

Understanding **evil**

The recent shooting in Las Vegas is yet another shocking tragedy in what appears to be an endless string of violence. How can we possibly make sense of a seemingly senseless act? From its first stories, the Bible presents a clear picture of what happens when people disconnect themselves from God. Yet throughout its pages, it also reveals how we can take a stand against evil.

Cain and Abel **Genesis 4:1-8**

1 Now the man knew his wife Eve, and she conceived and bore Cain, saying, "I have produced a man with the help of the Lord." **2** Next she bore his brother Abel. Now Abel was a keeper of sheep, and Cain a tiller of the ground.

3 In the course of time Cain brought to the Lord an offering of the fruit of the ground, **4** and Abel for his part brought of the firstlings of his flock, their fat portions. And the Lord had regard for Abel and his offering, **5** but for Cain and his offering he had no regard.

So Cain was very angry, and his countenance fell. **6** The Lord said to Cain, "Why are you angry, and why has your countenance fallen?"

7 If you do well, will you not be accepted? And if you do not do well, sin is lurking at the door; its desire is for you, but you must master it."

8 Cain said to his brother Abel, "Let us go out to the field."

And when they were in the field, Cain rose up against his brother Abel, and killed him.

OBSERVATIONS

Evil is a matter of choice.

God has given human beings a free will. God intends us to use this will for good, but now that we have become a fallen race, we can also use our will for evil.

Evil begins in our thoughts.

Because of this, we need to pay careful attention to our thought-life. The greatest battles between good and evil begin here.

Evil loves isolation.

The best way to battle evil is to develop and maintain healthy relationships.

Evil changes our countenance.

Whenever someone's countenance changes, we need to start asking questions.

Evil is more easily addressed early.

A daily check of our heart helps uproot evil quickly.

Evil premeditates action.

Let's not fool ourselves. We cannot entertain evil thoughts without a change in our behavior.

We can master it!

God has given us the gift of his Holy Spirit who helps us overcome the evil within us.



Perform Regular Heart Check-ups

Check your heart regularly. Identify and name anything that doesn't belong to the healthy life God desires us to live. Confess this to God, who promises to be your helper.

Pay Attention to Other's Countenance

Keep an eye on your friends and family. If someone's countenance falls, start asking questions. Don't be invasive, but extend an open invitation to talk.



Questions *for reflection or group discussion:*

Do you catch evil thoughts quickly or do you tend to let them linger?

Is there anyone around you whose countenance has fallen?

How will you make time for them?



Your Notes *what God is saying to you:*
