

Genesis 4:1-11
Paradise Lost 101**Warm Up**

Lesson 101 means the basic foundations you need to know before learning something else. What were the 101 foundations you had to learn for your job/career/ marriage / study or training?

Background and context

This passage is the first story that takes place outside Eden. It is often overlooked, yet it has significant foundational messages for us as Christians. Humanly speaking, the story does not make sense. Both men gave offerings, yet one is accepted and the other not. Abel's offering is accepted yet he ends up dying rather than being blessed by God. On first reading it is difficult to see why God accepted one offering and rejected the other. What was it about Cain's offering that was unacceptable? Was it the offering or the attitude of heart?

**Thinking it through: Main discussion/activity**

READ Genesis 4:1-11. What are the surprising things in the passage? What is new? What don't you really understand?

1. What were the offerings that Cain and Abel brought?
2. How does the text describe the difference in the way Cain and Abel offered gifts?
3. How do the phrases "*in the course of time...*" and "*Fat portions*" and "*firstborn*" reveal the different attitudes of heart between Cain and Abel?
4. **Read Hebrew 11:4.** Why was Abel's offering acceptable? What can we learn about what God desires from our offerings?
5. **Read v 6.** God warns Cain to try and prevent sin from entering his house. To control his desires. How do we know Cain failed to do this? What lessons can we learn from this?
6. It is interesting that the consequences of Cain's sin caused suffering to innocent Abel. How common is this in our world today? What lessons can we learn?
7. How do we know that God is concerned with justice and innocent blood being shed? What might He think of the world we live in today?
8. Look at the story again. Where do we see Jesus in this story? See **Hebrews 12:23**.

Discipleship and Application

9. Reflect on your own attitude to giving to God. Are we trying to pacify God with our offerings, and keep him on side or are we genuinely worshipping Him when we give?
10. How can we ensure our offerings are **FAT PORTIONS** and **FIRST**?

**Try to leave 15-20 mins to talk about prayer needs of the group and to pray.**

There are many creative ways of praying together: writing prayers, using candles as a focus, reading prayers or praying for each other in pairs.