

## Genesis 4:8-15—It's God's kindness that leads us to repentance

### Memory Verse

**Genesis 3:15 NKJV (God speaking to satan)**

**And I will put enmity between you [satan] and the woman, and between your seed [the antichrist] and her Seed [the Messiah]; He [the Messiah] shall bruise your [satan's] head, and you [satan] shall bruise His [the Messiah's] heel."**

### Outline:

1. Sin's desire is for you—revision (v 7)
2. The very first murder (v 8)
3. The loving heart of the Father (v 9a)
4. The danger of unforgiveness that leads to a root of bitterness (v 9b)
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6. Abel's blood cries out for vengeance (v 10)
7. The contrasting messages of Jesus's blood and Abel's blood (v 10)
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9. Cain complains about his punishment—the difference between remorse or regret and true repentance (v 13-15)
10. It's God's kindness that leads us to repentance—worldly sorrow vs godly sorrow

### **Genesis 4:1-15 NKJV**

**Now Adam knew Eve his wife, and she conceived and bore Cain, and said, "I have acquired a man from the LORD." <sup>2</sup> Then she bore again, this time his brother Abel. Now Abel was a keeper of sheep, but Cain was a tiller of the ground. <sup>3</sup> And in the process of time it came to pass that Cain brought an offering of the fruit of the ground to the LORD. <sup>4</sup> Abel also brought of the firstborn of his flock and of their fat. And the LORD respected Abel and his offering, <sup>5</sup> but He did not respect Cain and his offering. And Cain was very angry, and his countenance fell.**

**<sup>6</sup> So the LORD said to Cain, "Why are you angry? And why has your countenance fallen? <sup>7</sup> If you do well, will you not be accepted? And if you do not do well, sin lies at the door. And its desire is for you, but you should rule over it."**

**<sup>8</sup> Now 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 killed him.**

**<sup>9</sup> Then the LORD said to Cain, "Where is Abel your brother?" He said, "I do not know. Am I my brother's keeper?"**

**<sup>10</sup> And He said, "What have you done? The voice of your brother's blood cries out to Me from the ground. <sup>11</sup> So now you are cursed from the earth, which has opened its mouth to receive your brother's blood from your hand. <sup>12</sup> When you till the ground, it shall no longer yield its strength to you. A fugitive and a vagabond you shall be on the earth."**

**<sup>13</sup> And Cain said to the LORD, "My punishment is greater than I can bear! <sup>14</sup> Surely You have driven me out this day from the face of the ground; I shall be hidden from Your face; I shall be a fugitive and a vagabond on the earth, and it will happen that anyone who finds me will kill me."**

**<sup>15</sup> And the LORD said to him, "Therefore, whoever kills Cain, vengeance shall be taken on him sevenfold." And the LORD set a mark on Cain, lest anyone finding him should kill him.**

## **1. Sin's desire is for you (revision)**

**Genesis 4:7 NKJV**

**“If you do well, will you not be accepted? And if you do not do well, sin lies at the door. And its desire is for you, but you should rule over it.”**

Never forget the destructive power of sin. Both sin and satan only want to kill, steal, and destroy (see John 10:10). Resisting sin always leads to long term blessing, contentment, peace, and satisfaction. Giving into sin always leads to long term pain, guilt, and discontent—what the bible calls “death” in Romans 8:5-6.

How do we prevent sin from controlling us? There is only one way. We must first submit our will to God's will, willingly choosing to only be and do who God wants us to be and do. The only other choice is to be submitted to sin and satan. There is no such thing as a free man; the only free choice we have is to whom we will submit ourselves to as slaves to obey—sin or God.

Romans 6:16 NLT

Don't you realize that you become the slave of whatever you choose to obey? You can be a slave to sin, which leads to death, or you can choose to obey God, which leads to righteous living.

## **2. The very first murder**

**Genesis 4:8 NKJV**

**Now 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 killed him.**

Cain committed premeditated murder. He lulled and lured Abel with friendly talk to a deserted place where nobody would see them, then killed his unsuspecting brother.

Here we see the downward spiral and rapid spread of sin. In only one generation, there is murder, and that among close family. How this would have broken Adam and Eve's hearts, especially as they probably, at least initially, might have thought or hoped that Cain might be the promised Saviour that would defeat satan. Instead he turns out to be a cold blooded murderer who murdered another one of their sons. Well, they did choose to “know” evil.

### ***Sin, the cause of dysfunctional families***

“Sibling rivalry among brothers is another theme in Genesis. Ishmael persecuted Isaac; Jacob left home so Esau couldn't kill him; and Joseph's brothers intended to kill him but decided to sell him as a slave. When sin entered the human race, it gave us dysfunctional and fractured families, and only the Lord can put families together again.” (Warren W. Wiersbe)

What does this tell us? The only solution to dysfunctional families and marriages is for everyone to submit themselves to God. Only then will we experience the selfless and patient love of God working in and through us.

### 3. The loving heart of the Father

Genesis 4:9a NKJV

Then the LORD said to Cain, “Where is Abel your brother?”

*God knew where Abel was, but was giving Cain a chance to repent.* Right after Cain sinned, God was right there convicting him of that sin. This is what God does with everybody—the Holy Spirit convicts all mankind of sin (see John 16:8-11). *This shows the loving heart of the Father towards His creation, that He cares about each and every person—He will warn, convict, remind, and give us every opportunity to repent—this is evidence of His love for us.*

However, He has also given us free will. At any stage of our journey we can choose to soften our heart towards God and repent. But many unbelievers will not ever do this, and will eventually, by their own choice, like Cain, leave the presence of the Lord to never return again (see v 16). This is a picture of someone continually rejecting the conviction of God’s Spirit and ending up in Hell forever.

For us as believers, the conviction of sin process is the same, but the eventual result will be the opposite to that of Cain. Every believer will eventually have a soft heart towards God, even if it is only after they have died. This is because our new nature loves God, making us by nature soft towards God, even if temporarily we can be hard towards God because we choose to allow our sinful nature to control or dominate us.

All of God’s discipline is designed to bring us to a place of repentance, to soften our hard hearts, to make us more reliant on Him. Parents should copy the Father’s motive and method when disciplining their children (and also when we have to discipline each other). Instead of accusing, we should use questions to give the other person a chance to repent, with the goal being reconciliation.

“There’s a definite parallel between God’s dealings with Cain in Genesis 4 and His dealings with Adam and Eve in chapter 3. In both instances, the Lord asked questions, not to get information (for He knows everything) but to give the culprits opportunity to tell the truth and confess their sins. In both instances, the sinners were evasive and tried to cover up what they had done, but both times God brought their sins out into the light and they had to admit their guilt.” (Warren W. Wiersbe)

Hebrews 12:5-13 NLT

And have you forgotten the encouraging words God spoke to you as His children? He said, “My child, don’t make light of the LORD’s discipline, and don’t give up when He corrects you. <sup>6</sup> **For the LORD disciplines those He loves, and He punishes each one He accepts as His child.**”

<sup>7</sup> As you endure this divine discipline, remember that God is treating you as His own children. Who ever heard of a child who is never disciplined by its father? <sup>8</sup> If God doesn’t discipline you as He does all of His children, it means that you are illegitimate and are not really His children at all. <sup>9</sup> Since we respected our earthly fathers who disciplined us, shouldn’t we submit even more to the discipline of the Father of our spirits, and live forever?

<sup>10</sup> For our earthly fathers disciplined us for a few years, doing the best they knew how. **But God’s discipline is always good for us, so that we might share in His holiness. <sup>11</sup> No discipline is enjoyable while it is happening—it’s painful! But afterward there will be a peaceful harvest of right living for those who are trained in this way.**

<sup>12</sup> So take a new grip with your tired hands and strengthen your weak knees. <sup>13</sup> Mark out a straight path for your feet so that those who are weak and lame will not fall but become strong.

## 4. The danger of unforgiveness that leads to a root of bitterness

Genesis 4:9b NKJV

Then the LORD said to Cain, “Where is Abel your brother?” He said, “I do not know. Am I my brother’s keeper?”

v 9 He [Cain] said, “I do not know. Am I my brother’s keeper?”: The answer of course should be “yes”. However, the answer in Cain’s mind was “no”. Notice just how quickly sin hardened Cain’s heart when he refused to repent, how rapidly depression and anger escalated into physical violence and a complete lack of empathy.

“Sin says, “I don’t care about him. He hurt me. I don’t care about her. She offended me. I don’t care about them. They wronged me.” That explains how, after killing Abel, Cain could say, “I don’t care about him. I’m not his keeper.” If there is someone in your life whom you would just as soon disappear, be careful because you’re walking in the way of Cain (Jude 11). Your hostility and bitterness towards him or her will alter the course of your life as surely as Cain’s did his.” (Jon Courson)

Hebrews 12:14-15 NLT

Work at living in peace with everyone, and work at living a holy life, for those who are not holy will not see the Lord. <sup>15</sup> Look after each other so that none of you fails to receive the grace of God. Watch out that no poisonous root of bitterness grows up to trouble you, corrupting many.

Hebrews 3:12-13 AMP

[Therefore beware] brethren, take care, lest there be in any one of you a wicked, unbelieving heart [which refuses to cleave to, trust in, and rely on Him], leading you to turn away and desert or stand aloof from the living God.

<sup>13</sup> But instead warn (admonish, urge, and encourage) one another every day, as long as it is called Today, that none of you may be hardened [into settled rebellion] by the deceitfulness of sin [by the fraudulence, the stratagem, the trickery which the delusive glamor of his sin may play on him].

Also notice here the corruption of religion—a pious religious act turns sour very quickly. This shows that Cain’s offering wasn’t done in faith—Cain’s religion was only an empty “fig leaf” or works based religion—only for show, self-gain, and self-glory.

*Cain is a murderer and a liar, just like his father the devil*

One more thing to notice is that Cain is not just a murderer, but also a compulsive liar. He lied to his brother to get him to come out to the field or wilderness with him. He lied to God when God asked where his brother was. Finally, Cain lied to himself when he thought that he could murder his brother and actually get away with it. Lying is the opposite of repentance—instead of bring the sin out into the light by owning up to it, we do our best to cover it up, and thus one sin leads to another and we go deeper and deeper into sin.

1 John 3:12-13 NLT

We must not be like Cain, who belonged to the evil one and killed his brother. And why did he kill him? Because Cain had been doing what was evil, and his brother had been doing what was righteous. <sup>13</sup> So don’t be surprised, dear brothers and sisters, if the world hates you.

John 8:44 NLT

For you are the children of your father the devil, and you love to do the evil things he does. He was a murderer from the beginning. He has always hated the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he lies, it is consistent with his character; for he is a liar and the father of lies.

## **5. The believer's relationships with other believers is a mirror of their relationship with God**

v 9 He [Cain] said, "I do not know. Am I my brother's keeper?": It's so true that our relationships with our physical family and our spiritual family (our brothers and sisters in Christ) are an accurate representation of the status of our relationship with God. Warren Wiersbe explains this well:

"We can't separate our relationship with God from our relationship with our brothers and sisters. (That includes our natural brothers and sisters as well as our brothers and sisters in the Lord.) An unforgiving spirit, such as possessed Cain, hinders worship and destroys our fellowship with God and God's people (Matt. 5:21–26; 6:14–16). It's better that we interrupt our worship and get right with a brother than to pollute our sacrifice because we have a bad spirit within.

Murder (v. 8). Anger is a powerful emotion that can lead to violence and even murder. Jesus taught that anger in the heart is the moral equivalent of murder with the hands (Matt. 5:21–26). Every year angry drivers cause accidents that kill 28,000 people on the U.S. highways, and angry people who have been fired from their jobs have killed hundreds of innocent people. Had Cain heeded God's warning and accepted His gracious invitation (Gen. 4:7), he would never have become a murderer.

How soon after his worship was rejected did Cain entice his brother away from home and kill him? Was it on the same day, or did he brood over the matter a few days? He probably murdered his brother in his heart many times before he actually committed the deed. He was envious of his brother because of his relationship with God (1 John 3:12), and yet Cain was unwilling to get right with God. When we hate others, it's a sign we're not walking in the light (1 John 2:9–11) and that we don't have God's love in our hearts (1 John 3:10–16)." (Warren W. Wiersbe)

Matthew 5:21-24 AMP

**You have heard that it was said to the men of old, You shall not kill, and whoever kills shall be liable** to and unable to escape the punishment imposed by the court. [Exodus 20:13; Deuteronomy 5:17, 16:18]

<sup>22</sup> **But I say to you that everyone who continues to be angry with his brother or harbours malice (enmity of heart) against him shall be liable** to and unable to escape the punishment imposed by the court; and whoever speaks contemptuously and insultingly to his brother shall be liable to and unable to escape the punishment imposed by the Sanhedrin, and whoever says, You cursed fool! [You empty-headed idiot!] shall be liable to and unable to escape the hell (Gehenna) of fire.

<sup>23</sup> **So if when you are offering your gift at the altar you there remember that your brother has any [grievance] against you,** <sup>24</sup> **Leave your gift at the altar and go. First make peace with your brother, and then come back and present your gift.**

1 John 3:11-18 NLT

**This is the message you have heard from the beginning: We should love one another.** <sup>12</sup> **We must not be like Cain, who belonged to the evil one and killed his brother.** And why did he kill him? Because Cain had been doing what was evil, and his brother had been doing what was righteous. <sup>13</sup> So don't be surprised, dear brothers and sisters, if the world hates you.

<sup>14</sup> If we love our brothers and sisters who are believers, it proves that we have passed from death to life. But a person who has no love is still dead. <sup>15</sup> **Anyone who hates another brother or sister is really a murderer at heart. And you know that murderers don't have eternal life within them.**

<sup>16</sup> We know what real love is because Jesus gave up his life for us. So we also ought to give up our lives for our brothers and sisters. <sup>17</sup> If someone has enough money to live well and sees a brother or sister in need but shows no compassion—how can God’s love be in that person?

<sup>18</sup> **Dear children, let’s not merely say that we love each other; let us show the truth by our actions.**

Cain was religious, but unsaved. Again, the way of Cain is empty religion, religion that pretends to worship God one day, but then murders others the next. Put another way, the way of Cain is an attitude of bitterness, hatred, and unforgiveness, covered with a thin layer of good works to hide the ugly reality that lurks inside (a Sunday only Christian or false convert).

## **6. Abel’s blood cries out for vengeance**

**Genesis 4:10 NKJV**

**And He said, “What have you done? The voice of your brother’s blood cries out to Me from the ground.**

Numbers 35:29-34 describes how the blood spilled by unpunished murders defiles the ground—because there is no justice. Here God is saying, Abel’s blood cries out for vengeance, for justice.

Numbers 35:29-34 NLT

“All murderers must be put to death, but only if evidence is presented by more than one witness. No one may be put to death on the testimony of only one witness. <sup>31</sup> Also, you must never accept a ransom payment for the life of someone judged guilty of murder and subject to execution; murderers must always be put to death. <sup>32</sup> And never accept a ransom payment from someone who has fled to a city of refuge, allowing a slayer to return to his property before the death of the high priest. <sup>33</sup> This will ensure that the land where you live will not be polluted, for murder pollutes the land. And no sacrifice except the execution of the murderer can purify the land from murder. <sup>34</sup> You must not defile the land where you live, for I live there myself. I am the LORD, who lives among the people of Israel.”

God here is both grieved and angry. God is a holy God who hates sin, but also a loving God who desires to forgive guilty sinners. I imagine that God’s words, **“What have you done?”** must have been said with an anguished voice, a voice mixed with sadness and righteous indignation/anger (a good example of how to “speak the truth in love”). Why? Because God knows that He must now discipline Cain, and God does not enjoy causing or allowing others to suffer, even if it for their own good.

Judges 10:11-16 NLT

The LORD replied, “Did I not rescue you from the Egyptians, the Amorites, the Ammonites, the Philistines, <sup>12</sup> the Sidonians, the Amalekites, and the Maonites? When they oppressed you, you cried out to Me for help, and I rescued you. <sup>13</sup> Yet you have abandoned Me and served other gods. So I will not rescue you anymore. <sup>14</sup> Go and cry out to the gods you have chosen! Let them rescue you in your hour of distress!”

<sup>15</sup> But the Israelites pleaded with the LORD and said, “We have sinned. Punish us as You see fit, only rescue us today from our enemies.” <sup>16</sup> Then the Israelites put aside their foreign gods and served the LORD. **And He was grieved by [could no longer endure] their misery.**

## 7. The contrasting messages of Jesus's blood and Abel's blood

Genesis 4:10 NKJV

And He said, "**What have you done? The voice of your brother's blood cries out to Me from the ground.**"

v 9 **The voice of your brother's blood cries out to Me from the ground:** There is a contrast between the blood of Abel which cries out for justice or vengeance, and that of the blood of Jesus, which cries out "forgiven".

Hebrew 12:24 NLT

You have come to Jesus, the One who mediates the **New Covenant** between God and people, and to the sprinkled blood, **which speaks of forgiveness instead of crying out for vengeance like the blood of Abel.**

The focus of the New Covenant is the forgiveness that is available to all people as a direct result of the shedding of the blood of Jesus—the literal or actual substitutionary atonement or payment for all the sins of all mankind.

*Don't take God's grace for granted*

However, even though God's promise to those who have both repented and believed is to forgive all their sins, past, present, and future, it is not a licence to sin. Yes we have forgiveness by the blood of Jesus. But we also serve a holy God, who will discipline us in the here and now for our own good. Look at how the Hebrews passage continues after reassuring us that we have forgiveness through the blood of Jesus.

Hebrews 12:25-29 NLT

Be careful that you do not refuse to listen to the One who is speaking. For if the people of Israel did not escape when they refused to listen to Moses, the earthly messenger, we will certainly not escape if we reject the One who speaks to us from heaven! <sup>26</sup> When God spoke from Mount Sinai his voice shook the earth, but now he makes another promise: "Once again I will shake not only the earth but the heavens also." <sup>27</sup> This means that all of creation will be shaken and removed, so that only unshakable things will remain.

**<sup>28</sup> Since we are receiving a Kingdom that is unshakable, let us be thankful and please God by worshiping him with holy fear and awe. <sup>29</sup> For our God is a devouring [consuming] fire.**

It's not a threat that, "if you are not a good boy then you will go to hell". Rather, the message is, "Don't take God's grace for granted". Yes, as a believer you will definitely go to heaven when you die. However, there will still be consequences while we still live down here. Knowingly and deliberately disobeying God is mocking Him, just like we mock our parents when we knowingly disobey them. Paul makes this clear when he writes to believers in his letter to the Galatians.

Galatians 6:7-10 NLT

**Don't be misled [deceived]—you cannot mock the justice of God.** You will always harvest what you plant. <sup>8</sup> Those who live only to satisfy their own sinful nature will harvest decay and death from that sinful nature. But those who live to please the Spirit will harvest everlasting life from the Spirit. <sup>9</sup> So let's not get tired of doing what is good. At just the right time we will reap a harvest of blessing if we don't give up. <sup>10</sup> Therefore, whenever we have the opportunity, we should do good to everyone—especially to those in the family of faith.

## 8. God disciplines Cain

**Genesis 4:11-12 NKJV**

**So now you are cursed from the earth, which has opened its mouth to receive your brother's blood from your hand. <sup>12</sup> When you till the ground, it shall no longer yield its strength to you. A fugitive and a vagabond you shall be on the earth."**

Cain thought that he could sin and get away with it, but he found out the hard way that **"you cannot mock the justice of God"**. Cain deserved to die, but instead God gives him a life sentence. Firstly, he would never be able to grow food for himself (**When you till the ground, it shall no longer yield its strength to you**). Secondly, Cain would always be homeless, a wanderer (**A fugitive and a vagabond you shall be on the earth**).

"So now you are cursed from the earth: The curse upon Cain was that Adam's curse would be amplified in regard to him. If bringing forth food from the earth would be hard for Adam (Genesis 3:17–18), it would be impossible for Cain (who was a farmer). If Adam were driven from Eden (Genesis 3:24), Cain would find no resting-place on all the earth (a fugitive and a vagabond you shall be on the earth)." (David Guzik)

The effect of this curse on Cain was twofold. Firstly, it would constantly remind Cain of his wrongdoing, the intention being to encourage Cain to come to his senses and repent. Secondly, he would be a warning or example to others, that if they murdered someone, then there would be consequences.

## 9. Cain complains about his punishment—the difference between remorse or regret and true repentance

**Genesis 4:13-15 NKJV**

**And Cain said to the LORD, "My punishment is greater than I can bear! <sup>14</sup> Surely You have driven me out this day from the face of the ground; I shall be hidden from Your face; I shall be a fugitive and a vagabond on the earth, and it will happen that anyone who finds me will kill me."**

**<sup>15</sup> And the LORD said to him, "Therefore, whoever kills Cain, vengeance shall be taken on him sevenfold." And the LORD set a mark on Cain, lest anyone finding him should kill him.**

v 13 **And Cain said to the LORD, "My punishment is greater than I can bear!:** Cain is completely self-focused. All he can think about is himself. As we learned last time, sin is selfish, and the more we give into sin, the more selfish we become. We see this is Cain's life. He didn't care about Abel, nor about his parents, brothers and sisters, and God, were affected by his heinous crime. Below are some comments from various commentators which help us to better understand how sin has affected Cain.

"Cain didn't say, "Father forgive me." He said, "My punishment is not fair." Cain remained in his cursed condition because he chose to be mad rather than to ask for mercy." (Jon Courson)

"Cain never repented of his sins; his words reveal only remorse and regret. He didn't say, "My *guilt* is more than I can bear." He was concerned only with his punishment, not with his character. If he wandered from place to place, he would be in danger; but if he stayed in one place, he would starve. The earth had turned against him, God had turned against him, and people would turn against him. Anybody Cain met would be a relative who might want to avenge Abel's murder. What could he do?

**By hating and murdering his brother and refusing to repent, Cain created for himself an intolerable life. He opened the door to temptation (4:7) and closed the door on his family, God, and his future.** No matter where he lived or what he did, Cain would always be a restless man for whom there was no remedy." (Warren W. Wiersbe)

“My punishment is greater than I can bear! Cain didn’t feel bad about his sin, but only about his punishment. This attitude did not end with Can; like him, many people feel only bad about their punishment, not their sin.” (David Guzik)

“One of the clearest marks of sin is our almost innate desire to excuse ourselves and complain if we are judged in any way.” (James M. Boice)

“One of the consequences of sin is that it makes the sinner pity himself instead of causing him to turn to God. One of the first signs of new life is that the individual takes sides with God against himself.” (Barnhouse)

May we be on guard against this sinful selfish attitude, as well as the tendency to lie about or coverup our sin—they always go together and will lead us deeper into sin. Continuing in sin will only make us more selfish. We will either create new and bigger lies, or, we will withdraw more and more from true christian accountability and fellowship, spending less time with other believers because we feel less and less comfortable around them, and find it harder and harder to be honest with them, as time goes by.

This withdrawal from Christian fellowship and accountability is often a slow and insidious process, an unconscious trend that happens slowly over time as our hearts get harder—but it’s exactly what Adam and Eve did when they tried to hide from God in the garden of Eden.

Remember, It only takes one small unconfessed sin to start us down the path of unrepentance, which will lead only to loneliness and emptiness. The believer, if he is to remain in fellowship with God and his brothers and sisters must keep short accounts with God and men—confessing sin as soon as it happens. The longer we leave confession, the harder it becomes, as there is more shame attached to the sin. God wants us to be free from this shame that produces this spiritual isolation, and we can be as soon as we confess and repent.

#### God show’s mercy to Cain by protecting him

v 14b-15 “...and it will happen that anyone who finds me will kill me.” <sup>15</sup> **And the LORD said to him, “Therefore, whoever kills Cain, vengeance shall be taken on him sevenfold.” And the LORD set a mark on Cain, lest anyone finding him should kill him.**

We don’t know what kind of protective mark God put on Cain which would protect him from his family avenging his brother Abel’s murder, but it worked. This is an act of mercy, because Cain was a cold blooded murder and he did deserve to die. But this demonstrates God’s mercy. God doesn’t punish us as our sins deserve (at least not in this life), *in the hope that we will be thankful and repent while there is still the opportunity to do so.*

Psalm 103:10 NLT

He does not punish us for all our sins; He does not deal harshly with us, as we deserve.

Think of all the times that God has dealt kindly with us, sometimes letting us off completely, and never punishing us as severely as we actually deserve. May we treat each other with the same mercy that God shows us. We can do this, because, even if the person doesn’t repent, and doesn’t respond to our forgiveness, then we know that God will keep them fully accountable when they stand before Him at the judgement (see Hebrews 9:27).

## 10. It's God's kindness that leads us to repentance

Cain's selfish unrepentant attitude that kept him wallowing in sin—like a pig in mud or like a dog eating its own vomit—is what the Bible calls *worldly sorrow*. This worldly sorrow is the selfish regret or remorse that we just learned about. In contrast, the Bible calls true or genuine repentance *godly sorrow*.

2 Corinthians 7:8-11 NLT

I am not sorry that I sent that severe letter to you, though I was sorry at first, for I know it was painful to you for a little while. <sup>9</sup> **Now I am glad I sent it, not because it hurt you, but because the pain caused you to repent and change your ways.** It was the kind of sorrow God wants his people to have, so you were not harmed by us in any way. <sup>10</sup> **For the kind of sorrow God wants us to experience leads us away from sin and results in salvation. There's no regret for that kind of sorrow. But worldly sorrow, which lacks repentance, results in spiritual death.**

<sup>11</sup> Just see what this godly sorrow produced in you! Such earnestness, such concern to clear yourselves, such indignation, such alarm, such longing to see me, such zeal, and such a readiness to punish wrong. You showed that you have done everything necessary to make things right.

Romans 2:4 NKJV

Or do you despise the riches of His goodness, forbearance, and longsuffering, not knowing that the goodness of God leads you to repentance?

Why should we, like Paul did, take the time to confront other believers who are sinning? *Because it shows that we actually care.* This is an important principle. We must speak the truth in love. If we don't speak the truth to someone, then we are not loving them. Love isn't a mushy warm feeling, it's a verb, an action word—love always does what is best for the other person, even if it doesn't feel good at the time. Real confronting love is hard—while mooshy wooshy warm and fuzzy feelings are easy. Remember that not doing anything when a person is caught up in a sin will only encourage them to continue down that destructive path, leading to much more pain and suffering for them—this will make them feel good at the time and avoid a confrontation, but it is not actually what is best for them. But when we, in love, gently convict them of their sin, then it gives them another opportunity to repent and come back into fellowship, both with God and other believers.

2 Corinthians 7:12 NKJV

Therefore, although I wrote to you, I did not do it for the sake of him who had done the wrong, nor for the sake of him who suffered wrong, **but that our care for you in the sight of God might appear to you.**

Proverbs 27:5-6 NKJV

Open rebuke is better than love carefully concealed.

<sup>6</sup> Faithful are the wounds of a friend, but the kisses of an enemy are deceitful.

Ephesians 4:14-16 NLT

Then we will no longer be immature like children. We won't be tossed and blown about by every wind of new teaching. We will not be influenced when people try to trick us with lies so clever they sound like the truth. <sup>15</sup> **Instead, we will speak the truth in love, growing in every way more and more like Christ,** who is the head of his body, the church. <sup>16</sup> He makes the whole body fit together perfectly. **As each part does its own special work, it helps the other parts grow, so that the whole body is healthy and growing and full of love.**

James 5:16 NLT

Confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The earnest prayer of a righteous person has great power and produces wonderful results.