

Body Bugs: Infections that hinder unity in the body – Week One

Body Bug #1: Anger

The Tragic Story of Cain and Abel – Genesis 4:1-16

Main Idea: When we are overcome by anger, we have a choice. Either we respond to God and find strength to work it through, or we give into rage. Rage will ruin our relationships, but right response to God restores them.

1. HOW ANGER STARTS – Anger begins when we compare ourselves with others, and we’re consumed by jealousy. Genesis 4:1-5

- A. Eve gives birth to two sons Cain and Abel. 4:1-2
- B. Cain and Abel present their sacrifices to God. 4:3-5a
 - 1. They learned about sacrifice from Adam. 3:21
 - 2. They have very different attitudes toward their offerings. 4:3-4a; Heb. 11:4; Jude 11
 - 3. God accepts Abel’s offering, but he rejects Cain’s offering. 4:4b-5a
- C. Cain is overcome with anger. 4:5b
 - 1. He is consumed with envy. Literally, “*Cain burned with a fury.*” Gen. 34:7; Jonah 4:1,9
 - 2. He allows his envy to build into bitter resentment. “*His countenance fell.*”
- D. *Application* – We need to understand God’s perspective on anger.
 - 1. Anger is not necessarily a sin. Ephesians 4:24a; John 2:14-17
 - 2. Anger must be aggressively managed in God’s power. Ephesians 4:24-25
 - 3. The first step in dealing with anger is to interpret it, and then commit it to God.

2. HOW ANGER DESTROYS – If our anger is unchecked, we will eventually commit some form of murder. Genesis 4:6-8

- A. God comes to Cain, encouraging him to repent (4:6-7). *We see three motivations...*
 - 1. 1st motivation – God sees our sin, and in grace, provides opportunities to repent. 4:6
 - 2. 2nd motivation – God promises rich fellowship with him, if we will repent. 4:7a
 - 3. 3rd motivation – If we give into sin, sin will master us. Sin is like a demon. 4:7b
- B. Cain doesn’t repent, but murders his brother in cold blood. 4:8
 - 1. Cain’s act is premeditated – NIV, “*Let’s go out into the fields...rose up...*”
 - 2. Cain’s act is brutal. “*He attacked...*”
 - 3. Cain’s act crushed the family.
- C. *Application* – We need to beware the problem of mental murder.
 - 1. Jesus teaches that mental murder is a very real problem. Matthew 5:21-22
 - 2. James and John teach that mental murder destroys relationships. Jam. 4:1-3
 - 3. There are many subtle ways that we commit mental murder: contempt, stonewalling, etc.

3. HOW ANGER HARDENS – If we fail to deal with anger, we become hardened, convinced that we’re right and others are wrong. Gen. 4:9-16

- A. *First step* – Cain denies responsibility for the murder. 4:9
 - 1. God seeks confession and repentance. “*Where is your brother Abel.*”
 - 2. Cain lies about his knowledge and is indifferent about his death.
- B. *Second step* – Cain complains bitterly about his punishment. 4:10-14
 - 1. God pronounces judgment on Cain. 4:10-12
 - 2. Cain, still unrepentant, complains against God. 4:13-14
- C. *Third step* – Cain spurns God’s grace. 4:15-16
 - 1. God grants his grace to Cain, giving him a sign of protection. 4:15
 - 2. Cain rejects God’s grace. 4:16