

- 3) Abel was a godly example (Hebrews 11:4) "*By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts: and by it he being dead yet speaketh.*" Abel's proper sacrificial gift testified that he was righteous in his heart; therefore, he acted by faith. God testified that Abel's gift or offering was acceptable. Though he died, his obedience still speaks.

3. They had to Different Ends

a. Their earthly ends differed

- 1) God cursed Cain (Ge 4:11-12). The ground would no longer produce well for him. For the remainder of his life he would be a fugitive and a vagabond (i.e., an unstable wanderer).
- 2) Abel was honoured by God (Heb 11:4).
- 3) Cain lived the rest of his life with his sin (Ge 4:16). There is no indication that he ever repented.
- 4) Abel died by Cain's sin (Ge 4:8).

b. Their eternal ends differed

- 1) It appears that Cain went to hell (1 John 3:12) "*Not as Cain, who was of that wicked one, and slew his brother. And wherefore slew he him? Because his own works were evil, and his brother's righteous.*"
- 2) Abel went to be with the Lord. Jesus called Abel "righteous" (Mat 23:35). Paul wrote the same, as we have read in Hebrews 11:4.

Conclusion: Why did Cain go bad and Abel did right? They each made a choice. If you turn from the way God wants you to go, you cannot blame your parents, your home life, your environment, your education, or your friends; it is your choice. Therefore, take Solomon's wise advice, (Proverbs 4:23) "*Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life.*"

Parents, each of your children are different. Each has his or her own personality. Each has a sinful heart. Give your child-rearing top priority. Learn God's principles and with God's help live them out before your children. Faithfully teach your children God's principles. Biblically discipline. Protect them from evil exposures. Pray for them fervently.

Song: Have Thine Own Way - 388

Opposite Brothers

14 February 2021 – Genesis 4 – Gen21 – Scott Childs

Introduction: Before entering the Promised Land, God gave these instructions to Jewish parents. (Deuteronomy 6:5-9) "*And thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might. And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart: And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up. And thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thine hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes. And thou shalt write them upon the posts of thy house, and on thy gates.*"

Rearing godly children is not an easy task. Children differ in personality, but they each have a sin nature and a wicked heart. There is no brief formula to follow that will always produce great results with every child. The Scriptures contain about 12 clear parenting instruction verses, but scores of Scriptural principles for godly living that parents must study, learn, live as examples and teach to their children. The parenting instructions God has given rely heavily upon the parent obeying, living and passing on Scriptural principles. Depending on God, you must rear your children by your love, your teaching, your biblical discipline and your example, but especially by your example!

Transition: This evening, we are going to seek to learn from the lives of the first two brothers who were opposites.

1. They had Similar Beginnings

a. This was good and bad

- 1) Same parents (Ge 4:1-2). Adam and Eve, though they had fallen into sin, were still brilliant and capable parents.
- 2) Same home – house, food, family, fellowship, etc.
- 3) Same parental instruction – training for life, work and worship.
- 4) Unfortunately, they also had the same sin nature inherited from their parents. (Romans 5:12) "*Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned.*"
- 5) Same understanding of God's expectation (Ge 3:21).

Because of their sin, they had to kill from their flock to get skins for their clothing. It appears that God taught Adam and Eve to offer the meat of those slain animals as sacrifices to Him to cover their sins.

b. Similar beginnings are no guarantee

- 1) There are many variables.
 - a) Each child has his own personality. Some are more self-willed than others.
 - b) Some take after one parent more than the other.
 - c) It is more difficult to interact lovingly with a child whose personality clashes with your own.
 - d) Every child is born with a free will. The day will come that he or she must choose his own path.
- 2) (Proverbs 22:6) *"Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it."* While this verse is absolutely true, only perfect parents produce perfect results. If a child departs from the way, it is not God's fault.

2. They Lived Different Lives

a. The boys had different occupations

- 1) Cain was a farmer (Ge 4:2). There was nothing wrong with Cain being a farmer. Many good men in the Bible were farmers.
- 2) Abel was a shepherd. Being a shepherd made Abel different from Cain, but it did not make him any better than Cain.

b. The boys had different beliefs

- 1) Cain offered God fruit. He may have brought to God the very best of his fruit. He was a religious man. He did not refuse to give an offering; he just did not offer what God had required. Today, many religious people offer their best to God by way of good deeds, church attendance, prayer, offerings, and service, but that is not what the Lord has required to make them righteous.
- 2) Abel offered God the firstling of his flock (Ge 4:3-4). God's response to their offerings indicates that they both knew that God required a blood sacrifice (Ge 4:4-5). Today, God

clearly tells us His requirement for salvation. (Acts 3:19)

"Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out ..." (Acts 16:31) "And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house." (Galatians 3:22) "But the scripture hath concluded all under sin, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe."

- 3) Cain acted by religious works (Ge 4:3). Abel acted by Faith (Ge 4:4). (Hebrews 11:4) *"By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts: and by it he being dead yet speaketh."* (Romans 5:1) *"Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ:"*
- 4) God did **not** respect Cain's offering (Ge 4:5). God **did** respect Abel's offering (Ge 4:4).
 - a) The word *"respect"* means to look at. God may have burned it with fire from heaven. He may have spoken acceptance from heaven. We do not know, but the boys both knew.
 - b) The grammar tells us that God *continually* had respect for Abel's offering but *never* had respect for Cain's. It also tells us that it made Cain *continually wroth*. It sounds like this was a repeated situation and each time that Cain's offering was rejected, he became more and more angry. Unconfessed anger will eventually overheat and explode.
- 5) Cain became a murderer and Abel died a martyr (Heb 11:4). Abel's death continually testifies of his righteousness

c. The boys had different character

- 1) Cain was of the wicked one - Abel was righteous. (1 John 3:12) *"Not as Cain, who was of that wicked one, and slew his brother. And wherefore slew he him? Because his own works were evil, and his brother's righteous."*
- 2) Cain was an ungodly example to others (Jude 1:11) *"Woe unto them! for they have gone in the way of Cain, and ran greedily after the error of Balaam for reward, and perished in the gainsaying of Core."*