



**YOU: Connect. Grow. Serve. Go!**  
**Summer 2018 Leader Commentary**

**Unit 1: The Truth Starts Here**  
**Session 2: When Sin Creeps In (see pp. 106-109)**

**The Question:** What happens when sin creeps in?

**The Point:** I must rule over sin, not let sin rule over me.

**Background Passage:** Genesis 4:1-16

**Focal Passage:** Genesis 4:1-10

This commentary is designed to help you think about the question, “What happens when sin creeps in?” and drive home this one truth: I must rule over sin, not let sin rule over me.

**Focus on These Points**

***I Allow Negative Emotions to Take Over***  
***(Gen. 4:1-5)***

Genesis 4 starts with an act of obedience. Adam and Eve are intimate (v. 1)—or had “sexual relations” (NLT)—resulting in the conception and birth of the couple’s first child. Adam and Eve had begun to fulfill God’s command in Genesis 1:28 to be fruitful and multiply. Eve called their firstborn son, Cain. This Hebrew name sounds like the Hebrew word meaning, “to get.” Perhaps Eve believed the boy was the “offspring” God promised in Genesis 3:15 that would “strike” the serpent’s head. Her response to the miracle of birth was both an acknowledgment to God and a celebration: “I have had a male child with the LORD’s help” (v. 1). Since a human birth had never before happened, having a child gave them an especially proud sense of accomplishment. Eve later birthed another male child, Abel.

As the boys matured, they embraced different vocations. Cain was a farmer like Adam. Abel was a shepherd. Eventually the brothers made sacrifices to God, bringing the products associated with their respective vocations. God must have previously revealed to Adam’s family the necessity of making sacrifices and the need to remain in fellowship with Him. (Besides, Adam and Eve especially knew what it was like to have that fellowship deteriorate.) After the fall, God Himself performed an animal sacrifice to provide clothing for Adam and Eve (3:21).

Cain’s sacrifice is the first recorded offering to God in the Bible. The underlying Hebrew in verse 3 suggests this was a voluntary or freewill gift that was typically given to an authoritative figure. His offering—something that would normally seem like a noble gesture in man’s eyes—was rejected by God. If God had revealed to the first family the need for sacrifices, He would have likely given specifics regarding how, when, and what to give. The guidelines for offerings that were set forth later in the Mosaic Law are clearly documented. During Moses’s time, grain offerings were described as acceptable. So, when Cain offered “some of the land’s produce” (v. 3) (as opposed to an animal offering) it would’ve been deemed admissible. God’s disregard for Cain’s gift was obviously rooted elsewhere. Conversely, God accepted Abel and his offering.

Scripture offers no reasoning for the contrast. The key to the acceptance and rejection of the respective brothers’ offerings may have been related to their attitudes and not the type of

offering presented. Some Bible scholars suggest a faith issue was at hand. Hebrews 11:4 (MSG) reveals, “By an act of faith, Abel brought a better sacrifice to God than Cain. It was what he *believed*, not what he *brought*, that made the difference.” “Cain was furious, and he looked despondent” (v. 5).

### ***I Refuse to Heed the Warning (Gen. 4:6-7)***

Cain harbored jealousy and anger in his heart after God rejected his offering. God warned Cain of the possible consequences of having such a resentful reaction. The implication to Cain was simple. If he could pull himself out of this rut—dumping negative emotions and changing his attitude—then both he and his offering would be accepted. God always provides a way out so that we can bear up under the temptation without giving in to sin (1 Cor. 10:13).

The lure of temptation would be a constant danger. Sin is described with animal-like qualities, “crouching at the door” (v. 7), and it is ready to pounce on anyone who attempts to pass by it. This same posture—crouching—is also used when referring to a lion (49:9). According to verse 7, sin desires Cain. Paralleled with Genesis 3:16, this verbiage in verse 7 suggests that sin wants to bond with humanity in the same manner husbands and wives bond with each other during sexual intimacy. To defeat such an illegitimate relationship, we must learn to be a master to sin and not be its companion.

God’s warning was threefold: (1) Sin is waiting to spring up in moments of jealousy and anger. (2) Sin wants to consume people’s lives. (3) Sin wants to dominate our actions. Cain could choose. However, he rejected God’s warning and refused to appropriately address the anger he had toward Abel.

### ***God Holds Me Accountable (Gen. 4:8-10)***

Just like an unruly child who sulks when reprimanded, Cain has a poor attitude. He acts out by going on a sin rampage, rejecting God’s way and refusing to do what is right. After becoming angry, Cain plots his brother’s murder. He doesn’t stop with premeditation. Cain follows through. His murder of Abel is the first homicide noted in history. The curse against Adam regarding human death was now a reality (see 2:17; 3:19).

When God confronted Cain and asked, “Where is your brother Abel?” Cain responded by lying and showing callousness toward his family member, “I don’t know. . . . Am I my brother’s guardian?” (v. 9). Cain was his brother’s guardian in a sense because he had an obligation to honor and protect him, not hate and kill him. What began as jealousy escalated to murder. Then lying and irreverence for God followed. The fall of man was in full effect. Years earlier, Cain’s parents tried to avoid admitting guilt when God questioned them (see 3:12-13). Cain followed suit. With no confession from Cain, God had no recourse but to hold him responsible. God cursed him (4:11). As a result, Cain experienced spiritual and physical departure from God’s presence.