

1.3

SERIES 1: IN THE BEGINNING CAIN AND ABEL

TRUTH ABOUT GOD ///

God expects us to give our best to Him.

SERIES AIM

God was intentional about His creation and the purpose it would serve, and the same can be said for the way He created you and me. God loves us, and He made us to thrive and live according to His perfect will.

BIBLICAL PASSAGE

Genesis 4:1-15;
Romans 7:14-20

LESSON BIG IDEA

I will offer God my best.

WHERE DO WE BEGIN? ///

Abel's worship ended up costing him everything. Real, genuine worship will cost us. Sacrifice is necessary for us to be in right standing with God. There is an old saying that is very true: "It's not sacrifice unless it costs you something." How many times have we offered God our leftovers? How many times have we offered Him something that wasn't a big deal for us to give up? A real sacrifice is difficult; it means telling ourselves "no" about something so that we can tell God "yes." We need to decide as Christians, "I will offer God my best." Jesus gave His very best for us; we owe Him our best in return.



WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE? ///

The following questions, devotions, and action points can be used any way that you feel comfortable. We suggest that you use a journal, your notes app on your phone, or even the spaces provided in this daily devotional book to take notes, write answers, and make lists. The purpose of this resource is simply to give you a space to interact with the Word of God and reflect on what you learn from that experience.

/// What do your daily choices say about your life?

/// What happens if you make no choices at all?

/// What are some hard choices you have made in order to give God your best?

/// Do you know how to give God your best?

DAILY DEVOTIONAL GUIDE ///

OUR SACRIFICE

☐ MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 20

Read Romans 7:14-20.

For we know that the law is spiritual: but I am carnal, sold under sin. For that which I do I allow not: for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I. If then I do that which I would not, I consent unto the law that it is good.

The writer wasn't confused about who he was and what sin had done to his heart and soul. He knew we are sinful, and when we sin, we become increasingly dirty and broken. Sometimes we are broken to the point that we no longer recognize right from wrong. Thankfully, we have been given the perfect solution to the problem of our sin. Through devotion to God and His teachings, we can renew our minds and reject the temptations preying on our fleshly and sinful nature. What may seem to be a sacrifice to us will be what sets us free. Through dedication to things like prayer and reading the Bible, and even doing devotions just like this one, each day we can reverse the effects that sin has on our lives.

Jr. High /// Make a list of some prayer requests you have. Ask friends or family for requests as well, and pray for these things every day this week.

Sr. High /// Think about some ways that sin changes people.

☐ TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 21

Read Genesis 2:8.

And the LORD God planted a garden eastward in Eden; and there he put the man whom he had formed.

It might seem simple, but this verse alone shows the depth of love God has for His creation. Likewise, it shows His good intentions toward us. You see, God could have made man, and left him there to fight for survival, unprotected from the weather or wild animals. But, instead, God made a home for His creation; a home plentiful in food and protected from anything unpleasant in the environment. In God's unfailing love, He created you and me just the way He intended us to be. And He placed us exactly where He meant us to be placed so we could begin to live out our story. But this isn't just any story; your life is the story God has written specifically for you. And even though it might hurt sometimes or maybe it won't always make sense, we can be certain that God placed us right here to care for us and watch His will for our lives come true.

Jr. High /// Think of three things you love about how God made you. These can be talents, appearance related, or emotional attributes.

Sr. High /// Write down five things you love about how God made you.

OUR SACRIFICE

☐ WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 22

Read Genesis 2:18.

And the LORD God said, It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him.

It's not God's plan for you to be alone. Right now, life might seem really confusing and emotional—maybe even to the extent that you aren't sure you want to deal with another day. But just like we read in yesterday's devotional, God's plan for you is not vague or impersonal. God's plan and love for you is very real, very specific, and intentional to who you are as a person. So even when we are lost and confused, or when we are feeling broken and uncertain, it's important to always look to God and listen to His words because He cares for us. Today might seem impossible, but God is making a way, and He will use the body of Christ to come alongside you and help you. He wants your tomorrow to be even better than today and bursting with even more life. Seek Him. Pray to Him. Talk to Him, and let Him change your perspective and heal your broken heart.

Jr. High /// In a journal or on a note card, write down a few of your favorite and most encouraging Bible passages. Put these verses in a place that you will see every morning before you start your day.

Sr. High /// If you have a phone, set three reminders throughout your day with encouraging Bible verses.

☐ THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 23

Read Genesis 4:3–5.

And in process of time it came to pass, that Cain brought of the fruit of the ground an offering unto the LORD. And Abel, he also brought of the firstlings of his flock and of the fat thereof. And the LORD had respect unto Abel and to his offering: But unto Cain and to his offering he had not respect. And Cain was very wroth, and his countenance fell.

Cain messed up, and it's safe to say he was bummed about it. Abel took the time, made the effort, and what he brought God was an incredible representation of sacrifice and devotion. But Cain, he settled for less than his best. Maybe he overslept. Maybe he forgot about the upcoming sacrifice; we honestly can't know his reasons or his heart, but the fact remains that Cain gave God less than He deserved. There are always moments in life when we are at a disadvantage and just can't get it together enough to give our situation everything we have. Normally, that is something we can write off and promise we will do better next time, but not with God. God loved us so much that He gave everything to save us. The least we can do is take the time to prioritize God and give Him our very best every day.

Jr. High /// Set up a place in your room (or outside) where you can be alone with God away from distractions. Pray there as often as you can this week.

Sr. High /// Set up a prayer closet, and make a point to pray there as often as you can for the rest of this week. Take time to journal after each prayer.

OUR SACRIFICE

☐ FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 24

Read Genesis 4:8.

And Cain talked with Abel his brother: and it came to pass, when they were in the field, that Cain rose up against Abel his brother, and slew him.

Cain let sin get ahold of him, and in his weakness, he killed his brother. There are times in our lives that we act quickly and without thinking, and most of the time we do so because of the sin in our lives. Sometimes we snap at someone who is annoying us, or we get angry with a friend or family member over something so small. It's embarrassing, and in that moment, it doesn't feel like we can make things better. Yet even when we look at the case of Cain and his sin, God showed him mercy. We should always try our best to be slow to anger (James 1:19), but when we find ourselves on the wrong side of a bad decision, all we can do is ask forgiveness and thank God for his sweet mercy and grace that cover our mistakes.

Jr. High /// What are some ways that we can grow our patience?

Sr. High /// Think about a time that you lost your temper and how that affected you and the people around you. How can we work on our patience?

☐ SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 25

Read Genesis 4:9.

And the LORD said unto Cain, Where is Abel thy brother? And he said, I know not: Am I my brother's keeper?

This verse reveals one of the most important themes of the Bible: to love your neighbor as you love yourself. Had Cain really known and loved God as much as he acted like he did, he would have understood what God was asking when He tried to locate Abel. God knew what Cain had done, and Cain's response made it clear that when he attacked Abel, he only cared about his own feelings and needs. When we think about sacrifice and relationship with God, many times what God is really asking us to do is to look out for people in need—individuals who are broken or hurting and need help from the people of God. When we as Christians can find the hurting and show them the love that God has shown us, we are living out God's perfect will for our lives.

Jr. High /// Make a list of some people you know who need Jesus. How can you share the gospel with them?

Sr. High /// Make a list of some people you know who need to know Jesus. List some ways you can connect with them. Also include one person you have not introduced yourself to yet, and try this week to start up a conversation.

