

The desire of Christian parents

The desire of most Christian parents is for their children to heed the call to follow Christ and become sons of God. We want our children to know salvation and to continue on the pathway of sonship that God has predestined for them. When a child rejects this call, it is a great grief to families. Some parents can become condemned at this point and blame themselves for failing to sufficiently train their children in the way of the Lord. Others can seek to bridge the gap between the rebellion of their children and their own Christian walk, in the hope that they might return to the fellowship of the body of Christ. What is important to understand in relation to our families and the salvation of our children is that the word of God comes calling to every single person. Irrespective of the context in which a child is brought up, they will be accountable for their own response to the word. This, however, does not diminish the importance of family culture in the care and training of our children. Rather, we are caused to consider the aspects of godly family culture that can support their response to the word and their participation in offering.

We must come to faith in relation to our children and their salvation. We can teach our sons and daughters how to make offering and to recognise the messenger and the message, but we cannot compensate for them when they reject the word of God. Moreover, we are unable to make offering on behalf of our children in an effort to atone for their sins. In finding faith for our families, we must put aside the yoke of bondage to fear concerning our children and maintain our participation in the offering of Christ.

References:

Mat 16:24 Pro 22:6
Php 2:25 1Co 1:18
Gal 5:1

Further Study

Gal 4

Daily Proverb

Proverbs 4

Cain's rebellion

The firstborn son of the very first family on earth rejected the word of God and turned from the pathway of his sonship and salvation. It's amazing to consider that from this one household came two sons whose responses to the call to make offering were so sharply contrasted. Abel made acceptable offering and was connected to his predestined name, while the rejection of Cain's offering led to anger, murder and separation.

It seems likely that Cain and Abel were middle to late teenagers when they first brought their offerings to the gate of the garden of Eden. Cain brought an offering of the fruit of his labours as a farmer. However, God rejected his offering and Cain became angry and his countenance fell. God said to Cain, 'If you do well, will you not be accepted? And if you do not do well, sin lies at the door. And its desire is for you, but you should rule over it.'

The issue with Cain's offering was that he was unwilling to be the person God named him to be. Cain was to become the king-priest of all creation. That was his job as the firstborn! He was not called to be a farmer, as his father Adam had been. Offering was to have redefined him to his predestination as a king-priest. However, Cain did not want what God had ordained for him. He wanted to continue being a farmer. An outcome of Cain's rejection of the word of God was the murder of Abel. The pursuit of his desires and expectations of life bore the fruit of hatred which was evident as he inflicted grievous injury on a son of God.

References:

Gen 4:1-7
Rev 5:10
Jas 1:20

Further Study

1Jn 3

Daily Proverb

Proverbs 5

The crisis of offering

It is notable that Cain was not able to be a farmer, and ended up becoming a type of counterfeit king-priest of the cities he built in the land of Nod. Following his rejection, he pursued this destiny on his own terms, rather than according to God's word. He was not prepared to come back to God through offering and find repentance or forgiveness. Consequently, the lineage of Cain was erased.

The key here for us to understand is that Cain's approach to offering is the crisis point for every person, and in particular, the young people who have grown up in Christian homes. At some point, they have the opportunity to make offering themselves. The issue is whether a young person is willing to be *redefined* at this point, from who they think they should be to who God named them to be, as they join the offering of the Lamb.

Our offering is not acceptable in the first instance because we come with a particular idea of who we are and what we should give. Like Cain, it is probable that our children will have seen the offering of their parents and believed that was their offering as well. However, as children in the middle to latter teenage years begin to offer of their own initiative, they have the opportunity to be redefined from this self-perception to become the son of God they were made to be. When a person rejects the word of their name and reacts in anger to the unacceptability of their offering, they inevitably leave the fellowship of the body of Christ. Moreover, this phase is often marked by notable relational breaches where violence (either in word or deed) is inflicted on others in the body of Christ.

References:

Gen 4:3-5, 16, 25-26
Jer 18:4
Gal 5:13-15

Further Study

Gen 4

Daily Proverb

Proverbs 6

The 'failure' of Adam and Eve

We could say that Cain's problem sprang from his *family* environment. It was not *his* fault that he was outside the garden of Eden. It was the sin of his parents that had led to the situation where they were outside of the garden and needing to bring offering in this particular way. In terms of his work and offering, Cain was merely doing what his 'fallen' father had taught him to do. And having followed the example and instruction of his father, Cain's offering was then rejected by God.

Adam and Eve could well have felt responsible for the fruit of Cain's actions, including his subsequent 'suffering' as one who was separated from the love and blessing of God. In fact, we read that Eve was in bondage with Cain and his children until she ceased from seeking to redeem the situation she had caused, and found grace to bring forth a son of God in place of Abel.

The dilemma for Adam and Eve is *the same for every parent*. We are not yet perfect; the cultures of our homes are not yet perfect, and the discipline and instruction of our children is not perfect. We can rightly conclude that the problems of our children are attributable to us. As our children move through the teenage years, this reality can seem even more obvious.

The guilt we may feel for the fallen and, at times, rebellious responses of our children can be compounded when the child himself attributes the blame for his malformation and suffering to us. We instantly feel guilty because we know that what is being claimed is true. However, compensating for our children so that they can avoid the cross and their own accountability for life, or working to optimise their advantage in life, will not ensure their salvation.

References:

Gen 3:23-24
Gen 4:13-14, 25-26
Ecc 2:18-19
1Co 1:21

Further Study

Gen 3

Daily Proverb

Proverbs 7

He calls every person

At times it can seem that there is little rhyme or reason to the responses that young people make to the word that calls their name. Some children from difficult and even ungodly homes will grow up and find Christ, while others from committed Christian homes will not. And then there are situations where, just like Adam and Eve's family, there is a mixed response to the gospel call. So how do we make sense of all of this? What is our responsibility towards the redemption of our children? How do we instruct and encourage our children in the way of the Lord?

It was true that Adam and Eve had sinned and that every child of theirs would be born in sin. Nevertheless, before they had left the garden, God had provided for their redemption by offering. He covered their nakedness with the skins of an animal and drove them from the garden. Through repentance, and their participation in this offering, they were recovered to the hope of their predestined sonship. Their fellowship with God was now only possible through offering at the gate of the garden. Although they now knew the pathway of salvation, their own responses were not sufficient to ensure the salvation of their children.

Cain and Abel would need to avail themselves of the offering of Christ, the Lamb of God. To restate the point, Adam and Eve could do nothing to change this circumstance. They were not able to offer on their children's behalf, and neither could they alleviate the requirement for their children to participate in the offering of the Lamb. We read in the Scriptures that this reality is the same for every family and every person. For this reason, we must understand offering and our children must learn to make offering.

References:

Rom 5:12
Psa 46:7
Heb 10:10

Further Study

Gen 3:21-24
Job 1:5
Heb 10

Daily Proverb

Proverbs 8

Learning to offer

It is quite evident that Cain and Abel were not going to find salvation in the home of Adam and Eve. So what did Adam and Eve do? They taught their children how and where to make offering. They were required to bring their offerings to the gate of the garden of Eden. This was their temple. Likewise, our children will not be redeemed in our houses. They will also have to come to the 'gate of Eden' and make offering. God wants to meet our children, personally. They are His. He made them and predestined them to be His sons. They can meet their Saviour outside of the family at the point of the communion. There the Lord will meet with them individually so that they can be redefined according to their name written in the Lamb's book of life.

Just like Adam and Eve, we can teach, urge, and nurture our children towards offering. In doing so, we are teaching them to join Christ's offering, and in this context, hear the word of their name. However, when they hear the word that calls their name and present themselves to make offering, it will, nevertheless, be a crisis of redefinition for them. As we all do, they will need to negotiate the acceptability of their offering. At this point, like Cain, sin is crouching at the door. But they will be able to overcome sin as they humble themselves and begin to join themselves to the offering of the Lamb. Teaching our children about offering involves communicating the realities of accountability. Every person is accountable for their own souls. Instead of blaming others (such as their parents) for their circumstances and frailties, every child needs to be aware that their sin is their own and that salvation is found in Christ.

References:

Gen 4:3-4, 7
Php 4:3
Rom 12:1-2
Rom 3:19-23

Further Study

Rom 12

Daily Proverb

Proverbs 11

Teaching honour and respect

Another aspect of instructing our children about offering, particularly in their teenage years, will involve resolving their sibling and peer group relationships. This has to do with understanding their own name and recognising and revealing the name and capacities that God has given to another. This was a significant weakness of Cain's. Not only was he unresolved about his own name, he was jealous and hostile towards his brother Abel. Our children need to learn to accept their name and predestination and to honour and respect the distinctive names and predestinations of others in their families and in the church.

Children are born with different abilities, capacities, appearances, dispositions, emotional characteristics and so on. Moreover, Jesus explained to us that God gives talents *according* to abilities, so that some with 'much' may even be given more, although this will be accompanied with greater accountability. At times, these differences, and the way they are recognised in different settings, can create sibling rivalries and peer-group comparisons and competitions. Yet this is not the culture of the household of God, and can lead to hostility and injury rather than a fellowship of first love.

In families, an error that many parents (and particularly mothers) can fall into, is to try to keep everything between the children, even. This may be in an effort to create a peaceful family context or to impose upon a situation where one or another judges themselves more or less valued. These efforts are misdirected, as our children need to learn to put aside such judgements and, rather, honour and esteem the distinctive capacities, abilities, talents and callings that God gives to different individuals in every family.

References:

Rom 12:10 1Pe 5:5
Php 2:3 1Jn 4:20-21
Mat 25:15, 29

Further Study

Mat 25

Daily Proverb

Proverbs 12

The importance of motherhood

Mothers have a particular capacity and responsibility to teach their children to honour and respect others. They need to put off the tendency to balance everything and everybody and, rather, name and nurture their children according to God's plan for their lives. The impact of motherhood at this point is profound. Consider, for example, Rebekah, who questioned God about the wrestling of the babies in her womb. God revealed the destinies of Esau and Jacob to Rebekah. However, instead of teaching the children to make offering, accept their names, and respect one another, the preferences and compensations of Isaac and Rebekah resulted in their house being torn apart.

So it is by offering that our children learn to resolve their relationships and to respect the names and predestinations of their siblings and peers. Then, as our youth transition through the teenage years into the young adult phase, they are beginning to accountably join the youth fellowship and a program of discipleship. In this context, as they offer themselves to the fellowship and its program, they discover who they are among their peers and in the church. They are becoming increasingly aware of their own capacities, gifts and graces and those of their peers. The youth leaders need wisdom to perceive the naming and predestination of each person as they make offering. However, our young people should have learnt in their homes to resist the temptation to compare and compete and, rather, join a fellowship of fellow pilgrims. Recognising and joining this fellowship is necessary for the young person's development and salvation.

References:

Gen 25:21-23
Gen 26:34-35
Gen 27:41-45
Jas 3:14-18

Further Study

Gen 16

Daily Proverb

Proverbs 13

Job's family culture

The apostle James spoke of the patience and endurance of Job. The experiences and testimony of Job are both an encouragement to us to endure in times of suffering, as well as instruction concerning the transition that many parents need to make in relation to the redemption of their children.

Job was blameless, upright, fearing God, and turning away from evil. He had seven sons and three daughters and many possessions. In fact, the Scriptures identify him as 'greatest of all the men of the east'. Nevertheless, Job had major concerns with the 'party culture' that his adult children were pursuing. 'His sons used to go and hold a feast in the house of each one on his day, and they would send and invite their three sisters to eat and drink with them. When the days of feasting had completed their cycle, Job would send and consecrate them, rising up early in the morning and offering burnt offerings according to the number of them all'.

Job's family culture was not ideal. We could even say that there was a 'split culture' in his house. His wife demonstrated a hedonistic, 'everything should go right in life' culture. When things didn't go right she became most upset and even demanded that Job curse God and die. Having learnt from their mother that their life should be pleasurable, the children enthusiastically pursued a 'party culture'. They were wealthy children, born with a 'silver spoon' in their mouths. Job kept offering for them, day after day, after every cycle of partying. Why did Job continually offer for his children? Because he was afraid that something terrible would befall them as a consequence of their revelries. If they became too drunk or discontent with a particular outcome, he did not want them to curse God and provoke his wrath.

References:

Jas 5:11
Job 1:1-5
Job 2:9

Further Study

Jas 5

Daily Proverb

Proverbs 14

The 'blame game'

On what basis was Satan confident of the failure of Job and, by implication, the failure of God's word concerning Job? Firstly, Satan had achieved what seemed to be an easy deception of Adam and Eve in the garden and, as a consequence, mankind was now cut off from the tree of life. Secondly, although Job had integrity, *he was full of fear*. In fact, after Satan had wrought such great suffering on Job, his own confession was that, 'Everything I *feared* came on me'. Job 3:25. Satan's boast was that Job only feared God for advantage; and stated that if God stopped blessing Job, then Job would curse God to His face. Satan was confident of provoking the 'blame game' where Job would blame God and others for his pain and distress.

The counsel of Job's friends involved apportioning blame for the circumstance in which he found himself. Ironically, they had come to 'comfort' Job and mourn with him in his distress. They counselled him in three cycles of speeches. In the first cycle, (chapters 4-14), Eliphaz points out that Job is obviously guilty of sin, Bildad accuses him of being a hypocrite, and Zophar tells him he is both a hypocrite and a liar. However, Job is not convinced by their theology and maintains his integrity. In the second cycle, (chapters 15-21), his friends repeat their accusations that he is a sinner, justly evidenced by Job's denial of any wrong doing. Because Job would not confess, in their minds it proved his guilt! In the third cycle, (chapters 22-31), his friends point out that the things which have fallen upon him are just the kind of things that come to men who give in to temptation; and they *beg* him to repent.

References:

Gen 3:1-5 Job 1:9-11
Job 2:3-6 Job 3:25
Job 22:23

Further Study

Job 2

Daily Proverb

Proverbs 15

The integrity and faith of Job

Job maintained his integrity and met God in the midst of his suffering. Although it was Satan who had afflicted him with such great suffering, Job's testimony was that he had received all these things from the hand of God. God Himself stated that Satan had incited Him to ruin Job without a cause. Job could have been offended at this, yet he trusted the Lord. He was a sinner who battled with his own carnality (evident by his fears and anxieties), yet Job was a God-fearing man.

Through suffering, Job joined Christ's offering, maintained his faith in God and overcame Satan. Job maintained the integrity of his faith. If Job had ceased to believe in God, then Job would have *blamed* God. But when Job said under the first test, 'Naked I came into the world and naked I went out. The Lord gave, the Lord took away; blessed be the name of the Lord', he held faith and maintained the integrity of God.

Job's faith was, in fact, the faith of the Son of God! When Jesus cried, 'Why have You forsaken Me?', He was not being insubordinate. He was maintaining His integrity. It was no more a statement of unbelief or anger than when Job cursed the day he was born. Christ never cursed God. He just said, 'My dilemma is terrible. You have forsaken Me.' And God said, 'Yes I have! I turned My back on You until Your offering is complete.' In a sense, God had also turned His back on Job until Job's participation in that same offering was complete. For what reason? So that Job could come to the confession, 'I have heard of You by the hearing of the ear, but now my eyes see You'. Through this process, Job's offering had been made effective.

References:

Job 2:3 Job 1:21
Mat 27:46 Job 3:1
Job 42:5

Further Study

Mat 27

Daily Proverb

Proverbs 18

The folly of Job's friends

Throughout the book of Job, Eliphaz, Bildad and Zophar present to Job their theologies as to why he is suffering. It is a study of pastoral and ministry approaches that are not based in the truth. 'And it came about after the Lord had spoken these words to Job, that the Lord said to Eliphaz the Temanite, "My wrath is kindled against you and against your two friends, because you have not spoken of Me what is right as My servant Job has. Now therefore, take for yourselves seven bulls and seven rams, and go to My servant Job, and offer up a burnt offering for yourselves, and My servant Job will pray for you. For I will accept him so that I may not do with you according to your folly, because you have not spoken of Me what is right, as My servant Job has."

The Lord took grave issue with the men who were proclaiming a word that they thought was in the name of God. The result was that God rebuked them, using the term 'folly' to describe their misdirected theology. Then He said that His wrath was kindled against them. God does ask us to speak for Him, to others. However, the folly of Job's three friends should serve as a warning that we must speak what is right! It's not good enough to subject others to our own evangelical theologies. As we look at Job, we are understanding patience. We understand the need, if we are testifying or ministering to those who are in distress, those who are sick, those who are suffering, to take care and make sure that when we speak, we do not speak out of turn. We need to be a little slower to speak and ready to hear, rather than make 'the sacrifice of fools'.

References:

Job 42:7-8
Jas 1:19
Pro 17:27

Further Study

Job 42

Daily Proverb

Proverbs 19

God bragged about Job

It is an amazing thought that God 'bragged' about Job to Satan. However, Satan turned this around and put the word of God on trial in relation to Job's integrity. What is somewhat staggering about this situation is that Job was, in fact, a fearful man. He continually made offering just in case his children had sinned and cursed God. And Satan targeted this vulnerability by occasioning extreme suffering on Job, including the death of his ten children. Yet, Job was victorious over Satan through his suffering. Satan stands and accuses us day and night; however, we can find comfort and encouragement in Job's victory, because his frailties were no different from ours. He prevailed through patient endurance in the suffering and affliction that was directed to him.

At the beginning of the book, Job was offering because of his fear and anxiety. By the end of the process, his participation in offering was a fellowship with God Himself. He had joined Christ's offering and overcome Satan. Overcoming Satan was his first victory. Job overcame the devil because he did not sin against God with his lips. Job's response when the calamity came upon him was to fall onto the ground and worship!

We will face the same tests as Job. There will be seasons in our lives when things will go wrong, for no apparent reason. We wouldn't have done anything to deserve it, but it will suddenly fall upon us. Like Job, we can have a positive response because the Lord would love to brag to the devil about us! In the end, those who are saved are those who 'overcame [the devil] by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony, and they did not love their lives to the death'. Rev 12:11.

References:

Job 1:5, 8, 21-22
Job 2:3
Rev 12:11

Further Study

Rev 12

Daily Proverb

Proverbs 20

Victory in the family

Even though it was a messy situation, Job's second victory was in his home. He had been caught in a mode of futile offering for his children in order to keep them alive. But it wasn't working! Having lost everything, including his health, in response to his wife's discontent he admonished her, declaring, 'You speak as one of the foolish women speaks. Shall we indeed accept good from God and not accept adversity?' Here we see Job speaking as the head of his house and achieving his second victory. 'In all this Job did not sin with his lips.' And on the basis of that, God was going to restore the house. At the end of the season of suffering, we read that God gave to Job seven sons and three daughters. His house was restored.

The third victory was for offering to have been made effective as he accepted adversity from the hand of the Lord. Job spoke at length to God, affirming his own righteousness. But when the Lord spoke with him He said, 'Where were you when I created? Where were you when I did this? Where were you when I did that?' Following God's discourse, Job finally put his hands to his lips and said, 'Job's words are ended'. There came an end to Job's reasoning. There came a point where he accepted that God is merciful and God is sovereign. The fruit of this third victory is that offering had become effectual for Job. Having previously made offering out of fear for the well-being of his household, Job was now making offering for his friends. The Scriptures record that the Lord's wrath was kindled against Job's three friends and God accepted Job's offerings and prayers for his friends.

References:

Job 2:10 Job 1:22
Job 38:4 Job 31:40
Job 42:8-9, 12-13

Further Study

Job 40

Daily Proverb

Proverbs 21

Discipline and instruction in families

As we consider what it means to bring our children up in the training and admonition of the Lord, let us make the point that a Christian is a disciple. We cannot claim the position of a son of God and reject the call to become a disciple of Christ. In fact, we would do our children a great disservice if we encouraged their sonship but failed to teach discipleship. Why? Because if we try to claim sonship in a positional way, without actually ever becoming a disciple of Christ, we will fall under the spirit of antichrist. In fact, that's what the spirit of antichrist is - it's claiming the sonship of Christ but not coming, properly and clearly, into Christ to be His disciple.

The apostle Paul addressed families this way - 'Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. Honour your father and mother (which is the first commandment with a promise), so that it may be well with you, and that you may live long of the earth. Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.' The discipline and instruction of the Lord in families is part of the way of discipleship.

Children are sharers in the discipleship of their parents. Children, including the younger teenagers, are not disciples themselves. However, under the discipline and instruction that comes to them from their parents, they are sharers in the discipleship of their parents. Moreover, the blessings and benefits that parents receive from Christ are shared with their children. Saying it another way, children receive the blessing of eternal life with their parents. For many of us, this will be a point of considerable reformation in our thinking about children, families and discipleship.

References:

Eph 6:1-4 Col 3:20-21
2Th 2:13-14 Eph 1:1-4
Luk 14:26-27, 33

Further Study

Eph 6

Daily Proverb

Proverbs 22

A discipleship house

Christian fatherhood and motherhood involves bringing children up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord. Children receive fatherhood and motherhood from their parents, but they do not become disciples of their parents, even though they are disciples and are training their children to become disciples of Christ. Fatherhood and motherhood is committed to training the family in the way of Christ, with a view that each family member will themselves become disciples of Christ. Remember back to the example of Cain and Abel. At a certain time, they were called to make offering themselves. This was a 'coming of age' where, as accountable adults, they were presenting themselves to God and making offering. The same will be so for our children.

Children are not disciples of their parents, but *participants* in the discipleship of their parents. The Lamb of God is the Lamb for the whole house. Christ's blood covers each child and they are guarded under the faith of their parents until they 'come of age' and can join the offering of Christ, as His disciples, for themselves.

The implications of this truth are compelling. Consider this. Little children are born; we dedicate them. With every one of these children, any who die before they come to the age of committing themselves as disciples, *they are covered by the faith of their parents*. This means that they die and go to be with the Lord in heaven! This is what a child inherits as a consequence of their parents' discipleship. The implications, of course, are that parents need to be disciples themselves. It is most important that Christian families are not carnal, in the sense of being 'secular' or merely 'religious adherents of Christ'. That is *not* a Christian family.

References:

Gen 4:3-4
Joh 1:29
Exo 12:3
Eph 6:1-3

Further Study

Deu 6

Daily Proverb

Proverbs 25

The transition to personal discipleship

Within a Christian family, a child learns the meaning of offering from an early age. They fellowship in the offering of Christ with their parents when they partake of the communion elements, meet Christ personally, and are baptised into the fellowship of His sufferings, death and resurrection. Christ is able to reveal Himself to them and give them His Spirit, enabling them to function as members of His body while they still remain under the faith of their parents. They have the faith of a little child and they are under the faith of their parents; and they're partaking of the benefits of the discipleship of their parents. Children can receive grace, find peace, and gain power over self-centredness and sin while they are still young. They are members of Christ and members of His body until they decide, somewhere in their teenage years or beyond, they're going to walk away. That's the marvellous grace and blessing that comes to our children *as parents walk as disciples of Christ*.

Now when a child 'comes of age' somewhere in their middle teenage years, it is required of them by the Lord that they personally become a disciple of Christ. Again, we note the experiences of Cain and Abel. They were most likely teenagers when they first presented themselves to make offering. And, at this point, the opportunity to be redefined to their individual sonship name was available. So too, our teenagers will hear the call to follow Christ as disciples according to their faith, rather than under the faith of their parents' discipleship. They must present themselves to God to be the son and the person whom He has called them to be. Their personal offering is to be made within the fellowship of the church. Their commitment as disciples of Christ is to the leaders of the body of Christ within the local church to which they belong.

References:

Eph 6:1
1Co 1:9
Php 3:10
Rom 12:1-2

Further Study

Mat 4

Daily Proverb

Proverbs 26

Accountable for individual response

It is not uncommon to witness children in the church participate in the ministry of life and grace in quite amazing ways. This is done by children who are learning the culture of the house, but are participating under the faith of their parents. We may hear them prophesy, testify, encourage, write songs, and work miracles with gifts of the Spirit of God. Later, having witnessed this participation, it seems inconceivable that the child would not continue to walk in the way of discipleship. Again, we must accept that, at the point of accountable and individual response to the word, each child has to make a choice. Some children choose to turn aside from the faith of the discipleship in which their parents have trained them. This point of decision happens sometime around the middle to late teenage years.

Amazingly, a person only *loses* their place in the kingdom of heaven (if they've grown up under the faith of their parent, are born of God and come on through) when they *decide* to *walk away from Christ* and *walk out of the door*, like Cain did. It was the Lord Himself who grappled with Cain, and it was all to do with *his* offering. The reality is that Cain was a good boy! Up until his personal encounter with God, he was diligently doing the work that his father had taught him. Yet, as we read earlier, the Lord had something different for his name. He was to be the firstborn of all creation. He was to be the king-priest, although he never had been a king-priest before. God had *this* for him and he was going to *learn this through offering!* So there was nothing wrong with the produce that he had grown! Nevertheless, this wasn't who God had called Cain to be.

References:

Heb 3:14

Joh 6:66

Gen 4:2-7

Col 1:15-18

Further Study

Heb 4

Daily Proverb

Proverbs 27

A process of choosing

For our own salvation, and the salvation of our children, we must remain steadfast in discipleship and instruct our children in the pathway of discipleship. We need to continue to have our carnal approaches dealt with so that we are being renewed day by day in the Spirit. We must accept, however, that at some point we will no longer have a say over the choices and activities of our adult sons and daughters. They must come through a *process of choosing to walk in the way of the baptism* they were baptised in under the faith of their parents.

When our children respond to the word that calls their name, they will begin putting Christ first in their lives. As parents *and* fellow disciples, we can rejoice when our children begin to confess that they love Christ even more than their families. This is what Jesus was saying when He declared, 'He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me; and he who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me. And he who does not take his cross and follow after Me is not worthy of Me. He who has found his life will lose it, and he who has lost his life for My sake will find it.' When our children confess this, they are committing to be named by God and to join the offering of Christ. It's helpful to note that this point of commitment is a progression, as opposed to a one-off event. It involves a *context of training in the body of Christ* where they *proceed forward*, or progressively and slowly *proceed to walk away*.

References:

1Co 15:58 2Co 4:16
Col 3:10 Eph 4:23-24
Mat 10:37-39

Further Study

Eph 4

Daily Proverb

Proverbs 28

The importance of family devotions

As families who are committed to discipleship and committed to the discipline and instruction of our children, it is vital that we maintain personal devotions and family devotions as followers of Christ. Not only is this an essential foundation of our own discipleship, but our young children are under our faith. Children cannot be covered by the faith of their parents if their parents are not in the faith! Our children will be functioning in the body of Christ according to how the devotions are running in the home.

Some people may view devotions as optional, giving little attention to reading the Bible with their children or praying with them each day. This 'lack' often reflects a lack in the personal devotions of the parents. They think, in error, that what is available to their children on a Sunday will be sufficient to assure their passage into heaven. The truth of the matter, as has been stated already, is that the children are in the fellowship under the faith of the parents. So every parent needs to take heed to their culture and devotional life so that the children are not in confusion in our homes.

At this time, we all have opportunity to consider the culture of our houses and to answer the question, 'Are we a discipleship family?' This presents an excellent opportunity for fellowship with other houses similarly looking to continue and grow in the way of discipleship. We can help each other as we discuss approaches to devotions, how we are teaching our children to honour and respect others, helping them to understand how and where to make offering, etc. Remember that, just like Adam and Eve, we are not perfect parents, and yet we can find grace as we humble ourselves before the Lord and receive the abundant grace that is available in the fellowship of His body.

References:

1Jn 1:3
Jas 4:10
1Th 5:11

2Ti 3:16
Heb 4:16
2Th 2:17

Further Study

2Ti 3

Daily Proverb

Proverbs 29