



**ST. MATTHEW AME CHURCH
WOMEN'S BIBLE STUDY FELLOWSHIP**

**WINTER SERIES:
"I AM MY SISTER'S KEEPER"**

Then the LORD said to Cain, "Where is your brother Abel?" "I don't know," he replied, "Am I my brother's keeper?"

Genesis 4:9 NIV

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Session One: "You Matter"

I. Introduction- Genesis 4:1-9

- Cain was the firstborn of Adam and Eve, and then Abel was the second born child. Cain was a farmer and his brother, Abel was a shepherd. When the two men each brought an offering to the Lord, Abel's was accepted, but Cain's was not. Subsequently, Cain murdered Abel, his brother. Why Abel's sacrifice as a keeper of flocks was better than Cain's whose sacrifice came from harvested fruits, is not directly stated in Genesis 4:4. No evidence for this period of history yet exists to suggest that animal sacrifice was better than crops or fruit.
- Two conditions in 4:7 provide a partial answer: Cain had not done what was right; Abel had. However, how Abel did right is really left unanswered.
- Maybe Abel's sacrifice (an animal substitute) was more acceptable to God, both because it was a blood sacrifice and most important because of Abel's attitude when he offered it.
- Hebrews 11:4 offers one further reason: the faith of Abel. His faith relationship with the Lord led him to present a better sacrifice (the fat of the animals); and to live as a better person, one who is righteous before God.
- Cain got angry, furious- Genesis 4:5 Cain's reaction gives us a clue that his attitude was probably wrong from the start. Cain had a choice to make. Cain could correct his attitude about his sacrifice to God, or he could take out his anger on his brother.
- Cain's decision is a clear reminder of how often we are aware of opposite choices, yet we sometimes end up choosing the wrong, just as Cain did.
- Anger is not necessarily a sin, but actions motivated by anger can be sinful. Anger should be the energy behind good action, not evil action.
- Following Cain's murder of his brother, Abel in a field, God comes to confront Cain. God begins with a question.
- He already knows the answer to, Where is your brother, Abel? God provides Cain the opportunity for confession.
- Instead of confessing, Cain lies to God and remains defiant. He brazenly claims not to know where Abel is.
- Cain then ask a question: "Am I my brother's keeper?" Cain's question not only represents dishonesty, but disrespect. Cain rejected any responsibility for his murdered brother in a way which implies it's wrong of God to even ask the question.
- God gave Cain the chance to right his wrong and try again. However, Cain refused and the rest of his life is a startling example of what happens to those who refuse to admit their mistakes. Genesis 4:10-14
- Even when we do wrong, our God is still gracious to us. Genesis 4:15-16
- When you read Genesis 4:9 in some of the other translations, you also notice Cain's lack of concern for the actions he took. God said to Cain, "Where is Abel your brother?" He said, How should I know? Am I his babysitter?" [Message Bible]

II. "BUT TODAY"

- What's fascinating is the first time this term is used has nothing to do with the way we use it today, Cain was being cynical, showing no regard or genuine concern for his brother, after all-he had just killed him.
- This is very different, the exact opposite of the spirit with which we use the phrase today which is to look out for your brother/sister.
- We should sympathize, empathize and assist each other in their weaknesses, grievances and trials. Galatians 6:2
- We each have a responsibility to support and encourage others. Romans 15:2 ,1 Thessalonians 5:11, Roman's 15:5

III. "YOU MATTER"

- We all live in an interdependent world in which our survival depends upon an understanding that our common humanity is more important than our differences and that everyone matters. Some tribes in Africa have a remarkable way of greeting each other. When one person says hello, the response is, "I see you".
- Think how much better the world would be, if we actually saw each other.

"GOD SEES ME"

- First, we must realize that God sees us. We matter to God. Jeremiah 1:5,Luke 12:7
- We are God's children. As believers, our self-worth is based on the fact that God loves us and calls us His children. We are His children now, not just sometime in the distant future. 1John 3:1
- No one can love us like God. Isaiah 49:15-16,Micah 7:18-19
- If something is important to you-it's important to God. He cares about the day-to-day routine and understands our needs. Matthew 6:25-26

"I SEE ME"

- You must have confidence that you are who God says you are. Psalm 139:13-14
- You must act like you are who God says you are
- Our true value is God's estimate of our worth, not people. Other people evaluate and categorize us according to how we perform, what we achieve and how we look. Our real value is inside.
- You don't have to be the smartest, the most productive, the most anything. We are to do our best and trust the Lord will work through all situations.
- Some of us think that we are not good enough. You are more than enough!
- We can only make a difference, if we know our existence matters.

"I SEE YOU"

- When we acknowledge another, we are saying, "I see you", not as the world sees you, but as God sees you.
- Let others know they exist.
- We can only learn and grow when we acknowledge each other.
- There should be no favoritism. James 2:1-10
- A sure way for someone to lift herself up is by helping to lift someone else. Romans 12:10

"An individual has not started living until he can rise above the narrow confines of his individualistic concerns to the broader concerns of all humanity". -Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

LOOKING AHEAD

JANUARY 9, 2021 -Session II "WHAT IF I WERE YOU AND YOU WERE ME"