

Family Foundations, Part 6 – Controlling Sin in the Heart Before it Controls the Life (Genesis 4:6-7)

Preached by Pastor Phil Layton at Gold Country Baptist Church on January 11, 2009

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Genesis 4:3-8 (NASB95) ³ So it came about in the course of time that Cain brought an offering to the LORD of the fruit of the ground. ⁴ Abel, on his part also brought of the firstlings of his flock and of their fat portions. And the LORD had regard for Abel and for his offering; ⁵ but for Cain and for his offering He had no regard. So Cain became very angry and his countenance fell. ⁶ Then the LORD said to Cain, “Why are you angry? And why has your countenance fallen? ⁷ “If you do well, will not *your countenance* be lifted up? And if you do not do well, sin is crouching at the door; and its desire is for you, but you must master it.” ⁸ Cain told Abel his brother. And it came about when they were in the field, that Cain rose up against Abel his brother and killed him.

This ends our reading of God’s Word for this evening with the end of the life of Abel, who Hebrews 11 said, being dead, still speaks. Most of you have probably heard the saying, “Dead men tell no tales.” Whether it was the last words of a man in a mafia-related shooting as he died, or the slogan popularized by Pirates of the Caribbean, or whatever the *original* origin of the phrase, when it comes to God’s Word, actually dead men *do* tell tales. This tale, this true story of two sons, the first two sons, still speaks today. In fact, God Himself says (v. 11) “the voice of your brother’s blood is crying to me from the ground.” His voice also speaks to us in 2009.

Hebrews 11:4 (KJV) By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts: and by it he being dead yet speaketh ... [what does he teach us? v. 6] without faith *it is* impossible to please *him*: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and *that* he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.

This story of Cain and Abel is recorded to speak to us today, and it does speak to us a vital lesson if we will let it. The way God speaks to the first sinful child of Adam and Eve is recorded not merely for Cain’s sake, but for the sake of all Adam and Eve’s children ever since to this day. Not merely for children, but for adults, too. God gets to the heart of the matter of our sin, and our bad worship and bad hearts in this passage. And in God’s good and gracious nature, He as our Heavenly Father gives the model for His children, His means of grace to control sin in the heart before it controls the life.

#1. The Nature of Our Spiritual Worship

To review briefly we saw last week that Cain’s problem was a *heart* problem. God always looks at the heart and does not accept religious acts without a repentant heart of faith. 1 John 3 also speaks to this as does Hebrews 11 which tells us Abel had a true heart of faith.

We also looked last week at Romans 1 (*let’s look there again to review*). The great problem with the human race is not a behavior problem or environment problem or education problem, or lack of programs, or of government assistance, or lack of self-esteem. The solution is not solved by psychologists, sociologists, or any secular source. The Scriptures are clear our greatest enemy and problem is **within, the problem is inside us, not something outside of us.** We saw last week that the root issue is a sin issue, it is a heart issue ... it is a worship issue. And the solution is only found by true faith in God’s truth, and true worship of the True God. Last week we saw that all humans are always worshipping something, constantly. Even those who don’t think they’re religious, or who profess to be atheists (or anti-theists) still worship something (science, self, etc.).

Romans 1:20-30 (NASB95) ²⁰ For **since the creation of the world [from these chapters in Genesis till today]** His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are **without excuse [man knows but suppresses the truth, v18-19]** ²¹ For even though **they knew God, they did not honor Him as God or give thanks**, but they became futile in their speculations, and their foolish **heart was darkened**. ²² Professing to be wise, they **became fools**, ²³ and **exchanged the glory of the incorruptible God for an image ... [they don't cease to worship, man foolishly exchanges the glory of God for something far less to focus on]** ²⁴ Therefore God gave them over **in the lusts of their hearts to impurity [the source is the heart]**, so that their bodies would be dishonored among them. ²⁵ For they **exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator ...** ²⁸ And just as they did not see fit to acknowledge God any longer, God gave them over to **a depraved mind [again, all that follows comes from within]**, to do those things which are not proper, ²⁹ being filled with all unrighteousness, wickedness, greed, evil; full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, malice; *they are* gossips, ³⁰ slanderers, haters of God, insolent, arrogant, boastful, inventors of evil, disobedient to parents ...

All of our sins come from within, from depraved hearts and minds. The book of James says we always sin because of our *own lusts* (1:14), and it says our conflicts are always, always due to *our own* internal conflicts and sinful desires *within us* (4:1-3). Your sin is not caused by *your spouse*, it's by *yourself* (self-love, worship). Jesus said nothing outside us defiles us, it's all from within.

Mark 7:21-23 (NASB95) ²¹ “For **from within, out of the heart of men**, proceed the evil thoughts, fornications, thefts, murders, adulteries, ²² deeds of coveting *and* wickedness, *as well as* deceit, sensuality, envy, slander, pride *and* foolishness. ²³ “**All these evil things proceed from within** and defile the man.”

Jesus also said, it's “from the abundance *of the heart* the mouth speaks” – in other words, when we sin with our speech, in our marriage or relationships, we're not mainly having *communication* problems, we're revealing a *heart* problem. We need to diagnose it properly to have the proper cure. We need to recognize the problem is not the occasion or other person that prompts us to say or do things in anger. The problem is our sinful heart has overflowed and manifested itself. We must start here: The heart is the key issue for us and God. And God by His kindness (Rom. 2:4 says), gives grace that should lead our hearts to repentance.

But to those who refuse it, Romans 2:5 says “But **because of your stubbornness and unrepentant heart you are storing up wrath for yourself** in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God”

As we turn back to Genesis, this was Cain's problem, long before the physical act of murder. It was a spiritual problem, uncontrolled hatred in the heart led to homicide. He had an unrepentant heart as Genesis 4 unfolds, and he reveals stubbornness as God graciously and patiently gives Him kindness and grace that should have led to repentance. The heart of the matter was a sinful heart and thoughts.

Gen 6:5 “Then the LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great on the earth, and that **every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.**”

The truth of Romans 1, illustrated in the story of Cain and Abel, is that the great indictment on all men, and the ultimate root of all sin is *our wrong hearts continually engaged in their thoughts in wrong worship* (which later secondarily result in wrong outward deeds). Wrong behavior is the fruit - but we want to focus on the root.

Application #1. True Worship of our Glorious God is our Greatest Task

This is where I planned to end and apply last week. I won't repeat our discussion of the details of Gen. 4:3-5; I want to consider this bigger framework, and look at the "forest" of this theme before we look at the trees. Allen Ross has written an excellent book subtitled *Biblical Worship from the Garden to the New Creation*, the only work I know of that traces this theme so thoroughly from Genesis to Revelation. One of his applications of Cain and Abel's story is:

'This gives the reader a preview of human worship in general: some people attend a service and are uplifted, and others who are there do not respond; some give to the Lord and are blessed, while others do it and are disgruntled. It is not the ritual that is at fault but the person. Thus, in this story we are dealing with two kinds of "worshippers." On the surface Cain's offering looked perfectly acceptable, but his heart was not in it [or right] ... Abel went out of his way to please God, but Cain was simply discharging a duty. Cain thought God would be satisfied with the performance of the routine, but he was wrong¹

As you look at Genesis 4 again, for Cain it gives no hint of sorrow, grief, concern, or repentance anywhere. Undoubtedly there are many Cains in churches, but many people like this man in Genesis 4 who think just showing up at a worship service pleases God. But without a repentant heart of humble faith, God is very displeased with our filthy rags of religion without contrition.

Application #2: Worship is about what pleases God, not what pleases us

Abel understood this in Genesis 4, but this was not Cain's focus. This is something many tend to forget in churches where *worship style* is so emphasized and creating an atmosphere that pleases the maximum number of "seekers" is so much a priority for so many. Many look for churches primarily because of a particular music type or instrument combination or tradition that pleases them and so-called "worship wars" split churches, and we overlook this essential fact that worship is fundamentally for GOD, not us!

Cain's worship did not please God and the context reveals his focus was on himself, not God. *Does your worship please God because your heart of faith is right with God and focused on God?* Before we look more at the details of this story in Genesis 4, I think we need to look at our own hearts and examine ourselves.

Application #3: Worship must be a priority for you and your family

As for me and my family we will worship the Lord. Choose you this day whom you will serve and worship. All of us serve and worship something, the only question is who or what. We parents have to be careful not to polish the idols of our children and fuel their focus on things as more important than the worship of God.

The book *Instructing a Child's Heart* warns how 'many parents feed their children's idols. They take delight in their children's delight in possessions ... and pleasures. Parents expend enormous amounts of time, money, and energy in the development of performance abilities [kids can pick up from parents whether the priority is little league or worship of a big and glorious God].

Families are so overcommitted to activities that there is precious little time for meals together, family devotions, or simple conversation and family enjoyment ... While choosing from the dizzying array of choices, think carefully or you will inadvertently lead your children away from God rather than to him.^{3,2}

I was reading a book put out by the AWANA ministry that emphasized the priority of family worship. In colonial America and centuries past in England, it said that men who were not regularly leading their family in family worship / devotions could frequently come under the rebuke of the Elders and church discipline, at least to the point of those dads not being allowed to take of communion at church. They took it seriously, not lightly.

What is family worship? It's not a real complicated word, or concept: worship as a family together, or doing devotions together (usually involving Scripture or songs or both, in some backgrounds there's more formal training like a catechism or study, but it can be more informal). For us at our young kids age, it's usually as simple as reading some Bible passages or stories (books with pictures), singing songs, praying, and making it fun and interactive for the kids, acting out the story. It will look differently for others, but kids will pick up whether God's Word is a priority for mom and dad in the week.

What about on the Lord's Day? Your kids will also pick up from mom and dad whether worship of God is a priority, and whether you enjoy church, and look forward to the worship of God who is the glorious center of your marriage and home, a God you find awesome and awe-inspiring as the holy majestic God of wonders. As we closed with last week: "the most important thing you can do for your kids is to be dazzled by God." Your kids will know whether or not you find God dazzling and satisfying and whether He truly is the glorious grand goal of your life or just a little compartment of your life, a little thing you do on the side at times.

Our goal as parents is not mere externalism or behaviorism, but it is the bigness and greatness of God to truly be known and loved by us and our children. As A. W. Tozer said there's nothing more important or determinative for life than how we think of God.

Much more could be said on that, but those are some suggested applications for Point #1.

Point #2: The Nature of Our Sin

Genesis 4:3-5 (NASB95)³ So it came about in the course of time that Cain brought an offering to the LORD of the fruit of the ground.⁴ Abel, on his part also brought of the firstlings of his flock and of their fat portions. And the LORD had regard for Abel and for his offering;⁵ but for Cain and for his offering He had no regard. So Cain became very angry and his countenance fell.

God will address the nature of sin as we read vs. 6-7, but it's important we look at the text closely enough to see ourselves here:

Paul David Tripp says as we read this story, "this is what we should be thinking: Cain's struggle is my struggle. Cain's struggle is your struggle. Sin causes us to turn acts of worship into occasions of self-righteousness. Sin causes us to turn ministry into moments of self-aggrandizement. Sin causes us to turn acts of service into occasions for placing people in our debt and in our power ... Worship isn't always what it seems on the surface ...

[even our prayers when others can hear them] can be occasions of wanting people to look at me and to esteem me -- that's the struggle this side of the garden. That there's such a strong desire in us to be acclaimed, that we love ourselves so deeply and so fully that even moments of worship and moments of ministry and moments of worship get polluted by the love of self. And when you look at Cain, you shouldn't say "what an awful man Cain is!" You ought to say, "I have that heart, too!!" And there are occasions when I am a skilled glory-thief. In a moment when God should be receiving glory, I take that glory on myself. That's all of us ...'³

Now in verses 6-7 notice how God deals sin in Adam and Eve's child Cain, because there are lessons for us here as well.

⁶Then the LORD said to Cain, "Why are you angry? And why has your countenance fallen?"⁷"If you do well, will not *your countenance* be lifted up? And if you do not do well, sin is crouching at the door; and its desire is for you, but you must master it."

This is the first time we see the word "sin" in the Bible (concept obviously in Gen. 3), a theme like worship that runs all the way through Revelation (worship continues in heaven, sin does not).

In this passage, we also see the first counselor, the first dealings with sin by God our Father, a gracious example for us, even when dealing with a child who is living more like his father is the devil.

v. 6 'Then the LORD said to Cain, "Why are you angry? And why has your countenance fallen?"

It should be obvious in reading this that sinful thinking can have emotional or visible or physical effects on us. Our psychiatric world has come up with all kinds of band-aids for physical effects of wrong thinking, and there's no question that drugs *can have an effect on people* – but if there's a spiritual problem at the core, only a spiritual solution from God's sufficient Word can help our spiritual heart cancer that no band-aid or pain reliever can cure.

⁷**"If you do well, will not *your countenance* be lifted up? And if you do not do well, sin is crouching at the door; and its desire is for you, but you must master it."**

The word for "crouching" was used of a tiger or lion or such animal lying in wait to pounce on and overpower its prey. What a picture of the nature of our sin! It is deadly, it seeks to devour us. 1 Peter 5:8 describes the devil as a prowling roaring lion seeking to devour in sin.

"... and its desire is for you, but you must master it."

We must tame the lion within. To paraphrase John Owen, we're either destroying sin in our life, or sin is destroying our life. Those who lose the battle on the outside have already lost the battle on the inside. This is so important for us to understand, for the nature of our own hearts and sin, and if we're parents, to know the nature of our children's sinful hearts and what is at stake in the battle for self-control. Frighteningly, their sin they get from us!

If we do not control sin within, in the heart, it will control the life. You need to be able to overcome your feelings or your feelings will overcome you. Sin's desire is for you, but you must master it. It wants to rule you, but you need to rule it.

ESV: "its desire is for you (footnote "**or against**" you) but you must **rule over it**"

NIV: "If you do what is right, will **you not be accepted**? But if you do not do what is right, sin is crouching at your door; **it desires to have you**, but you must master it."

New English Translation: "It desires **to dominate** you but you must **subdue** it."

The nearly exact same phrase is used in Genesis 3:16 of the conflict between husband and wife in marriage:

Genesis 3:16 (NASB95) ¹⁶To the woman He said, "I will greatly multiply Your pain in childbirth, In pain you will bring forth children; Yet **your desire will be for your husband, And he will rule over you.**"

ESV: "Your desire shall be **for [footnote "or against] your husband**, and he shall rule over you."

NET: "You will **want to control your husband, but he will dominate you.**"

As we saw in our study a few weeks ago on Genesis 3, since sin came into the relationship of our first parents, wives have tended to have a sinful desire to control or dominate or rule over her husband and to not submit to his leadership; but the man must not let her. And the husband's sinful tendencies in human history have either been to abuse his authority by lording over or dominating his wife, or if *she* wins in this struggle of the sexes for domination, the man becomes passive and is weakly ruled by her as his boss for life.

That's the same phrase used in Genesis 4:7 with a similar idea in our struggle with sin. Sin wants to dominate and rule over us, and if we let it, we will become powerless and mastered by it for life. You must not let it win now, or sin will be your boss and ruler later

In this phrase in verse 7 about sin like a crouching creature, the grammar is quite difficult to translate in the Hebrew, but it may be that the feminine is construed as a masculine grammatically 'because, with evident allusion to the serpent, sin is personified as a wild beast, lurking at the door of the human heart, and eagerly desiring to devour his soul ... [one commentator sums up the picture this way:] "God talks to Cain as to a wilful child, and draws out of him what is sleeping in his heart, and lurking like a wild beast before his door. And what He did to Cain He does to every one who will but observe his own heart, and listen to the voice of God" (*Herder*). But Cain paid no heed to the divine warning.⁴

Derek Kidner notes in light of Genesis 3: 'Whereas Eve had to be talked into her sin by the serpent, it appears that Cain would not be talked out of his intended sin, even by the Lord Himself.'⁵

The personal responsibility of Cain is emphasized in the Hebrew by the emphatic personal pronoun: "*you*, you are to master it."

#3. *The Nature of our Savior*

In making this appeal to Cain, our Lord not only reveals much about the nature of sin, but also much about His own nature. God is revealed in His earliest interactions with mankind after sin and throughout Scripture as a gracious God who is by nature a Savior.

James Boice sums it up well the nature of our God in this passage: ‘Here there is a point in the story that always touches me deeply. Although the offering of Cain was rejected, God did not simply walk away from Cain, as it were, but rather approached him and tried to reason with him about his sacrifice and what he needed to do to be accepted. So also would God plead with you, if you are fighting him. God reasoned with Cain: *Why are you angry* ... there is an indication that God saw in Cain whatever state he was in ... God sees him regardless, just as God sees you [and your heart].

Second, Cain need not have been angry. The fault was not outside himself, as if it were something that could not be changed. It could be changed, and the one to change it was Cain. So too with us. We tend to blame others for our troubles. Although others are sometimes a factor, the true cause is ... within. It is as Pogo said in one of his memorable utterances, “We have met the enemy and he is us.”

Third, there is a reminder of the right course of action: [v. 7] “If you do what is right, will you not be accepted?” ... [But it appears that] he rejected the right, not for lack of knowledge, but for lack of humility, faith, and obedience. He refused to come ... because he considered the confession of his need demeaning.’⁶

The nature of our sin should cause us to realize how desperately we need a Savior. God is by nature a savior, and His kindness should lead us to repentance, and our sin nature should lead us to come humbly to Him. Genesis is just the first of five books of the Torah, but all of God’s law is to point us to Christ. We are responsible to do what is right and pleasing to the Lord in worship and in life, though we are not by our own nature inclined to do so.

Yet God’s grace is there and available in this chapter unmistakably and amazingly, at man’s lowest point. God’s description of Cain in v. 6 is translated by several scholars as “downcast” or “crestfallen” or “depressed.” This is the first biblical mention of depression, if you will, and anger, which often go together. The way God the counselor deals with this depressed downcast angry patient is quite different than how most “professional” counselors would deal with him today. In v. 7, God tells him this is a spiritual issue and spiritual struggle and he needs to do what is right spiritually if he wants restoration and rejuvenation of his spiritual and inner man.

Let’s look at v. 7 again more closely:

v. 7a “If you do well, will not *your countenance* be lifted up?”

“In the Hebrew, *accepted* [NKJV] is literally a ‘lifting up’ ... an expression that can indicate a smiling as against a frowning (*fallen*, 6) face: cf. Numbers 6:26 [from the familiar Jewish benediction: The LORD bless thee, and keep thee: *The LORD make his face shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee: The LORD lift up his countenance upon thee, and give thee peace*]. The sense may be that the very look on Cain’s face gives him away; more probably it goes further, to promise God’s restoration (cf. Gen. 40:13) on a change of heart.’⁷

In the NASB *your countenance* is in italics, because it's not in the original text, so it's also a translator's decision based on context. Depending on the intended object, the phrase may be referring to *confidence* or *acceptance* (i.e., *favor*);⁸ or it could also take on the meaning of *forgiveness*.⁹ Literally, it's been rendered 'if you do good will [it] not be lifted up?). The "it" may refer to the sacrifice that was not lifted up or accepted. Or it may refer to Cain's countenance, which was just reported to have fallen. The latter is most likely the correct...'¹⁰

A pastor named Jon Courson writes: 'Although I feel like a prophet crying in the wilderness as I go against the flow of what our culture says about depression, I remain biblically persuaded that many people today are seeking medical help for depression when in reality it is often a spiritual issue. Interestingly, even the research done by the pharmaceutical companies who manufacture antidepressants corroborate this, for their studies indicate that, due to the reduction of serotonin—a chemical in the brain which governs emotional stability, it is impossible for those who are clinically depressed to simply will themselves out of depression. I believe this is what Scripture has indicated all along, for bitterness and anger, sin and resentment affect the chemistry of one's brain. Thus, the pharmacist and the pastor differ not in the diagnosis of depression, but in the cure. The pharmacist says, "Take a pill."

The pastor says, "Make a choice." [as God calls Cain to in v. 7]

[The Bible says God's people] can choose to put on the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness (Isaiah 61:3). We can choose to rejoice in the Lord (1 Thessalonians 5:16). We can choose to pray without ceasing (1 Thessalonians 5:17). We can choose to give thanks in everything (1 Thessalonians 5:18). We can choose to think on whatever is pure and lovely and praiseworthy (Philippians 4:8).

"If you choose right," God said to Cain, "you'll be lifted up. But if you don't, the lion of depression will eat you for lunch." I am not suggesting that we should never use medication. But as a pastor, I am concerned and saddened by how many Christians in our country [turn to drugs rather than Divine truth that truly changes lives inside-out]. "Why art thou cast down, O my soul?" David asked when he faced depression like ours. What was his prescription? "Hope thou in God" (Psalm 42:11). "My bones ache. My eyes weep. I feel as though there's gravel in my teeth," cried Jeremiah in his own deep, dark depression. His cure? "I will lift up my heart with my hands unto the heavens" (Lamentations 3:41).

Although I am increasingly convinced that there are people who, because of difficulties in life, can benefit from wise and prudent medical help in this arena, such is not the norm because as you read the Bible from cover to cover, it becomes clear that the issue regarding depression is primarily [often spiritual in nature].

God didn't say, "I know you're sad, Cain. Here, drink this; swallow that; and you'll be better in the morning." No, He said, "Your bitterness is causing your countenance to fall. If you choose to do well—to obey My Word—you'll be lifted up. If you don't choose well, you'll be eaten up"¹¹ [by sin the crouching lion, v.7b].

In our Discipleship / Counseling Class, there's a lesson by Carey Hardy that will deal with some of these issues in much more detail, a few weeks from now in Sunday School, on the relationship between spiritual and medical issues in helping people

Ecclesiastes 8:1 teaches us that when we live by God's wisdom and ways, even our face or physical appearance can change:

A man's wisdom makes his face shine, And the sternness of his face is changed.

Literally his countenance changes and face shines, it looks up now. Psalm 32 and other places speak of how repentance can impact us physically, just as sin can impact us physically, repentance restores

Martin Luther paraphrased Genesis 4:7 this way:

“If you did well, or if you were good, that is, if you believed, you would have a gracious God and there would be a true lifting-up, that is, forgiveness of sins. But because [I the Lord saw your heart and] had no regard for you, it assuredly follows that you are not good and are not freed from your sin; but your sin remains.” ... through the use of the verb “to lift up” the text compares sin to a huge burden under which Cain lies oppressed so that he cannot breathe unless it is removed. The Epistle to the Hebrews points out the way in which we are rid of this burden when it says that by faith Abel offered a more excellent sacrifice (Heb. 11:4).¹²

The phrase “lifted up” can also be translated as “accepted” as probably some of your versions have. In that case, the emphasis would seem to be more the pleasing of God (which of course is good for us and lifts us up if God accepts us, both are true).

Matthew Henry paraphrases the “acceptance” understanding well:

"If now thou do well, if thou repent of thy sin, reform thy heart and life, and bring thy sacrifice in a better manner, if thou not only do that which is good but do it well, thou shalt yet be accepted, thy sin shall be pardoned, thy comfort and honour restored, and all shall be well." See here the effect of a Mediator's interposal between God and man ... Though we have offended, if we repent and return, we shall find mercy. See how early the gospel was preached, and the benefit of it here offered even to one of the chief of sinners.¹³

If we would master sin in our life, we must first be mastered by the only One who has mastered it. Jesus must be our Master, our Lord. Sin may be waiting at our door, but Revelation 3:20 says our Savior is also standing at the door, knocking, ready to fellowship.

There's another story of two sons I want to close with in Luke 15 that also pictures the Lord's nature in this way. The nature of our Savior is shown to those who are willing to come humbly, confessing their unworthiness and great need and throwing themselves on the mercy of a Father who is gracious by nature.

Luke 15:10-23 (NASB95) ¹⁰“In the same way, I tell you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents.” ¹¹ And He said, “A man had **two sons**. ¹²“The younger of them said to his father, ‘Father, give me the share of the estate that falls to me.’ So he divided his wealth between them. ¹³“And not many days later, the younger son gathered everything together and went on a journey into a distant country, and there he squandered his estate with loose living. ¹⁴“Now when he had spent everything, a severe famine occurred in that country, and he began to be impoverished. ¹⁵“So he went and hired himself out to one of the citizens of that country, and he sent him into his fields to feed swine. ¹⁶“And he would have gladly filled his stomach with the pods that the swine were eating, and no one was giving *anything* to him. ¹⁷“But when he came to his senses, he said, ‘**How many of my father's hired men have more than enough bread**, but I am dying here with hunger! ¹⁸‘I will get up and go to my father, and will say to him, “Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in your sight; ¹⁹I am no longer worthy to be called your son; make me as one of your hired men.” ²⁰“So he got up and came to his father. But **while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and felt compassion for him, and ran and embraced him and kissed him.**

¹ Allen P. Ross, *Recalling the Hope of Glory: Worship from the Garden to the New Creation*, p. 139-40.

² Ted Tripp, *Instructing a Child's Heart*, 106.

³ Paul David Tripp, "Crouching Tiger" (www.sermonaudio.com)

⁴ Keil, C. F., & Delitzsch, F. (2002). *Commentary on the Old Testament*. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson. 1:70.

⁵ Derek Kidner, *Genesis*, p. 74

⁶ James Boice, *Genesis*.

⁷ Kidner, 75

⁸ Holladay, *Lexicon*, 246 (4 and 5).

⁹ cf. Victor Hamilton, *Genesis*, 227).

¹⁰ *KJV Bible commentary*. 1994. Nashville: Thomas Nelson, p. 25.

¹¹ Courson, J. (2005). *Jon Courson's Application Commentary : Volume one : Genesis-Job* (19). Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson.

¹² Luther, M. (1958). *Vol. 1: Luther's works, vol. 1 : Lectures on Genesis: Chapters 1-5* (J. J. Pelikan, H. C. Oswald & H. T. Lehmann, Ed.). Luther's Works (1:265). Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House.

¹³ *Matthew Henry's Complete 6 Volume Commentary*, 1:39.