



study questions

Use these questions in your community group time to dig deeper and discover how you can apply today's message to everyday life.



INTRODUCTION

Life "is more than I can bear." We may not be like Cain, who murdered his brother, but we feel his pain. Sometimes it seems like the struggle of staying alive and well never ends. What we feel at that point is the cosmic war we saw start last week. We can pretend passivism and declare the powers that be leave us alone, but the very act makes us participants and cannon fodder for the real enemy.

We God-followers often get sucked into this struggle because we major on the minor skirmishes. Instead of keeping big picture in mind, we make up names like "the culture war." That phrase may have some truth to it, but the fact is our God is far greater than any culture. If we're not careful, we get sidetracked into believing really silly things like that's all there is - i.e. if we can just win that court case or pass that law, all will be better.

That's not to say that Christians shouldn't be deeply involved and caring for the public square, and especially all people in it. But we've got bigger fish to fry. God asks for our trust in the midst of UWWI (Universal World War I). When we get our eyes and hearts on him our life and hope dramatically changes.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Have you ever felt strongly that you were a casualty of God's war against evil?
2. Read Genesis 3:21 - 4:24 together, all at one time.
 - a. Why did God banish Adam & Eve's family from the garden [3:22]? Was it all punishment or was there something else?
 - b. There is much talk about 4:2 regarding Eve's statement of "bringing fourth a man." Was she claiming she was a creator too, or pointing to God in spite of sin's curse?
 - c. What are the ramifications for humanity of Cain's horrible act of murdering his brother? What about for your life and family?
 - d. [4:15] What is God doing in his response to Cain's fears (was he repentant or complaining?) What does God's response foreshadow? What does it say about him?
 - e. In 4:17-24, what characteristics of human culture and the city (Hebrew = "Ur") that are still around today (both good and bad)?
3. What ramifications do you see from this narrative for our lives today?
4. What do you make of the three thoughts about "How then shall we live?" that Dwain spoke of on Sunday? Treat every person as made in the image of God; Make decisions based on God's truth, not personal feelings; Trust God to provide.
5. Is there a relationship, part of your thought life, or a life-direction you need to ask your brothers and sisters to pray for you about this week?

MOVING FORWARD

God had a great plan. It was a plan that would have us know and feel his all-powerful omniscient presence and protection every day, every hour, every second. But we broke with him, and now we are where we are.

The beauty of this account is this: Not only is our struggle not a new one, but God has been reversing it for years. He could have just nuked evil in the beginning, but he was thinking of you and me. "Not wanting any to perish" [2 Peter 3:9] he literally redeemed his plan to make sin work backwards.

CHANGING YOUR MIND

"...take heart! I have overcome the world." Jesus - John 16:33