

# GENESIS Why The Beginning Matters

## Study 7

### The Family of Sin

#### Genesis 4-5

#### Part 1 of 4: The Nature of Worship in the midst of Sin

#### Verse 1-5a

Genesis 4:1-5a (ESV)

Adam made love to 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.” Later she gave birth to his brother Abel.

Now Abel kept flocks, and Cain worked the soil. In the course of time Cain brought some of the fruits of the soil as an offering to the Lord. And Abel also brought an offering—fat portions from some of the firstborn of his flock. The Lord looked with favor on Abel and his offering but on Cain and his offering he did not look with favor...

**1) a) Fill in the blanks. Refer to verses in Genesis 4:2-5a and Hebrews 11:4-6 (both in NIV and ESV), what clues are given about the differences between Cain’s offering and Abel’s offering?**

Clues from	Abel’s offering	Cain’s offering
Genesis 4:2-4	Additional description of ‘firstborn’	No additional comment, just ‘offering’, no favour(NIV) or no regard (ESV)
Hebrews 11:4-6	Offering was ‘better’(NIV), by faith ‘More acceptable’ (ESV)	‘Worse’ than Abel, possibly ‘without faith’

#### Quick Verse Reference

Hebrews 11:4-6

By faith Abel brought God a better offering than Cain did. By faith he was commended as righteous, when God spoke well of his offerings. And by faith Abel still speaks, even though he is dead.

By faith Enoch was taken from this life, so that he did not experience death: “He could not be found, because God had taken him away.” For before he was taken, he was commended as one who pleased God. And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who

comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him.

2 Samuel 24:24

But the king replied to Araunah, "No, I insist on paying you for it. I will not sacrifice to the Lord my God burnt offerings that cost me nothing."

So David bought the threshing floor and the oxen and paid fifty shekels of silver for them.

**b) Discussion question. According to the video lecture, what was the more important lesson about offering? Or what is the wrong way of thinking about offering? [You may refer to the diamond ring size metaphor]**

Quick Verse Reference

Psalm 51:17

My sacrifice, O God, is a broken spirit;  
a broken and contrite heart  
you, God, will not despise.

Part 2 of 4: The Terrifying Nature of Sin

### Verse 5-7

Genesis 4:5-7 (ESV)

but for Cain and his offering he had no regard. So Cain was very angry, and his face fell. The Lord said to Cain, "Why are you angry, and why has your face fallen? If you do well, will you not be accepted? And if you do not do well, sin is crouching at the door. Its desire is contrary to you, but you must rule over it."

**2) Objective question. Select all the apply. According to the video lecture, what are the examples of the terrifying nature of sin?**

A. Sin blinds you through strong emotions

B. Sin produces a false identity outside of God-given identity

C. Sin is hidden, easy to miss

D. Sin is a power that has a life of its own that devours

E. Sin destroys people, relationship and life itself

F. Sin is okay in moderation

Part 3 of 4: The Grace of God in Mitigating Sin

**Verse 5-7**

Genesis 4:5-7 (ESV)

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**3) a) Reflection question. God still showed grace and approached Cain to counsel him and talk him out of sinning. Have you had such personal experience?**

**b) Discussion question. Both getting angry and getting drunk clouds your judgement to make decisions. Are there any ways to avoid getting into the state?**

- cool down period

- modifying interpretation of the situation and response will change

- don't look at the world and interpret the world as out to get you all the time or have a victim mentality

**Verse 8-12**

Genesis 4:8-12(ESV)

Then the Lord said to Cain, "Where is Abel your brother?" He said, "I do not know; am I my brother's keeper?" And the Lord said, "What have you done? The voice of your brother's blood is crying to me from the ground. And now you are cursed from the ground, which has opened its mouth to receive your brother's blood from your hand. When you work the ground, it shall no longer yield to you its strength. You shall be a fugitive and a wanderer on the earth."

**4) Discussion question. Why did God bother to ask Cain what happened to Abel when it seems that God already knows?**

**Verse 13-14**

Genesis 4:13-14 (ESV)

Cain said to the Lord, "My punishment is greater than I can bear. Behold, you have driven me today away from the ground, and from your face I shall be hidden. I shall be a fugitive and a wanderer on the earth, and whoever finds me will kill me."

**5) Discussion question. According to video lecture, does it seem like Cain repented?**

### Verse 15-16

Genesis 4:15-16 (ESV)

Then the Lord said to him, "Not so! If anyone kills Cain, vengeance shall be taken on him sevenfold." And the Lord put a mark on Cain, lest any who found him should attack him. Then Cain went away from the presence of the Lord and settled in the land of Nod, east of Eden.

**5) Reflection question. Even though Cain is a murderer, God showed grace to Cain by keeping him alive. Are there sins in your life that you think is too big for you to approach God for forgiveness?**

Part 4 of 4: The Choice men have to Make

### Verse 17-26

Genesis 4:17-24 (ESV)

Cain knew his wife, and she conceived and bore Enoch. When he built a city, he called the name of the city after the name of his son, Enoch. To Enoch was born Irad, and Irad fathered Mehujael, and Mehujael fathered Methushael, and Methushael fathered Lamech. And Lamech took two wives. The name of the one was Adah, and the name of the other Zillah. Adah bore Jabal; he was the father of those who dwell in tents and have livestock. His brother's name was Jubal; he was the father of all those who play the lyre and pipe. Zillah also bore Tubal-cain; he was the forger of all instruments of bronze and iron. The sister of Tubal-cain was Naamah.

Lamech said to his wives:

"Adah and Zillah, hear my voice;  
you wives of Lamech, listen to what I say:  
I have killed a man for wounding me,  
a young man for striking me.  
If Cain's revenge is sevenfold,  
then Lamech's is seventy-sevenfold."

Genesis 4:25-5:5 (ESV)

And Adam knew his wife again, and she bore a son and called his name Seth, for she said, "God has appointed for me another offspring instead of Abel, for Cain killed him." To Seth also a son was born, and he called his name Enosh. At that time people began to call upon the name of the Lord.

This is the written account of Adam's family line.

When God created mankind, he made them in the likeness of God. He created them male and female and blessed them. And he named them "Mankind" when they were created.

When Adam had lived 130 years, he had a son in his own likeness, in his own image; and he named him Seth. After Seth was born, Adam lived 800 years and had other sons and daughters. Altogether, Adam lived a total of 930 years, and then he died.

**6) Discussion question. What are the differences between the line of Seth and the line of Cain?**

Line of Cain (Genesis 4)	Line of Seth (Genesis 5)
Death: Civilization apart from God	Life: Civilization with God
Polygamy, Violence, named Cities after humans	They call upon the name of the LORD, they worship God, God restarted the 'image of God narrative' with this group

**Verse 6-32**

Genesis 5:6-32 (ESV)

When Seth had lived 105 years, he became the father of Enosh. After he became the father of Enosh, Seth lived 807 years and had other sons and daughters. Altogether, Seth lived a total of 912 years, and then he died.

When Enosh had lived 90 years, he became the father of Kenan. After he became the father of Kenan, Enosh lived 815 years and had other sons and daughters. Altogether, Enosh lived a total of 905 years, and then he died.

When Kenan had lived 70 years, he became the father of Mahalalel. After he became the father of Mahalalel, Kenan lived 840 years and had other sons and daughters. Altogether, Kenan lived a total of 910 years, and then he died.

When Mahalalel had lived 65 years, he became the father of Jared. After he became the father of Jared, Mahalalel lived 830 years and had other sons and daughters. Altogether, Mahalalel lived a total of 895 years, and then he died.

When Jared had lived 162 years, he became the father of Enoch. After he became the father of Enoch, Jared lived 800 years and had other sons and daughters. Altogether, Jared lived a total of 962 years, and then he died.

When Enoch had lived 65 years, he became the father of Methuselah. After he became the father of Methuselah, Enoch walked faithfully with God 300 years and had other sons and daughters. Altogether, Enoch lived a total of 365 years. Enoch walked faithfully with God; then he was no more, because God took him away.

When Methuselah had lived 187 years, he became the father of Lamech. 26 After he became

the father of Lamech, Methuselah lived 782 years and had other sons and daughters. Altogether, Methuselah lived a total of 969 years, and then he died.

When Lamech had lived 182 years, he had a son. He named him Noah and said, "He will comfort us in the labor and painful toil of our hands caused by the ground the Lord has cursed." After Noah was born, Lamech lived 595 years and had other sons and daughters. Altogether, Lamech lived a total of 777 years, and then he died.

After Noah was 500 years old, he became the father of Shem, Ham and Japheth.

**7) Reflection question. Enoch seemed to have a 'shorter life' compared to the rest even though he is faithful. Does this change how you think about long life vs short life with respect to faithfulness?**

#### Background Information

Da Carson's commentary on Genesis 5:23-24:

**"365 years.** There are also 365 days in a solar year. Enoch became famous for his faithfulness to God and as one who knew much about God (Jude 14-15, Hebrews 11:5-6).

**God took him.** The seventh from Adam does not die like the others (cf. the seventh day of creation [2:2-3], which does not end like the other six days). Enoch's acceptance by God gives hope to his contemporaries as well as those who read this account."

Part 1 of 4: The Nature of Worship in the midst of Sin

Part 2 of 4: The Terrifying nature of Sin

Part 3 of 4: The Grace of God in mitigating Sin

Part 4 of 4: The Choice men have to make

#### Case Study

##### Case 1 – Sin Blinds

Darcy was a social worker active in the 2nd Baptist church and gave many sacrificial hours ministering to drug addicts at a home. She herself has come from very modest home and had given up on a lot of opportunities for a better life because she chose to be a social worker to help the poor. She would selflessly sit with the sick the whole day if need be to bring them to the hospital.

She was part of the leadership in the church but quit because of differences of opinion which became explosive. Even her small group of friends around her eventually moved away from her.

One of her chief problems was being highly critical of everyone and everything around her. She could always spot the thing that was lacking, or not as well-run in any ministry in the church and she would not fail to let it be known privately in her conversations with fellow believers. She rarely had anything good to say about anyone.

She was approached to head up a committee doing missions in church and agreed but only if her best friend Fanny would also be appointed to the committee as well. Fanny was known to be a hard worker but who had trouble getting on with people because of her unrestrained mouth and quick temper.

**1) a) Discussion question. Darcy has a crouching sin which she cannot be aware of, what is it? And how does this affect the people around her?**

**b) Discussion question. Why do you think Darcy is acting the way she is acting?**

**c) Discussion question. If you were her elder in the church, would you agree to have her head up the committee and give in to her condition to co-opt her friend into the missions committee? Give reasons for your answer.**

**c) Discussion question. How can any of her friends in church help her out without alienating her and causing her to leave the church?**

### **Case 2 – Sin Produces a False Identity**

Pastor Khin Seong runs a very successful church in Selayang, the church now runs up to over a thousand people and he had 10 pastors working under him. He had just completed his Ph.D. in theology and has been a pastor for the past 30 years.

Elder Charles, a lay preacher, then sets up a church down the road from him reaching out to the poor in the community, and pretty soon this church is growing rapidly and everyone seemed to be going there. The church is vibrant and people loving and accepting of everyone.

Even some of Khin Seong's members and key leaders were going there as well, making Khin Seong upset. They were attracted to the simple bible expositions and practical demonstration

of Christ's love with social action programs for the poor.

Khin Seong's church on the other hand only catered to the middle and upper-middle-class members of the community and Khin Seong's emphasis was on solid bible-based teaching.

Charles then approaches Khin Seong for help with a single mother's ministry which had just started and required the help of godly single mothers from Khin Seong's church as well as funding. Khin Seong becomes very angry as Charles had the audacity to ask him for help when so many of his church members had left his church to go to Charles's church.

One day, one of Charles's leaders who had been sacked for some unknown reason came to Khin Seong asking for a job and by the way, he told him that Charles had been embezzling money from the tithing. Khin Seong now found an opportunity to report Charles to the police and wipe out the competition!!!

**2) a) Discussion question. Why is Khin Seong becoming more and more angry with Charles?**

**b) Discussion question. What is the underlying spiritual problem of Khin Seong which we can find similarities with the Cain and Abel story?**

**c) Discussion question. How should Khin Seong deal with this ex-leader from Charles' church? Should he take this opportunity to take out Charles? Why or why not?**

Model Answer

a. Why is Khin Seong becoming more and more angry with Charles?

He is jealous of the success of the Church that Charles has set up.

b. What is the underlying spiritual problem of Khin Seong which we can find similarities with the Cain and Abel story?

He has set his identity like Cain based on being better than other church leaders like Charles. After all, he has a Ph.D. and Charles has no qualifications. Charles may even be teaching heresy. Khin Seong has been in church planting for 30 years and Charles is a mere novice. Hence to be shown up by his own members leaving his church and going to Charles is an attack on his own self-esteem and an assault upon his prestige and pride of being a leader or a large church. He has built his identity upon his qualifications, years of experience, and success in his church and now this is unraveling.

c. How should Khin Seong deal with this ex-leader from Charles' church? Should he take this opportunity to take out Charles? Why or why not?

Khin Seong needs to examine his own motives very clearly. If the motive of his subsequent action is to undermine and destroy Charles' church simply because he is jealous of the latter's success then he will be giving in to sin which will gain power over his life and send him on a path that will eventually see the end of his own church ministry.

If Charles is innocent and the leader is lying and Khin Seong had made inappropriate police reports then the backlash would come from his own members who will be ashamed of the action of their own church leader. Khin Seong will be put on the defensive and will have to lie to do other actions to justify his own sin and in the end be devoured by the power of sin.

### **Case 3 – Perspective of Life on Earth**

A preacher called Alan was looking at Genesis 5 and noticed the long lives of all the ancient people there. He then concluded that clearly, the bible taught that if one is godly then one will live a long life and not die early.

When he compared Genesis 4 and Genesis 5, he found most of the folk in Cain's line had technological advancement, and lived in cities with fast-paced lives but were very evil compared to the people in Genesis 5 who lived simpler lives on the farms and lived longer. He concluded that city folks were naturally eviler and that as Christians we should not be living in the cities but move out to a land-based agrarian community to live longer.

Also, Genesis 5 was telling us that with clean earth then and no DNA damage from radiation, men can live longer and hence we should preserve our environment and get rid of pollution.

**3) a) Discussion question. Are these valid conclusions and spiritual lessons from Genesis 4-5?**

**b) Discussion question. What can you tell of the differences between these two kinds of lines of humanity (the line of Cain vs the line of Seth) which is the real lesson from Genesis 4-5? Who is the poster boy of the line of Cain, and who is the poster boy of the line of Seth and why?**

**c) Discussion question. Look at Jeremiah 29:4-8 and discuss what God thinks about his people living in cities like in this case Jerusalem. What is their mission? What is ours in Kuala Lumpur despite being called "*pendatang*" by some quarters? What are we expected to do? And how do we do this?**

### Quick Verse Reference

Jeremiah 29:4-8

This is what the Lord Almighty, the God of Israel, says to all those I carried into exile from Jerusalem to Babylon: "Build houses and settle down; plant gardens and eat what they produce. Marry and have sons and daughters; find wives for your sons and give your daughters in marriage, so that they too may have sons and daughters. Increase in number there; do not decrease. Also, seek the peace and prosperity of the city to which I have carried you into exile. Pray to the Lord for it, because if it prospers, you too will prosper." Yes, this is what the Lord Almighty, the God of Israel, says: "Do not let the prophets and diviners among you deceive you. Do not listen to the dreams you encourage them to have."

### Model Answer

a. Are these valid conclusions and spiritual lessons from Genesis 4-5?

Firstly Genesis is a narrative and the things that happen in the narrative are not necessarily prescriptive for us to follow it just tell us what happens.

The whole thrust of the Genesis 4-5 is to show the consequences of what happened in Genesis 3 with the fall of man and to flesh out the prophecy of Gen 3:15 where the seed of the woman will be in conflict with the seed of Satan. The conflict is epitomized by the Murder of Abel by Cain and Cain's descendants are cast as the seed of the serpent as shown by their evil deeds just like Cain. The difference in the Seth line is longevity and the fact that this line of humanity has started calling upon the name of the Lord which is never mentioned in the line of Cain. Hence the Gen 4-5 narrative shows us two distinct lines of humanity in fulfillment of the Gen 3:15 prophecy.

The other incidentals of city dwelling and musical talent have no bearing on the spirituality of both lines. The fact that the line of Cain started cities does not imply that cities are evil. It just states a historical fact of how cities got started. In fact, spirituality is clearly cast as people who respond to God. God by His grace came to Cain just before he killed his brother and it is clear Cain killed Abel because he let sin have its desire for him to take control. Cain was not a city dweller but a farmer and the sin had nothing to do with his occupation or where he lived. It had all to do with his inward struggle with sin which was hidden and desired to control him.

The long life of the line of Seth is designed to show the relationship between people who call upon the name of the Lord, the seed of the woman and their life. The Cain line is renowned for technological advancement and violence multiplied and the Seth line is known for longevity surely sends the message of the relationship between God and life. It is also

patently true that there is less DNA damage in the early pristine conditions of the earth then but that is not the point of the author of the narrative and hence Genesis 4-5 is not teaching us about the care of our environment.

b. What can you tell of the differences between these two kinds of lines of humanity (the line of Cain vs the line of Seth) which is the real lesson from Genesis 4-5, Who is the poster boy of the line of Cain, and who is the poster boy of the line of Seth and why?

The Cain line is a line of people who thrive on power and violence in a quest for their own glory. It is the survival of the fittest and Lamech is the best example of this with his gory boast of killing someone for just bruising him. The descendants have polygamy as evidenced by Lamech. Hence one starts to see the curse of marriage occur with sin causing the man to rule over the women. Cain built a city and named it after his son. Hence the trend is to build a life around one's own glory in life. There is no reference to God in Cain's line despite God's grace to him. These are the seed of the serpent indeed.

On the other hand, is the seed of Seth where people began to call upon the name of the Lord and finally if Lamech is the poster boy of the Cain line then Enoch is the poster boy of the Seth line as he walked with God so closely that God took him to heaven and he did not even see death. The line of Seth will live lives based upon their faith in God and seek to serve and seek His glory rather than their own glory. Genesis 5 introduces us to Noah, a righteous man.

c. Look at Jeremiah 29:4-8 and discuss what God thinks about his people living in cities like in this case Jerusalem, what is their mission? What is ours in Kuala Lumpur despite being called "pendatang" by some quarters what are we expected to do? And how do we do this?

God is not against cities not even pagan cities. In this passage, Israel is exiled to the city of their archenemies and brutal invaders the Babylonians. One would naturally be excused for hating such brutal enemies but God instructed His people to live and work amongst them and seek the good of the people in Babylon for their welfare and the welfare of the city. To pray for them and seek their good.

#### **Case 4 – Subtilty and Power of Sin**

Robin loves playing games. He started playing Candy Crush on his phone when it was first introduced to him by a friend. It began as an innocent way to pass time. Slowly he started to play on a daily basis.

He soon began to realize there were other games that gave him a better rush. One of those was Poker Crush. He really enjoyed the uncertainty and the mental stimulation he got from it.

Although his LG discouraged him from playing it because they saw he started to play it obsessively, he denied that it was anything he needed to work on.

Half a year later, Chinese New Year came and he went to his hometown. His family started to play various card games and gambled small amounts of money (RM1 to RM5). When they had games of Blackjack and Poker, he felt really excited and won RM125 on the second night of CNY.

When CNY ended, he felt that Poker Crush no longer gave him the same adrenaline rush it once did. He wished he could continue playing Blackjack and Poker with small money as he did with his family. It was then that he decided to visit Genting Highlands and played there. However, their minimum amount to start playing was RM100 for each game. He reasoned that it was still a reasonable amount since he won that just a few nights before.

Within half a year after CNY, Robin had become a compulsive gambler and started to steal money to finance his new hobby.

**4) a) Discussion question. Sin is subtle and is difficult to detect. Robin lacked self-control and what started as something innocent, this sin eventually took over his life. How did sin “hide” in Robin’s case?**

**b) Discussion question. Sin grows in its power. It manifested itself as something trivial in Robin’s life but eventually grew to a point it was out of control. When did the habit begin? Was it very “powerful” at this point?**

**c) Discussion question. Robin, just like Cain, had the chance to turn around and repent and to “master” his sin (not let it take over him). How should he have overcome it?**

Model Answer

a. Sin is subtle and is difficult to detect. Robin lacked self-control and what started as something innocent eventually took over his life. How did sin “hide” in Robin’s case?

We learn that sin hides from us. “Sin is crouching” means it is trying to avoid your view — or to make you think that it is much smaller or more inert than it really is. To crouch is to stay low to the ground and not move a whisker.

What does this mean? It means that your most dangerous flaws — the things that can most destroy your life — are even now ‘crouching down’ and presenting themselves to you as much smaller and less serious than they really are. You may know you are resentful, selfish,

jealous, or have a lack of self-control in a certain area, but almost always, you underestimate the severity or depth of your problem. Actually, in so many cases, sin hides completely.

Substance abuse counselors know a lot about denial in the area of alcohol and drug addiction — but the Bible here and elsewhere tells us that all sin has the same dynamic. Most of us weave intellectual or psychological webs of deceit over our consciences so that we deny the sinfulness of our worst sins. We see workaholism as productivity, obsession with physical beauty as good grooming, stinginess as prudence, ruthlessness as being a ‘sharp businessman’, and so on.

b. Sin grows in its power. It manifested itself as something trivial in Robin’s life but eventually grew to a point it was out of control. When did the habit begin? Was it very “powerful” at this point?

We learn about the growing power of sin. The word “crouching” depicts sin as a wild animal, “*at your door*” ready to spring upon you and “*to have you*” — to tear and rend and devour you at the moment you step outside. But notice that it only can do that because Cain has not been ‘doing right’. “*If you do not do right — sin is crouching at your door...*” This means that sin does not immediately destroy you. First, we do it — but then, it ‘does’ us. That is the picture. The Bible indicates here that when we sin, our sins do not simply ‘pass away’, but somehow they take shape and shadow of you and become a presence of their own that takes us down. Notice, for example, that Cain’s very cold-blooded answer in v.9 “*betrays a hardening in comparison with the shuffling answers of 3:10ff.*” (Kidner, p. 76).

This need not be read in a completely magical or mystical way. The first time you lie to a parent, it breaks a barrier and makes it easier to do it again. Psychologists call it ‘habit’ — a useful psychological capacity that, however, can participate deeply in evil. Sinful actions become sinful habits of mind and heart that become virtually invisible (habits become unconscious) and difficult to change.

But this metaphor probably goes beyond the simple psychological explanation. There is also something in the fabric of life that has sometimes been called ‘the law of sowing’ — Gal. 6:7-8, “*You will reap what you sow*”. This is not an absolute rule, but rather a general principle of justice in the world that mirrors something of the justice of God. Gossipers will tend to be gossiped about. Haters will tend to be hated. Cowards will tend to be deserted. He who lives by the sword tends to die by the sword. People who will do anything at all to be popular often are very unpopular. Why? Even in this fallen world, there is a fitful reflection of the justice of God. Sin sets up strains in the fabric of the universe because of the nature of the one who created it.

c. Robin, just like Cain, had the chance to turn around and repent and to “master” his sin (not let it take over him). How should he have overcome it?

We learn a balance between respect for the power of sin and courage in its face. On the one hand, the metaphor is surely to warn Cain that sin is vastly more powerful than he thinks. On the other hand, God says, “you must master it”.

In light of the rest of the Bible, this is certainly not a declaration that we can overcome sin by our own willpower without God. In fact, God shows us that we will never even see our own sin without his illumination!

But with this last phrase, God is taking away our excuse. We must not ever say, “I couldn’t help it! I’m too weak!” (cf. 1 Cor.10:13). Certainly God is calling Cain to exert himself. He is saying, “we can overcome this.” So God is taking away both over-optimism and over-pessimism in the face of sin.

Reflection Question – Sin of Pride

**Pride manifests itself in many ways and in many of us, we exhibit pride in a manner almost unique to our own temperament and makeup. It is often subtle and hard to pick out.**

- a. Reflection question. Share with others in the group how pride manifests in a particular way in your life and start to pray for one another over this.