

IN THE BEGINNING

Genesis 4:1–18

*[The LORD said] “sin is crouching at your door;
it desires to have you, but you must master it.”* Genesis 4:7

1. Read Genesis 4:1–9. When Eve gives birth to her first son, Cain, what does she say? What difference, if any, do you see in Eve’s faith between chapters 3 and 4? Pray that God will give you spiritual eyes to see everything that happens to you today as being from his hand.
2. Cain, a farmer, and Abel, a shepherd, bring offerings to God. What is the Lord’s response to the offerings? Reread verses 3 and 4; what clues tell us why God prefers one offering over the other?
3. What kind of sacrifices does God reject? (Isaiah 1:11–17; Malachi 1:14)
4. Read 1 John 3:10–15. Cain may have thought he loved God, but did he really? What was Cain’s real problem?
5. How can we know that we really love God as we say we do? (1 John 3:14, 16; 4:19–21; 5:3)
6. What does Hebrews 11:4 say about why Abel’s sacrifice is pleasing to God?
7. What hints do we have in verse 7 that there is an evil being lurking behind temptation and sin? Compare this description of sin “crouching” and “desiring” with 1 Peter 5:8.

8. How does God enable us to “master” (vs. 7) sin when we are faced with temptation? (1 Corinthians 10:13; Ephesians 6:10–18; Hebrews 4:14–16)

9. Read Genesis 4:10–18. As we saw in chapter 3 and here again, no sin is hidden from God.
 - a. Abel’s blood “cries out” to God from the ground. Whose blood alone cries out effectually to God on your behalf? (Hebrews 12:22–24)

 - b. How do you think his blood speaks a “better word”?

10. What is the difference between remorse and repentance? (2 Corinthians 7:9–11) Which word better describes Cain’s reaction to God’s judgment on him? (vs. 13)

11. How does God show kindness to Cain? (vs.15) What are God’s mercies and kindnesses toward sinners meant to do? (Romans 2:4)