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My Way or God's Way?

Key References: Genesis 4:1-12; *Patriarchs and Prophets,* chap. 5, pp. 71-79; *The Bible Story* (1994), vol. 1, pp. 73-86; Our Beliefs, nos. 19, 7, 8















power**text**

"If you do what is right, will you not be accepted? But if you do not do what is right, sin is crouching at your door; it desires to have you, but you must rule over it" (Genesis 4:7).

power**point**

Worship is a test of our faithfulness to God.

Suppose you are invited to your best friend's birthday party and you know exactly what gift to get for the birthday. It would take some effort to get (even though it wouldn't cost a lot), but it would show how much you care for the friendship. Or you could choose to give your friend a gift that you liked and was easy to get, just so you don't show up empty-handed. Would you prove to be a true friend if you reacted with indifference on your best friend's birthday? Consider the importance of our worship to God as you envision the story of Cain and Abel.

Much had changed since Adam and Eve had last walked and talked with the Creator in the Garden of Eden. Oh, how they wished they could see God face to face as in the past! With deep regret they remembered what they had lost as a result of their disobedience. All around them in nature they saw the signs of decline as consequence of their disobedience. The animals that once were peaceful had become violent. Thistles and weeds grew everywhere. The signs of decline and death were visible in plant, animal, and human life.

With the passage of time, Adam and Eve became parents. They taught their two sons about the Creator and about life in Paradise. Often the first family went to worship God at the entrance of the Garden of Eden. Cain and Abel remembered the anguish on their parents' faces as they tied the lamb and placed it on the stone altar. While Adam gashed the throat of a lamb they each felt deep sorrow. It was very sad to see the innocent animal die.

Sabbath

DO Do this week's activity on page 33.

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Sunday

READ Read Genesis 4:1-12 and this week's story, "My Way or God's Way"

LEARN Write the power text, Genesis 4:7, on a small index card that you could carry in your pocket and repeat during the week. Repeat it three times and start memorizing it.

PRAY Invite God into your heart and ask Him to help you make wise choices.

Monday

READ Read 1 Samuel 15:22.

THINK What are the things that keep you from being obedient to God's requirements?

WRITE In your Bible journal, rewrite today's text using your own words. Then write down the things that you need to give up in order to do what is pleasing to God.

PRAY Praise God for teaching you to live in obedience to Him.

Tuesday

READ Read Hebrews 11:4.

REFLECT What does this verse mean to you? What made the difference between Abel's sacrifice and Cain's offering?

SHARE What are some ways you could show your faith in God? Today, share with someone the difference faith makes in your life.

PRAY Pray for a family member who needs to accept Jesus by faith as his or her personal Savior.

"This lamb had to die because we disobeyed the Creator's command," Adam explained as Eve wiped the free flow of her tears. "God never stops loving us. He offered a solution to save us from the penalty of sin. A Redeemer will come and, like this lamb, will sacrifice His life for us. He is our only hope!"

As the years passed, the once-young children became young men, capable of making important decisions. They could now worship God on their own.

"Tomorrow is the big day!" said Abel one day as the brothers returned home from the fields. "I have chosen a newborn lamb from my flock. I will be ready to sacrifice to the Creator. Have you prepared your sacrifice, Cain?"

"Not yet. I don't see why it is such a big deal, Abel. Tomorrow morning I'll just fill my basket with some ripe fruits, and that will be my offering to God."

"But Cain," insisted Abel, his voice filled with concern, "you know what sacrifice is pleasing to God."

"All that matters is that we offer God a gift," said Cain with indifference. "I'll give God some of the fruits I harvested. I will choose the best fruits from my orchard."



"Cain, you know why the Creator wants us to sacrifice a lamb. This is the symbol of His death that will save us from sin," pleaded Abel.

Cain became angry. A shadow swept across his face. He felt rebuked by his younger brother.

"Stop telling me what to do, Abel!" His voice was irritated. "I don't want to hear your words of wisdom. After all, we have the freedom to worship God however we choose."

"My brother," pleaded Abel once again, "please use your freedom wisely. Remember our parents' sad story. If they would have obeyed . . ."



4

Wednesday

READ Read John 14:15.

REFLECT Notice that love always leads to obedience.

DO Choose to do something today that shows your love and obedience to your parents.

PRAY Ask God to teach you to love Him by walking in obedience to Him.

Thursday

READ Read Romans 12:1, 2.

REFLECT What does it mean to "offer your body as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God"?

DISCUSS Talk with a family member about ways you could offer God your "true and proper worship."

PRAY Thank God for His many blessings, and let your life be a reflection of your praise to Him.

Friday

READ Read Psalm 119:9-11 several times.

MEMORIZE In addition to your Bible reading, memorize Scripture passages that will help you choose what is right (i.e., Proverbs 1:8, 9; Micah 6:8; Matthew 7:12).

LEARN Repeat the power text by memory.

SING With your family, sing your favorite praise song.

PRAY Praise God for His Word, which teaches us how to serve and worship Him.

"Enough! I don't want to listen to you anymore!" interrupted Cain, his voice filled with rage as he turned around with fury and left.

The next day Abel offered to God a lamb sacrifice. Cain brought his load of ripe fruits and laid them on the stone altar. The contrast was striking. The significance was crucial. Abel recognized his need of forgiveness and accepted the sacrifice of the Redeemer. Cain in turn relied on the fruits of his labor as being



good enough, and he rejected God's forgiveness.

God honored Abel's obedience by sending fire from heaven to consume his lamb sacrifice. Yet God rejected Cain's fruit offering, which was proof of his disobedience. As Abel's love for God continued to grow, Cain continued to do what was right in his own eyes. He started envying his brother because the Creator received Abel's sacrifice favorably. In his rebellion, one sin led to another. It wasn't long before Abel became the victim of the hatred of his brother, who cruelly murdered him.

Two brothers who had the same upbringing, who were equally taught the distinction between right and wrong, and who enjoyed the same privileges! God's expectations were the same. One chose to worship God's way; the other chose to worship his own way. A simple test with eternal consequences that could be summarized in a few simple words:

How we worship God.



PUZZLE 4

WORSHIPPING GOD

Instructions: Match the words on the right to the correct meaning on the left. Take the first letter of each matched word and put it before the correct meaning in order to find what God requires.

____	What did Cain and Abel bring to God? (Genesis 4:3, 4)		intercede
____	What cried out to God? (Genesis 4:10, 11)		crush its head
____	Where would Cain be a "restless wanderer"? (Genesis 4:12)		Eden
____	What is the penalty for sin? (Romans 6:23)		evil
____	What does Jesus do for us? (Hebrews 7:25)		new
____	Cain lived in Nod, which is east of where? (Genesis 4:16)		blood
____	To "love one another" is what kind of command? (John 13:34)		offering
____	What would Adam and Eve's offspring do to the serpent? (Genesis 3:15)		earth
____	What is arrogance like? (1 Samuel 15:22-23)		death