this had been too little, I would have given you even more. ⁹ Why did you despise the word of the LORD by doing what is evil in his eyes? You struck down Uriah the Hittite with the sword and took his wife to be your own. You killed him with the sword of the Ammonites. ¹⁰ Now, therefore, the sword will never depart from your house, because you despised me and took the wife of Uriah the Hittite to be your own.'

¹¹ "This is what the LORD says: 'Out of your own household I am going to bring calamity upon you. Before your very eyes I will take your wives and give them to one who is close to you, and he will lie with your wives in broad daylight. ¹² You did it in secret, but I will do this thing in broad daylight before all Israel.' "

¹³ Then David said to Nathan, "I have sinned against the LORD."

Nathan replied, "The LORD has taken away your sin. You are not going to die. ¹⁴ But because by doing this you have made the enemies of the LORD show utter contempt, the son born to you will die."

¹⁵ After Nathan had gone home, the LORD struck the child that Uriah's wife had borne to David, and he became ill. ¹⁶ David pleaded with God for the child. He fasted and went into his house and spent the nights lying on the ground. ¹⁷ The elders of his household stood beside him to get him up from the ground, but he refused, and he would not eat any food with them.

¹⁸ On the seventh day the child died. David's servants were afraid to tell him that the child was dead, for they thought, "While the child was still living, we spoke to David but he would not listen to us. How can we tell him the child is dead? He may do something desperate."

¹⁹ David noticed that his servants were whispering among themselves and he realized the child was dead. "Is the child dead?" he asked.

"Yes," they replied, "he is dead."

²⁰ Then David got up from the ground. After he had washed, put on lotions and changed his clothes, he went into the house of the LORD and worshiped. Then he went to his own house, and at his request they served him food, and he ate.

²¹ His servants asked him, "Why are you acting this way? While the child was alive, you fasted and wept, but now that the child is dead, you get up and eat!"

²² He answered, "While the child was still alive, I fasted and wept. I thought, 'Who knows? The LORD may be gracious to me and let the child live.' ²³ But now that he is dead, why should I fast? Can I bring him back again? I will go to him, but he will not return to me."

Verse 7-23: When confronted with his sin, David confessed his wrongdoing. When faced with the consequences of his sin, he asked for the Lord's intervention to spare his child. But after the child died, David continued to worship the Lord. He knew that God was in control, even over the consequences of our sin.

When confronted with sin, turn to the Lord not away from him. Yes, you will suffer the consequences of your wrong decisions, but you will have the Lord who will give you His strength during the difficult times.

Cain did not choose to turn to God. Instead, he wandered the earth. He stayed outside the presence of God. Do not let this be your legacy.

Up Close and Personal

Praise God for being a merciful God. Receive His forgiveness for your sin.

How do we turn from God when He confronts our sin?

How should we respond to the discipline of the Lord?

Why does God allow us to experience the consequences of our sin?

DAY 5

Today's Scripture:

Matthew 5:21-22; 1 John 3:10-15; John 15:12-13

The Word

If you haven't killed anyone lately then you think that you are nothing like Cain. We believe that only the physical action of killing equates us to him. However, the Scripture has a wider definition of murder than just the physical act.

Matthew 5:21-22

²¹"You have heard that it was said to the people long ago, 'Do not murder, and anyone who murders will be subject to judgment.' ²²But I tell you that anyone who is angry with his brother will be subject to judgment. Again, anyone who says to his brother, 'Raca,' is answerable to the Sanhedrin. But anyone who says, 'You fool!' will be in danger of the fire of hell.

Verse 21-22: The Lord considers anger, meanness, critical words, rude behavior, and other things along this line as sinful. We cannot minimize our actions because the person is not physically killed. The emotional harm inflicted on others is a "mini-murder" that God will judge.

How can we "murderers" be paroled from our evil ways? There is only one answer: love.

1 John 3:10

¹⁰This is how we know who the children of God are and who the children of the devil are: Anyone who does not do what is right is not a child of God; nor is anyone who does not love his brother.

Verse 10: We are recognized of being children of God by our right actions and our loving ways. These are the signs of being a Christian.

1 John 3:11-12

¹¹This is the message you heard from the beginning: We should love one another. ¹²Do not be like Cain, who belonged to the evil one and murdered his brother. And why did he murder him? Because his own actions were evil and his brother's were righteous.

Verse 11-12: Cain is forever known by his evil works. How will you be remembered? We are called to be known by our love and our righteous actions. The Word testifies that Abel did what was right. Thus, he was hated by Cain. Yet, we should not be surprised that darkness hates the light.

1 John 3:13-14

¹³Do not be surprised, my brothers, if the world hates you. ¹⁴We know that we have passed from death to life, because we love our brothers. Anyone who does not love remains in death.

Verse 13-14: We are not responsible for how the world feels about us. However, we are accountable for how we treat others. We are to show love. This is the sign to the world that we have eternal life. To not act in love is to act like people who do not know Christ. To love is to be like Him.

John 15:12-13

¹²My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you. ¹³Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends.

Verse 12-13: Jesus defined His sacrifice on the cross as a showcase of His love. We are to give of ourselves to others to show love. He commands us to do this. It is not a nice thought or wishful thinking. We are to love others as we ourselves are loved by God.

If we act in love, then we will make right decisions. Righteousness is not legalism, a system of right and wrong, but an overflow of love. Out of our love for God, we will want to keep from sin. Out of our love for others, we will not want to hurt them. This gives life to others and then we become “mini-life givers” instead of “mini-murderers”.

Up Close and Personal

Ask the Lord to fill you with His love and allow it to overflow to others.

Give examples of Cain-like behaviors.

Ask a few people that know for their honest opinion about if and how you showcase the love of God. Also, ask them if they recognize any Cain-like ways in you. Be receptive to their responses.

If the defining characteristics of Christians should be righteousness and love, how does your church radiate these qualities in the community?

In what ways are you being a negative testimony about Jesus?

How can you begin to showcase the love of God to others around you?