

HUMANITY HATES

CORE PASSAGE: GENESIS 4:1-12



CONTEXT

Adam and Eve, the first image-bearers of God, created by Him, sinned and were banished from the garden of Eden. Exiled from the garden, Eve gave birth to two sons, Cain and Abel. As their story unfolds, we find the consequences of sin continue to spread from Adam and Eve's decision to take of the forbidden fruit, not trusting in God's good character and instruction. Thus begins the long story of humanity's pride and sinful ways, revealing our full need for a Savior and Redeemer who will forgive us of our sins and make us new.

KEY CONCEPT

Sin leads us to disordered feelings and responses, and to hateful actions.

As you examine Genesis 4:1-12:

- Reflect upon parts of your life in which you fail to give your all or your best to God.
- Contemplate how sin derails our sense of purpose and productivity.

TIMELINE

The Eternal God Creates Everything, Chiefly Humanity (Genesis 1:1-2:25)

SESSION STUDY: The Effects of Sin Spread to Adam and Eve's Children (Genesis 4)

The Fall of Humanity and Its Consequences (Genesis 3)

God Judges Sinful Humanity with the Flood (Genesis 5-9)

Daily Readings

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| ☐ Day 1: Genesis 4:1-5 | ☐ Day 4: Genesis 4:13-16 |
| ☐ Day 2: Genesis 4:6-8 | ☐ Day 5: Genesis 4:17-26 |
| ☐ Day 3: Genesis 4:9-12 | ☐ Day 6: Psalm 75 |



Scan this QR code to access this session's Scripture passages.

PERSONAL PREPARATION

GENESIS 4:1-7

SIN LEADS US TO DISORDERED FEELINGS AND RESPONSES.

*Highlight words and phrases that define Cain's emotions.
Note how each emotion feeds off the other.*

1 The man was intimate with his wife Eve, and she conceived and gave birth to Cain. She said, "I have had a male child with the LORD's help." **2** She also gave birth to his brother Abel. Now Abel became a shepherd of flocks, but Cain worked the ground. **3** In the course of time Cain presented some of the land's produce as an offering to the LORD. **4** And Abel also presented an offering—some of the firstborn of his flock and their fat portions. The LORD had regard for Abel and his offering, **5** but he did not have regard for Cain and his offering. Cain was furious, and he looked despondent. **6** Then the LORD said to Cain, "Why are you furious? And why do you look despondent?" **7** If you do what is right, won't you be accepted? But if you do not do what is right, sin is crouching at the door. Its desire is for you, but you must rule over it."

THEOLOGY CONNECTION

STEWARDSHIP: God is the source of all blessings, temporal and spiritual; all that we have and are we owe to Him. Christians have a spiritual debtorship to the whole world, a holy trusteeship in the gospel, and a binding stewardship in their possessions. They are therefore under obligation to serve Him with their time, talents, and material possessions and should recognize all these as entrusted to them to use for the glory of God and for helping others.

Key Concept: Sin leads us to disordered feelings and responses, and to hateful actions.

Cain and Abel, the first brothers in all of history, presented offerings to God. Moses, the Spirit-inspired author of Genesis, noted that Abel's offering was from the firstborn and their fat portions, the most precious animals and the most flavorful parts. Cain made an offering as well, but it appears to have been less than his best. The rejection of Cain's second-rate offering made him furious and downhearted. In effect, he was upset about being called out for simply going through the motions. His worship lacked heart, which is the most important thing God weighs when it comes to worship of Him.

WORD STUDY

DESPONDENT: The Hebrew phrase used for "despondent" literally means his face fell. It carries the idea of one who expresses publicly his sense of dejection or lost hope.

In what parts of your life do you not give your all or your best to God?

God approached Cain as an act of grace—redemption was possible for Cain. God clearly defined the pathway and its destination if Cain remained angry and

jealous. God was calling Cain to consider a different pathway that would lead him away from the sin that was ready to pounce. God has provided the Bible as the means of defining the sinful pathway we are on today and the results of that pathway. The psalmist contrasted the end results of the righteous and the wicked: the righteous will be planted by waters while the wicked are blown away like chaff (Psalm 1:3-4).

Through Scripture, the conviction of the Holy Spirit, and even our consciences, to a degree, we have been warned, just like Cain, about the pathway toward sin. We would be wise to heed God's warnings. Cain, however, ignored the real issue, which was his halfhearted worship, and focused instead on his brother. His misguided focus would be his downfall.

When you sin, how do you tend to respond if not in repentance?



GENESIS 4:8-12

SIN LEADS US TO HATEFUL ACTIONS.

Note the depth of Cain's fall and the results of that fall.

8 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 guardian?" 10 Then he said, "What have you done? Your brother's blood cries out to me from the ground! 11 So now you are cursed, alienated from the ground that opened its mouth to receive your brother's blood you have shed. 12 If you work the ground, it will never again give you its yield. You will be a restless wanderer on the earth."

GOSPEL CONNECTION

Abel's blood "cries out . . . from the ground" for justice, and rightly so (Genesis 4:10), but Jesus's blood declares those who believe in Him to be covered with His righteousness, cleansed from sin, and justified before God (Hebrews 12:22-24).



Though God had warned Cain against further sin that would pounce on him, Cain didn't heed the warning and took the next step by murdering his brother. God knows all things, so by asking about Abel, God provided an opportunity for Cain to confess and repent of his spiraling sin. Instead, Cain tried to minimize his responsibility. As if the murder weren't bad enough, he tried to absolve himself of all guilt.

In his first letter to Timothy, Paul commented on a person's conscience being seared (1 Timothy 4:2). The Greek word translated "seared" points to scar tissue that is no longer sensitive to touch. Similarly, Cain was no longer sensitive to the guilt of his sin. The more steps we take into sin, the greater the searing until we eventually lack any sense of guilt and are no longer spiritually sensitive.

When have you seen sin lead to more sin as a general example or from an example in your own life?

God saw through Cain's attempt to divert blame as He heard Abel's blood crying out from the ground. Instead of finding a person willing to admit his wrongdoing and be reconciled, God encountered an indifferent person who was obstinate and rejected God's offer of grace.

Abel's blood rightly cried out from the ground for justice. Righteous Abel had been betrayed and murdered by his wicked brother, and Cain would face the consequences of his sin. But judgment for sin need not be the final word against us. Jesus, betrayed and murdered by sinful men, shed His perfect blood to cleanse from sin any and all who will repent and believe in Him (Hebrews 12:24). God deals justly with sinners, and He deals graciously with those who come to Christ in faith.

God placed a curse on Cain, making the ground produce nothing of value through Cain's efforts. Cain would also become a wanderer, lacking direction and purpose. Humans thrive when they have purpose and are productive; Cain would have neither. One wonders what might have been had Cain been willing to turn from his anger and jealousy. Unfortunately, Cain chose to stay on the destructive path fueled by his jealousy and hate (1 John 3:10-12). He was unwilling to trust God, which only produced more heartache and pain.

How does sin derail our sense of purpose and productivity?

PROGRESSION OF SIN

List the progression of Cain's sin using James 1:12-15 as a model.

JAMES 1:12-15

GENESIS 4:1-12

What does this exercise reveal about our struggle with temptation and sin?

Key Concept: Sin leads us to disordered feelings and responses, and to hateful actions.



HEAD

How might misunderstanding God's character lead you to sin?



HEART

How can you commit yourself to being a loving keeper of your brothers and sisters in Christ?



HANDS

How can you assure someone this week that the gospel can help break his or her progressive spiral of sin?

PRAYING SCRIPTURE

Read Psalm 75, circling words and phrases that point to God's role. Write a summary of how Psalm 75 describes God. Identify how the psalmist responded to the revelation of God in this psalm. Craft a prayer, praising God for His justice and for the provision of salvation found in the gospel.

PRAYER REQUESTS AND PRAISES