

CHAPTER 2

DEPRESSED CAIN

What is DEPRESSION? It is the state of feeling SAD, feeling down, gloomy, low in spirits, discouraged:



"I feel as though a dark cloud has settled over me."

In this chapter we are going to study a depressed person by the name of CAIN. We will find out the **cause** of his depression and we will learn God's **cure**.

The World's First Baby

Adam and Eve had a son and named him _____ (Genesis 4:1). Remember, Adam and Eve **became** sinners but Cain was **born** a sinner (compare Psalm 51:5). What about you? Did you **become** a sinner because you sinned or did you sin because you were **already a sinner** by birth?

Man's Way and God's Way

When Adam and Eve sinned they tried to cover their shame and sinfulness (Genesis 3:7). They made their own covering by the work of their own hands. God rejected this "fig leaf" covering. Can you think of ways that people try to cover up their sinfulness and shame today?

God's way is much better. God clothed Adam and Eve with _____ of _____ (Genesis 3:21). Where did God get these skins?

God was teaching our first parents something very important:

1. Man cannot cover himself (Genesis 3:7).
2. God must cover and clothe man (Genesis 3:21).
3. An innocent animal must die and its blood must be shed.
An innocent substitute must die.

Which Offering Pleases God?

Read Genesis 4:1-5. Do you think Adam and Eve ever told their sons about the fig leaves and the coats of skins?

What was Cain's occupation (Genesis 4:2)?

What was Abel's occupation (Genesis 4:2)?

What offering did Cain bring (Genesis 4:3)?

What offering did Abel bring (Genesis 4:4)?

Which offering did God accept (Genesis 4:4)? _____ Which offering did God reject (Genesis 4:5)? _____

See Hebrews 11:4---"By _____ Abel offered..." This implies that Cain's offering was not by F_____. God must have instructed Adam and Eve and their sons as to what kind of sacrifice would be pleasing to Him. By faith Abel obeyed the instruction he had received and brought the right kind of offering but Cain did not.

Suppose you were Cain. Even though you were a farmer and not a shepherd, what could you have done so that you could bring the right kind of offering? Do you think Abel would have traded a sheep for some fruits and vegetables?

Religion or Redemption

How does Cain's offering illustrate man's way of salvation (RELIGION)? How does Abel's offering illustrate God's way of salvation (REDEMPTION)? Correctly connect the following:

1. _____ Cain's offering

2. _____ Abel's offering

3. _____ Fig leaves

4. _____ Coats of skins

5. _____ Good works

6. _____ Isaiah 64:6

7. _____ Ephesians 1:7

8. _____ The Pharisee (Luke 18:10-12)

9. _____ The Publican or tax collector
(Luke 18:13)

10. _____ WHAT ABOUT YOU?

A. Man's Way--RELIGION

B. God's Way--REDEMPTION

Cain's Depression

When God rejected Cain's offering, two things happened (Genesis 4:5):

1. Cain was very _____ (angry, all burned up)
2. Cain's countenance (face) _____. This means he was sad and depressed. He felt terrible!



"I feel terrible! Why did this happen to me?"

If Cain had brought the right offering would he have been depressed? He **DID WRONG** and therefore he **FELT BAD**. To do badly is to feel badly. Wrong actions result in wrong feelings. And as we will learn, **FEELING BAD** does **not** **FIX THE WRONG**.

God's Cure

God spoke to Cain right away and God showed him that it was not necessary to be angry and it was not necessary to be depressed (see Genesis 4:6-7). God said to him, "If thou doest _____, shalt thou not be accepted?" (Genesis 4:7). This verse can be better translated as follows:

"IF YOU DO WELL (do right), WILL NOT YOUR FACE BE LIFTED UP?"

Cain's face had fallen (Genesis 4:5) but God gave Cain the cure for a fallen face! God told him how he could get a "FACE LIFT!" What must Cain do in order to have his face lifted up (to come out of his depression)? _____

God was saying, "IF YOU DO WELL YOU WILL FEEL WELL!" The key to feeling well is very simple: To **feel well** a person must **live well**.

Depression is not some strange power that suddenly overcomes a person. If this were true then there would be nothing we could do about it. God told Cain that there was something he could do about it: "DO WELL!"

Cain's Downward Cycle

Cain did not "do well." He did the opposite. He added sin upon sin! His problem got worse and worse. Notice the downward spiral:

HOW HE FELT

WHAT HE DID

He felt depressed (Gen. 4:5)

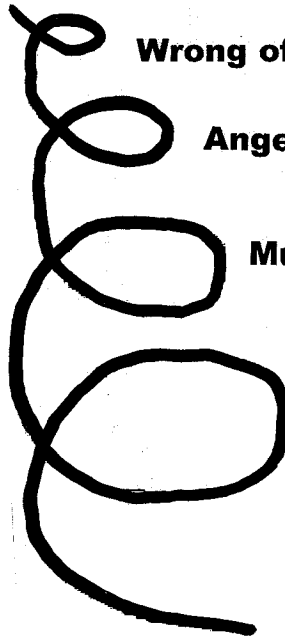
Wrong offering (Gen. 4:3)

Anger (Gen. 4:5)

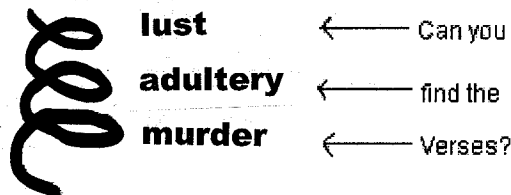
Murder (Gen. 4:8)

Lying (Gen. 4:9)

He felt terrible (Gen. 4:13)



Down, down, down he went—deeper and deeper into sin. Cain refused to "DO WELL." David also had a downward spiral (see 2 SAMUEL CHAPTER 11):



David stopped this downward spiral by CONFESSION and REPENTANCE (see Psalm 51 and Psalm 32). But Cain never confessed and never repented.

What do we learn about Cain in 1 John 3:12?

Feelings

Most people are led and controlled by their feelings and emotions, and the result is disastrous. When asked, "Why did you do that?" the common answer is, "Because I felt like it!"

Imagine yourself sound asleep enjoying all the relaxing comforts of dream-land. Suddenly you hear the dreaded buzz of the alarm clock. Do you feel like getting up or do you feel like shutting off the alarm and resting for another hour or two? You know that getting up is the right thing to do because there are things that you need to do. And so you get up even though you really feel like staying in bed. After you are up and around awhile you begin to feel differently, and you are glad that you **acted against your feelings**.

If you had followed your feelings and slept in, then later you would have felt terrible because you would have failed to do what you were supposed to have done (because of your laziness). You could have done these things if you had gotten up with the alarm, but since you slept in, it is now too late and you feel badly about it.

Every day is filled with many decisions that must be made on the basis of obedience to God rather than following one's feelings. There is much that we do not feel like doing. Here are two ways to live: One way says, "I will live according to feeling and do what I feel like doing." This is living according to FEELING. The other way says, "I will live as God says. I will act according to what is right rather than according to how I feel. Instead of just doing what I feel like doing, I will use my mind and decide to trust in God's Word." This is living according to FAITH (doing what God says in His Word). Which way shall we live? By FEELING or by FAITH?

Read Romans 15:1-3 and notice the word "PLEASE" (or "PLEASED") in each of the verses. If we should do what we naturally FEEL like doing, whom would we please?

The Hungry Servant

Jesus gave a helpful illustration in Luke 17:7-8. Here is a servant who has worked up a big appetite laboring in the field. He has been ordered by his master to prepare and serve the meal, and only after this is done may he eat and drink himself. As he savors the aroma of the food that he is preparing, what do you think his FEELINGS tell him to do?

_____ Thus he must make a choice: "Should I follow my feelings and enjoy this food now or should I do what I have been commanded to do?" What choice did he make (Luke 17:9)? _____ Later, after his master had finished eating, the servant could enjoy his food with the inner satisfaction and delight of knowing he had done right and that he had done the will of his master. And by this time he **really** would be hungry and the food would be even more enjoyable!

Let's learn the lesson well: **WE MUST OBEY OUR LORD AND MASTER WHETHER WE FEEL LIKE IT OR NOT! Obey God now and good feelings will come later.** I must do what pleases God by obeying His Word. I must have a healthy response and love towards others which shows itself in self-sacrificing actions (giving of myself for others). Pleasing God and loving others results in **GOOD FEELINGS** (the satisfaction and fulfillment that comes from doing what is right and obeying God).

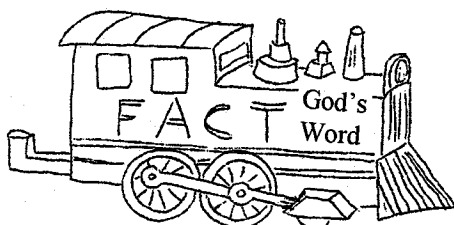
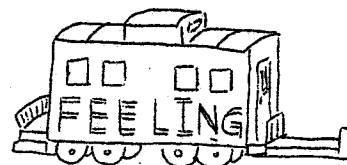
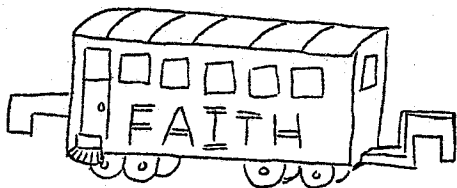
The Light on the Dashboard

People feel bad because of **bad behavior** (not living in obedience to God's Word). Bad feelings should **alert us** to the fact that something is wrong with our behavior! Bad feelings are like the red warning light on the dashboard flashing out at us telling us that something is wrong (that I am not believing God and I am not doing what He says). What must a person do to fix the problem? Should he take a hammer and smash the red light on the dashboard? Obviously not! He must get out of the car and lift up the hood to see what is wrong. His problem is not with the light on the dashboard. The light is working quite well and doing just what it is supposed to do. He is thankful for the light; it has warned him early enough to do something about the real problem.

The real problem, in terms of the person who has bad feelings, is that there are certain areas in his life where he is not doing what God has said. It is this **sinful disobedience** which has caused the bad feelings. To have good feelings, the person must do **W** _____ (Genesis 4:7), that is, he must do what is right and what God has told him to do!

Right living results in good feelings. Wrong living results in sadness, guilt, worry, sorrow, depression, anger, etc. If I am feeling bad, this should alert me to the fact that I may not be living according to God's Word (unless the bad feeling resulted from a physical problem such as sickness, depression caused by physical problems such as a chemical imbalance of the brain, etc.).

Let's learn the lesson that Cain failed to learn: **IF YOU DO WELL, SHALL NOT YOUR FACE BE LIFTED UP?**



What is the proper order and why?