

# Adam, Eve, Cain, and Abel – Lessons from the First Family

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Our text for this lesson is Genesis 2 – 4. In this section of scripture, we find much information about the first family. As with any story found in God's word, while it is important to know the facts of the story, it is as important to know the lessons taught by that story. The Old Testament is to be used by us today for our learning (Romans 15:4). A failure to understand the lessons of the Old Testament is a great disservice to our spiritual growth.

Adam and Eve were the first two people on Earth, and their first two sons were Cain and Abel. Eve was created to provide a helper for Adam, and God joined them together in the first marriage (Genesis 2:24; Matthew 19:1-6). While we are not given much information about the history of this family, we do know of two events that greatly affected not only them but also generations to come. In the first incident, Eve is persuaded by the Devil to partake of the fruit that God had forbidden them to eat (Gen. 3:1-6). And, in Genesis 4, Cain kills his brother Abel.

We will review several of the lessons that are found in these three chapters related to the first family. After a quick review, we will talk about some of these in more detail.

1. The first human on Earth was an intelligent being. Adam was charged with caring for the garden (Genesis 2:15), and Adam named all the animals (Genesis 2:19,20).
2. It is God who instituted marriage between one man and one woman (Genesis 2:21-24).
3. Sin is still sin regardless of our motivation or reasoning that led us into it (Genesis 3:6-24).
4. There is no blaming some one else for our sins. We are responsible for our own sins, regardless of how much influence someone else puts on us (Genesis 3:12-19).
5. There are consequences to our sins (Genesis 3:16-24; 4:11-15).
6. There is accountability for our sins (Genesis 3:9-13; 4:9,10).
7. It is God who set up the order of the home – the man is the head, and the wife is not (Genesis 3:16).
8. God desires that all men be saved (Genesis 3:15).
9. It is God who determines modesty, not man (Genesis 3:7 + 3:21).
10. Our service to God must be by faith (Genesis 4:1-6; Hebrews 11:4).
11. Sin brings sorrow to our lives (Genesis 4:6,7).
12. We will reap what we sow (Genesis 4:7).
13. Anger, when it has fully grown, will lead us to things we ought not to do (Genesis 4:5-8; Matthew 5:21-24; Ephesians 4:26).
14. We are our "brother's keeper" (Genesis 4:9; Galatians 6:1).

15. God knows (Genesis 3:9-11; 4:10).

16. When God says don't, don't!

Now, let us go back and look at some of these in more detail.

### **Marriage Was Instituted by God**

Marriage is a wonderful institution that provides the couple with love, companionship, and the proper means to procreate (Genesis 2:18; Ephesians 5:21-33; 1 Corinthians 7:1-5). Man has done about everything that can possibly be done to marriage, except abide by God's laws for marriage.

One area that is being more and more tested in our society is whether marriage should only be between a man and a woman. For years, this was without question, now it is a matter of Congressional debate. Yet, regardless of what man says, God set up marriage to be between a man and a woman. We word it as, "One man and one woman for life!" God said that the man should cleave unto his wife (Genesis 2:24). Romans 7:1-4 teaches us that a man is bound to his wife for as long as she shall live. The point of all of this is that God did not set up marriage to be between two men or two women. Homosexuality is a sin condemned by God (Leviticus 18:22; Romans 1:26,27). Allowing homosexuals to marry is not going to bless their relationship, nor will it make it right. God called it sin, and sin it will always be! Let us uphold that which God said concerning marriage.

### **Sin Will Always Be Sin**

We are inventive people, especially when it comes to trying to remove the blame for sin. We have used just about every excuse we can come up with and we do so in an attempt to "justify" our sin. We have somehow convinced ourselves that if our motives are good, then what we are doing is not really sin. People, who may have never heard of the concept of situation ethics, have nevertheless practiced it for years. They believe that circumstances make something right that would normally be wrong.

Eve sinned by partaking of the fruit that was forbidden. She was enticed by the Devil to do so because the partaking of this would give her that which tastes good, that which is beautiful to look upon, and it would make one wise (Genesis 3:6). Many would probably say that Eve is not to blame because she was misguided by the information available to her. Some would argue that her heart was right, she was just weak.

It is interesting that when God talked about this incident he said Eve was "*in the transgression*" (1 Timothy 2:14). Sin is a transgression of the law (1 John 4:3). Regardless of what Eve may have thought or any weaknesses she may have had, God still says that she sinned! We are responsible for our sins (Romans 2:6) – Every man will be judged according to **HIS** works.

### **God Set up the Order of the Home**

Many would argue today because of the women's liberation movement that every one in the house is equal, especially the husband and wife. To talk about roles that each must fulfill is something many do not wish to hear. Yet, when we study the home, we need to know what God has set in place for the home.

To be what God desires, the home must be ordered as he has set up the various roles. When the home was established by God, he put in place that a man and a woman would be married for life. He stated that the two would be one flesh (Genesis 2:24). When sin entered into the world, God defined the roles of both the man and the woman in the home. As part of what he told the woman, God said *“thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee”* (Genesis 3:16). To the man, God helped him to understand that providing for the home was going to be a much more difficult task. The man is the provider for and head of the home (Genesis 3:17,19).

God continues to emphasize the headship of the man and the subjection of the woman in 1 Corinthians 11:3. Here, he lets us know that the order of authority is – 1) God; 2) Jesus; 3) Man; and 4) Woman. In 1 Timothy 2:9-15, God teaches us that the reason for this order is that man was formed first (vs. 13) and Eve was deceived (Genesis 3:6; 1 Timothy 2:14). The order of the home and of humanity is not some arbitrary arrangement, but is set in place by God himself. To change this order is to violate God's will.

### God Determines Modesty

When Adam and Eve were first created and joined together by God, they were naked and not ashamed (Genesis 2:25). However, after they sinned, one of the first things they attempted to do was to clothe themselves. In doing so, they made aprons out of fig leaves (Genesis 3:7). These garments covered the mid portion of the body and nothing else.

After God's discussion with Adam and Eve, he made them coats out of skins (Genesis 3:21). These garments covered the body and kept covered that which was not to be open to everyone's eyes. Later, in talking to women specifically, God told them to dress modestly (1 Timothy 2:9). To help them understand this, he told them that this would be that *“which becometh women professing godliness”* (1 Timothy 2:10). What we have to understand is that if there is **MODEST** apparel, there is therefore **IMMODEST** apparel. And, if we are to dress modestly, then we must be able to know what modest apparel is!

Since it is God who wants the body covered, then we have to understand that modesty is not situational, generational, cultural, societal, or fashionable. There is a standard for modesty and it is in God's eyes, not man's. God expects us to keep our bodies covered, and to dress in such a way that people see Christ living in us.

### Our Service to God must Be by Faith

The story of Cain and Abel is a sad story that ends with Cain killing his brother Abel. Both had offered sacrifices in the first part of Genesis 4 and, while Abel's sacrifice was accepted, Cain's was not. Much discussion has been had on why one was accepted and one was not, but in reality, we will never really know. Both animal sacrifices and fruit of the ground offerings were acceptable to God. And, we have no way of knowing that both were not right in what they brought. We might also speculate that Cain's attitude was not right. And, seeing how he reacted to this whole situation, we might have a good case for this argument.

However, in truth, it would only be speculation on our part to say exactly why God rejected Cain's sacrifice. The only thing we can say about it is that it was not by faith. I know this because Hebrews 11:4 tells me that it was by faith that Abel offered a more acceptable sacrifice. In other

words, whatever it was that God wanted at that time, Abel did it. In fact, reading Hebrews 11 helps us to understand that when we serve God, it must be in keeping with his will.

We are to fear God and keep his commandments (Ecclesiastes 12:13). We do all things by God's authority (Colossians 3:17). Enoch was the example of faith used to show us that without faith we cannot please God (Hebrews 11:5,6). Yet, Genesis 5:24 tells us that Enoch walked with God. Before Enoch was taken by God, he was well-pleasing to God. Therefore, to please God, we must walk with him. And to please God, we must have faith in him (Hebrews 11:6). Therefore, having faith in God is the same as walking with God. Those who do not walk with God do not have faith in him.

### **Anger Will Lead Us to Do Things We Regret**

Some people seem to be angry about everything, and if they are not angry, it does not take much to get them angry. People hold grudges and allow things to build within them, never willing to let go of their anger.

Cain was angry after Abel's sacrifice, and even after God talked to him, he allowed the anger to grow (Genesis 4:6-8). Cain's anger eventually led him to murder his brother.

In Matthew 5, Jesus discusses the issue of murder relating to the Old Testament command "Thou shalt not kill". Apparently, the Jews of the First Century believed as many do today that as long as you do not commit the act, you can think whatever you want. However, Jesus taught otherwise. He went to the very root cause of the problem and that is anger. In Matthew 5:22, Jesus taught us to not allow anger to grow, and in the next verses, to settle problems with others (Matthew 5:23-25).

To bring anger under control is also taught in Ephesians 4:26. Here, the writer says not to sin in our anger, and not to let the sun go down on our wrath. As in Matthew 5, anger is not to be allowed to build and is to be settled quickly.

As Christians, we are to put off anger (Colossians 3:8). But, it is not enough just to put off anger, we are to add mercy, kindness, and forgiveness (Colossians 3:12,13). Without doing this, we will open the door for anger to lead us into doing that which we will regret.

### **When God Says Don't, Don't!**

God told Adam and Eve to not eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil (Genesis 2:17). Adam and Eve both chose to eat of this tree and suffered severe consequences. The beautiful garden in which they lived would no longer be theirs. The ease with which they had to provide for themselves would be gone. They were expelled from the garden and would never be able to get back again (Genesis 3:24).

The children of Israel would later try to do those things which were not authorized by God, and they would fail to enter the Promised Land (Hebrews 3:19). God said the things they did were to be used by us as examples of what not to follow (1 Corinthians 10:6). They learned the hard way that when God said don't, he meant don't.

King Saul offered sacrifices when he was not supposed to and he lost his right to be king (1 Samuel 13:13). God told Israel to not take of the spoils of Jericho. Achan did and Israel suffered (Joshua 6:18,19; 7:1-26). When God says something, he means it!

A failure to learn the lessons of the past will cause us to certainly repeat the mistakes of the past. And, while we will try to fool ourselves into believing that we will not suffer for our sins, understand that God will punish us for our sins. Let us continue to study God's word and apply the lessons that he has taught us.