

WORSE THAN MURDER? FRATRICIDE!

GENESIS 4:1-9

Homicide is the killing of one person by another while *suicide* is the act or an instance of intentionally killing oneself. Then there is *matricide*, the act of killing one's mother while *parricide* is the murdering of one's father. *Regicide*, of course, is the killing of a king. Another type of murder is *infanticide*, the act of killing an infant. But the very murder that the bible mentions first is *fratricide*, the act of killing one's brother. This seems to be the murder that father's all the rest. All brother killing does not involve the act of placing a switch blade into the heart of one for whom Jesus died. Slander, murmuring, gossip and back biting will kill them just as dead. Let us examine the personality trends that may lead one to *brother killing* and then, of course, avoid them.

1. When our worship becomes sloppy and we reject the blood covenant, we may be on the way to *fratricide*.

Notice in verse 3 of our text that as Cain brings an offering, not a sacrifice, he is rejecting the blood sacrifice that comes by faith. He and his brother Abel had the same "faith" instructions as given by God (*Hebrews 11:4*), but Cain despised them. You may have McDonald's your way in America, but you can't have worship your way anywhere (*John 4:23-24*). It seems to me that Cain introduced the very first doctrines of men into the worship of Jehovah God by offering what he thought was sufficient (*Matt. 15:8-9*). Let it be said that God wholeheartedly rejected his worship. See *Luke 23:34* also.

I wonder how many times God rejects our self-centered worship on the Lord's day as we imbibe in daydreaming while at the Lord's table. Isn't this really a rejection of the blood atonement? Aren't we told to remember the Lord's death until He returns? Sometimes we remember everything about last week or last year but the death of the One Who saved us. Don't we?

2. When we begin to covet someone else's relationship with God, we may be on the way to *fratricide*. (v. 4-5)

We simply cannot live someone else's successes. The victories of others are often difficult to enjoy. This is why we must strive to live the victorious life designed by God for each of us to live. Seeing from a distance the regard God had for Abel's offering, only brought Cain to the point of coveting. This extended itself to anger and Cain's total mental composer fell. He became a total mental reck.

3. When we start to love pouting and reject the God who accepts the obedient and threatens the disobedient, we may be on the way to *fratricide*. (v. 5)

One of the great American pastimes seems to be pouting. When things don't go our way, we just withdraw into our shell and cease to communicate as we begin a long period of silence.

Pouting never makes anything better, it only makes things worse. Anger ensues as the pout goes on and the entire demeanor of the pouter is changed for the worse. If we are pouting over the righteousness seen in others, then we eventually reject the very God who has praised that righteousness. Our pouting aids us in being more disobedient toward God. We almost dare God to scold us any longer. Let us hear the wise saying in **Proverbs 19:3**, “**The foolishness of man ruins his way, And his heart rages against the LORD.**”

4. When we are not only jealous of someone's achievements, but become envious, that is, when we don't want them to excel, we may be on the way to *fratricide*. (v. 5)

A serious survey was taken at the “Nobel Peace Prize Awards” in Stockholm, Sweden many years ago concerning the recipient of that prestigious honor. Most of the invited guests, relatives and close, personal friends of the winner, were questioned as to their feelings concerning the victor's merit in receiving the award. Almost without exception, each one said that the winner was the last one that they would have voted for. Some just can't revel in the victories of others. We often think that we should have been the honored one, or that so- and - so should have not been favored. What a pity on an already blemished human race.

When we begin to reason like this, we start to act like Cain who was of the Evil One because his deeds were evil. When the righteous show us up for what we really are, it is no time for murder, it is time for repentance. See 1 John 3:12. Disordered lives and every evil thing are the result of jealousy and selfish ambition (James 3:16). Jealousy also displays this horrible truth. We are not walking after the Spirit of the living God, but after the flesh of mere men (1 Cor. 3:3).

5. When we develop a very low opinion of scripture, we may be on the way to *fratricide*. (v. 6)

Verse 6 informs us that God spoke to Cain audibly when He said “Why are you angry and why has your countenance fallen?” Is there a major difference in the fact that God spoke to Cain face to face, so to speak, and God speaking to us through His word? That is, is there really a difference in His authority whether spoken or written? No, of course not. Faith came to Cain, as well as Abel, in just the same way as ours comes, by hearing (Romans 10:17). Hebrews 11:4 says “**By faith Abel offered to God a better sacrifice than Cain, through which he obtained the testimony that he was righteous, God testifying about his gifts, and through faith, though he is dead, he still speaks.**” Don't despise the faith of another. Instead, glory in it. It is one thing not to put much study time into God's word and

then not to take it very seriously, but to despise a brother who does diligently study and does obey his God to the letter, is the very trigger in killing him off in some way.

6. When we encourage ourselves to maintain our hot head, because “That’s just how I am”, we may be on the way to *fratricide*. (v. 6)

Proverbs 16:32 says, “He who is slow to anger is better than the mighty, And he who rules his spirit, than he who captures a city.” The longer the fuse, the better. The mightier man is enviably the one that is not the hot head. This may go against the culture in which we live, but it is no less true. We not only conquer ourselves with an even temper, but we eventually conquer many for the kingdom of Heaven (James 3:1ff). If not, then the results are disastrous. As Ephesians 4:31 says, “Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice.” Look at the scriptural progression: Bitterness (*pikria* refers to poison {Heb. 12:15, root of bitterness}, extreme wickedness), wrath (boiling fierceness) , anger, clamor (loud insulting language sounding like a raven’s cry), slander (wounding one’s reputation by evil reports), malice (malignity, that nature which is evil and suspects evil in others. Taking everything with an evil connotation) and finally as did Cain, murder.

7. When we stubbornly refuse the wise counsel of God’s word and reject God’s will, though He is pleading with us to do right, we may be on the way to *fratricide*. (v. 7)

You do not have to get up in the morning to go to Hell each day. Things can change. You can change. Sin is not inherently born within us. It is, like Cain’s sin, right at the doorway of life trying to force entry. Sin is not imposed upon us a lord over us, but we must be it’s master. Yes it desires us to be in its grasp, however, we always have a free choice to flee from it (James 4:7 Submit therefore to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you). We do not have to sin. It is not necessary for us to kill our brothers (Romans 4:12-14).

8. Finally, hatred, then fratricide and lying will ensue. (v. 8)

You see, those who kill their brothers are not born of God (1 John 3:15). There is no mistake about it , each and every person has a spiritual father or a father that lives in the spirit world. He is either God the Father or god the Devil. We are all a spiritual offspring of someone’s. Jesus vividly explains this phenomena in detail (John 8: 39-47).

9. If we are not our brothers keeper, then we are his killer. (v. 9)

When we are envious of one another, we fight and quarrel. When we lust over that which is not ours, we murder. You say to yourself, that leaves me out. I haven’t murdered any one ever. Oh, really? Galatians 5:15 “But if you bite and devour one another, take care lest you be consumed (destroyed) by one another.”

What is the remedy for all of this fratricide business? **1 Corinthians 4:5** Therefore do not go on passing judgment before the time, [but wait] until the Lord comes who will both bring to light the things hidden in the darkness and disclose the motives of [men's] hearts; and then each man's praise will come to him from God. (NASB) Jesus came to *impart* life. Taking the gospel out into the entire world is supposed to be a life giving, not life taking, responsibility. Let us resolve not to rub our brothers out, but to lift our brothers up. Let us determine not to assassinate even the characters of our brothers, but to build them up in the most holy faith. Is the old saying true? “The only army that shoots it’s wounded is the Lord’s army.”

C. Richard Chambers, Evangelist

John 15:13 "Greater love has no one than this, that one lay down his life for his friends. (NASB)

1 John 3:15 Everyone who hates his brother is a murderer; and you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him.

Matthew 5:22 "But I say to you that everyone who is angry with his brother shall be guilty before the court; and whoever shall say to his brother, 'Raca,' shall be guilty before the supreme court; and whoever shall say, 'You fool,' shall be guilty [enough to go] into the fiery hell. (NASB)