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Fall 2024
Navigating Family Conflict

Sermon Title Possibilities: Being My Brother's Keeper

To be used with Session 1: Cain and Abel: Family Responsibility

Scripture: Proverbs 27:5-6, 17

Connection with Unit Theme: To complement the Bible study "Cain and Abel: Family Responsibility," this sermon builds upon today's Bible study by articulating the fact that we are indeed called to be our brother's keeper. The sermon will provide biblical examples of how we can live this out daily.

Introduction: We learned in our group study this morning that upon being confronted by God as to the whereabouts and condition of his brother Abel, Cain asked, "Am I my brother's guardian?" (Gen. 4:9). Cain's question was meant to deflect from God's question. The reality is that we do have a responsibility to care for and about our family members. Solomon provided us with practical steps on how we can do this.

1. Being my brother's keeper means I am loving (Prov. 27:5).

If love is concealed, then is it really love? This seems like a good question for this particular verse. If we look to Jesus for the answer, we see that His love for us is not concealed in that it is displayed on the cross and His sacrifice. If we look to a couple that has been married for 50+ years, we may see their love on display as they still hold hands while sitting in a swing together. We can also see a child's love on display when he runs into the arms of a parent who comes home after a long day of work.

If we are to be our brother's keeper and accept responsibility for seeking to care for their wellbeing, then we need to share our love with them. The proverb goes so far as to articulate how we can do this. Sharing our love with our family members means that we should be willing to openly reprimand them. This does not mean we are to be unkind or abusive to our loved ones. We can openly reprimand them by providing a warning when we know they are going in the wrong direction. We learned in our groups this morning and God warned Cain that sin was crouching at the door and its desire was to rule over him (Gen. 4:7).

The question now becomes, how do we go about doing this in a healthy manner? First, we need to offer reprimands based on biblical truth. If we are standing on God's Word, and not just our opinions, then we know that we are in the right. Second, we need to be willing to share God's truth with our loved ones. Many of us seek to avoid confrontation. If we do this

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when we know what the Bible is saying about a subject matter, we are concealing our love and not being our brother's keeper.

2. Being my brother's keeper means I am trustworthy (Prov. 27:6).

To be trustworthy means to be dependable or reliable. The word itself is an adjective, which means that it is a descriptive word. If we once again use God as our example, we know that we can depend upon Him to never leave us nor forsake us, even if our emotions tell us something different in the moment. We also know that He is reliable in that He is not even able to speak anything apart from truth (Titus 1:2).

If we are to be our brother's keeper, then what does it look like for us to be trustworthy? We can once again use this proverb to find the answer. Solomon tells us that the wounds of a friend are trustworthy. It seems rather oxymoronic to talk about the wounds of a friend. Let's see if we can use an example to help us understand. Would a true friend tell someone that they have something on their face prior to going out in public? We all know the answer to be yes. Someone who is not a friend would allow another to venture into the public eye knowing that embarrassment would be had.

In a similar manner, a true friend would be willing to point out something that would be biblically embarrassing. If we see a loved one openly engaging in a sinful act out of ignorance, we have a responsibility to let them know. Our loved one should be open to our counsel because they know that we are trustworthy and have their best interest at heart.

3. Being my brother's keeper means I am constructive (Prov. 27:17).

Let's look at a new question together. Who was your favorite teacher growing up and why? Many of us cannot help but smile when we explore the answer to this question. We have fond memories of someone who poured into us or saw something in us that others did not see. One of the amazing truths about answering this question is that we rarely think about the subject matter the teacher taught. Instead, we recall the fact that our favorite teacher taught us more than something out of a book.

What if we saw our family members as people we could pour our lives into and sharpen them as iron sharpens iron? Sure, we teach them how to hit a baseball or bake our favorite cake. But what if we taught them what it means to walk with Jesus, even when it is difficult? What if we taught them how to be a loving spouse or parent even when the one's we are called to love do not deserve it in the moment? If we do these things, we are building them up and being constructive in our words and actions.

Conclusion: Not accepting responsibility has been around since Genesis 3. Adam blamed God and Eve. Eve blamed the snake. Cain indicated that he was not his brother's keeper. What would this church and community look like if those of us gathered together today chose to

accept responsibility by being loving, trustworthy and willing to build other us? Let's commit to finding out together.

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