

VBC
Pastor Jay Messenger
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Genesis 4:1-8

“Fight or Flight?”

Objective: *Everyone can fight and flee temptation by mastering four principles...*

Opener: “Claude” and the Snake...

- * Power trip for me...I was his Master...
- * Ever felt like something has "Mastered" you? Areas of struggle/"one step forward/two back"
- * If you could change that one area of your life...what would it be? What would it take?
- * Answer to the question, we must go back to the beginning...

Read Genesis 4:1-6

- * Offering...was a "gift" and act of worship by the brothers...
- * Why was Abel's better...**Hebrews 11:4**...by faith and with right motivation
- * Cain got angry...word means "to glow or blaze up"...**like glowing coals in a woodstove...**

God confronts Cain and we get some key insights on how to deal with temptation in our life...

Read Genesis 4:6-8

The description of Cain's sin (anger) key to this passage...

- Personification is powerful here...Sin is described as a ferocious beast...
- Key Hebrew words:
 - Crouch ("Rawbats") means to "prowl/lurk"
 - Desire-- "Violent craving"...
 - Master--"Rule over" (put a leash on you and drag you around)

Illustration: Zoo...little kid, leopard pacing, watching with deep intensity, craving to pounce...

Do you see the sin in your life that way? Do you take it that seriously? We need to because...

Principle 1# - Acknowledge...we're powerless to master temptation on our own...

Don't handle temptation effectively because we don't give it its proper due...

- All too often we think we can ignore it, minimize it, tolerate it and get away with it...
 - Like Cain...Pride..."I can handle this"...shrugs off God's intervention...
- Sin is dangerous...it never stays the same...it always grows and becomes powerful... it can destroy us...

See all the time...marriages destroyed by selfishness, internet pornography leads to addiction, critical nature that destroys friendships, a career that consumes someone's entire life...

Stop pretending we have our acts together...and realize we're in over our heads

Quote: Ron Mehl

"I've concluded that the people who move in real strength and power in this world, the people who God loves to exalt, are those people who understand they are overmatched in this life *and know it*. It is those who don't know it or refuse to acknowledge it who will eventually find themselves in deep trouble."

- "God Works the Night Shift" – p.198

Principle #2 - Act...on God's warnings...

Gen 4:7...Cain ignored God's warning...

Illustration: Driving Budget Truck Under Children's Village Skybridge

- * I ignored the warnings and it got me in big trouble...
- Do you do that? Do you listen to or ignore the warnings signs God gives you?
- At key times, God will intervene in our lives to warn us/protect us from making a bad choice...
- * Something a spouse says...a comment a friend makes...something we read in Scripture...something the Spirit brings to mind in a quiet moment...

Key to handling temptation is to flee it...by heeding and acting on the warnings God gives us...

Principle #3 - Access...God's Alternatives...

Gen 4:7...God gives Cain an alternative...a way out...a second chance...to offer the sacrifice with the right attitude...the right heart...and he does it in the heat of the moment...

- God gives us alternatives too...He promises in advance to give us a "way out" of our temptation...

Read 1 Corinthians 10:13...

When we face temptation, God always provides an exit...

Quote: Max Lucado....

"Watch. Stay alert. Keep your eyes open. When you see sin coming, duck. When you anticipate an awkward encounter, turn around. When you sense temptation, go the other way..."

- "No Wonder They Call Him Savior" – p.152

Part of Christian maturity is training ourselves to recognize and respond to the alternatives, "the ways out" that God gives us when we are tempted to sin...

Principle #4 - Attack...with Prayer and the Word of God...

We know we're going to be tempted...we often know in advance when those times are going to be...

- Do you pray about those situations? Do you attack them with prayer?

We have an additional advantage Cain didn't...we have the Word of God...

- More than a set of instructions, proper values, good perspective...it is alive and powerful in and of itself...

Hebrews 4:12...

Illustration: Mom/Dad's Open Heart Surgery

Something mystical happens when we absorb and internalize Word of God...

- Speaks to our deepest hurts, deepest struggles, deepest fears, "violent cravings"...and it changes us...

Do you believe that?

- Seen people walk away from addictions, abusive pasts, bitterness, family dysfunctions... deepest hurts of the soul...

Something incredibly powerful happens we combine prayer, the Word of God and deliberate choices on our part...we being to change in the most core part of our being...not a formula...it's a lifestyle...

- It's not easy, it's not quick, it usually takes a lot of time and it's usually incremental...but God can make it happen...

--Like Cain, we're in over heads...powerless to handle temptation on our own...

--Like Cain, God will warn us when we're getting into a bad situation...

--Like Cain, God will provide a way out for us when we do get tempted...

--But that's where the similarities need to end...

--We don't have to end up like Cain did...

--We don't have to be mastered by sin...