



REFLECTIONS

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Then the Lord said to Cain, "Why are you angry? Why is your face downcast? 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 master it."

Genesis 4:6-7

Family Matter

Imagine two brothers, close in age, growing up on a ranch far from town and with no neighbors nearby. There were no other companions to share the day with, so they became not only brothers, but playmates. Wherever one of them went, the other was surely close behind. Whatever one of them dared to do, the other felt compelled to match. And as is often the case, a spirit of competition eventually grew between them—each one trying to outdo the other. But one of them always seemed to win. It was a family matter.

Scripture doesn't tell of the childhood of Cain and Abel but they must have grown up much like the brothers on the remote ranch. They were friends and playmates not by choice, but there were no other children around. They must have romped and chased and played just as any other young boys. It's easy to imagine Cain trying something new or going someplace he had never been with Abel tagging along right behind him. Whatever Cain did, Abel would do, but maybe Abel could do it better. If so, then over time ill feelings might have built between them. Then one day it became too much.

One day Cain brought some fruit from the land he had worked as a gift to God. Abel brought God a gift too. His gift was fat portions from the first born of his flock. Cain's gift was ordinary. Abel gave the best he had. God looked with favor on Abel's gift, but with disfavor on Cain's. To Cain it was a family matter, and one he could not take. So he lured his brother and childhood playmate into a field and killed him.

Cain had been outdone. His pride was hurt, he was humiliated, and he was angry. But Cain didn't get it. The real issue was not what Abel did, or the damage to Cain's pride. The issue was Cain's failure to give his best. That is what God asks us to do.

Sacrifice is not about self deprivation. Sacrifice calls us to give our best. Whether it is the possessions we have or the efforts we expend, when we give less than our best we invite sin into our lives. It came into Cain's. It can come into ours.

But we can master sin when we give our best to the Savior.

"You are the light of the world."

Richard +

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