

My Brother's Keeper

By Ronald L. Dart

“And Cain talked with Abel his brother: and it came to pass, when they were in the field, that Cain rose up against Abel his brother, and slew him. And the Lord said unto Cain, where is Abel your brother? And he said, I know not: am I my brother's keeper?” (Genesis 4:8-9).

Cain was a murderer and a liar. And in two terse sentences, he revealed the kind of character that led to these sins: Cain was the center of his universe. No one mattered but him. He accepted responsibility for no one but himself.

Jude called it “the way of Cain” (Jude 11). It was the way of Cain to concern himself solely with his own needs, his own wants, and his own rights. Let the other man look out for himself. Since Cain did not want in any way to accept responsibility for others, God sent him away from others. As he was a spiritual isolationist, God gave him all the isolation a man could ever want.

The way of Cain is remarkably persistent. We find it in every age of man, and in every place—even in the church. Paul warned Timothy, “This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, Without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, Traitors, heady, high-minded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; *Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof:* from such turn away” (2 Timothy 3:1-5).

In the very last days of man on this earth, there will be people walking in the way of Cain. They will be people who have a *form of godliness*. They will be *church* people. Like Cain, they will be spiritual isolationists. They may enjoy fellowship, but they will want to avoid all responsibility to others or for others. They are people who insist on their rights, their freedoms—even the freedom to commit sin without it being anyone's business. Were God to ask about another member, they might well

reply, “Am I my brother's keeper?”

OUR RIGHTS

Just how responsible are we to be? How much are we expected to sacrifice in order to avoid hurting another person—especially a brother? Have we no rights at all?

The Corinthians believed that they had certain rights relative to one another—rights that could be enforced *in court* if necessary. Paul was shocked. Brother was going to law with brother and that before the unbelievers. “Now therefore there is utterly a fault among you,” he declared, “because ye go to law one with another. *Why do you not rather take wrong? Why do ye not rather suffer yourselves to be defrauded?*” (1 Corinthians 6:7).

Yes, we do have rights relative to one another, but there is a limit beyond which we must not go to enforce those rights. We may be called upon to sacrifice those rights rather than cause harm to another. It is the way of Cain to blindly insist upon our rights at the expense of our brother.

As it happens, the Corinthians had imbibed deeply of this way of thinking. Paul had plainly taught them to abstain from the pollution of idols (Acts 15:20, 23, 29). This was not accepted without argument. Someone had

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Kentucky Lake Feast

It's time for us to make our plans for the 2018 Feast of Tabernacles and we are blessed with many options to choose from. The Kentucky Lake Cooperative Feast believes their site is one of the best. It is sponsored by Church of God International (CGI), Christian Educational Ministries (CEM), and several independent churches. It is a family-friendly site with a backdrop of one of the most beautiful locations in the country—Kentucky Lake and Lake Barkley. The website, <https://lbleastoftabernacles.wordpress.com/about>, has been updated with the preliminary schedule, and housing rates—CHECK IT OUT!!



YEA Program for the Holy Days

The Youth Educational Adventures (YEA) program provides materials written to help parents and teachers to more easily and effectively teach children and teenagers God's Word at home and in church in an age-appropriate way. Children and teens are a gift from God, and core Bible teaching and practical aspects of Christian living are equally as important to them as they are to adults. YEA lessons can answer the whys and explain the hows, that can help bring children and teens closer to God. To do all of this, YEA has a comprehensive program of age-appropriate lessons, for students ages three through 19.

Several people have shared with us recently that they did not have enough resources to teach the lessons every week and we understand. For those small churches and families who are struggling with time, space, and teacher availability, why not focus on teaching God's annual holy days at the appropriate time each year? We have separate Festival lessons for each age level and we are making them available at a special discounted rate of \$3.95 for student lessons and \$1.95 for teacher guides.

Friends of CEM Cruise

This is a great year for a Feast of Tabernacles cruise. The feast starts on Sunday evening, September 23, at sunset and ends the following Sunday. The Last Great Day is Monday, October 1. These dates are perfect for a seven day cruise out of Galveston, Texas, on Royal Caribbean's *Liberty of the Seas*. The itinerary is to leave Galveston on Sunday afternoon, Monday and Tuesday are spent at sea, Wednesday is Coxen Hole (Roatan), Honduras, Thursday is Belize City, Friday is Cozumel, Sabbath is spent at sea, and return to Galveston on Sunday morning.

Worship services will be held on the ship. The Friends of CEM group has multiple options for the Last Great Day including meeting with one of the other groups feasting in Galveston or with the Houston Church of God. If you are interested in this unique opportunity please call or email Jenny Murphy, 405-714-8524, email: jenny@mytravelcrush.com. She will be keeping the Feast on the ship with the cruisers. Note: This cruise is not sponsored by CEM.



Radio Update

WXJC, 850 AM, in Birmingham, Alabama is changing their format and *Born to Win* will no longer be heard there. We are looking for an alternative station in that area. The owner/manager of Christian Faith Network has taken the *Born to Win* program off their five stations in Florida because he felt some of Ron Dart's teachings were not in accordance with their doctrinal statement. The sponsor of those programs in Florida is also looking for alternate stations. Please pray for God to open other doors for the program in this part of Florida and in other areas as well.

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replied, and his reply had run along these lines: “Why should we have to abstain from such a good, plentiful, cheap source of clean meat. We have *knowledge*. We *know* that this idol is nothing. It is just stone, and it has no effect on the meat being offered. Meat is meat, and it makes no difference to me what the butcher had in mind when he slaughtered it. Why should my liberty be judged of another man’s conscience?”

Paul understood their argument and realized that, while there was some truth in it, the argument included a fatal error—it was based on the way of Cain.

“Now as touching things offered unto idols,” Paul began, “we know that we all have knowledge. Knowledge puffeth up, but charity edifieth. And if any man think that he knoweth any thing, he knoweth nothing yet as he ought to know” (1 Corinthians 8:1-2).

With this rebuke, Paul begins an important explanation: “As concerning therefore the eating of those things that are offered in sacrifice unto idols, we know that an idol is nothing in the world, and there is none other God but one. . . *Howbeit there is not in every man that knowledge? . . .*” (vv. 4-7).

And there lies the point. You are not living on this planet alone. You have responsibilities.

Paul acknowledged the obvious: “But meat commendeth us not to God: for neither, if we eat, are we the better; neither, if we eat not, are we the worse. But take heed lest by any means this liberty of yours become a stumblingblock to them that are weak” (vv. 8-9).

How could this be? Paul explains: “For if any man see thee which hast ‘knowledge’ sit at meat in the idol’s temple, shall not the conscience of him which is weak be emboldened to eat those things which are offered to idols; and through thy ‘knowledge shall the weak brother perish, for whom Christ died?’” (vv. 10-11).

But is it really all that serious? Paul continues, “But when ye sin so against the brethren, and wound their weak conscience, ye sin against Christ. Wherefore, if meat make my brother to offend, I will eat no flesh while the world standeth, lest I make my brother to offend” (vv. 12-13).

Paul’s reaction is about as far from the way of Cain as one can get. Is it really necessary to go that far? Take another look at the consequences and then ask that question. Jesus said that such offenses would take place,

but pronounces woe upon the man causing the offense. “It were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and he cast into the sea, than that he should offend one of these little ones” (Luke 17:2).

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IT’S MY BUSINESS

But supposing no one knows? What difference can it make to my brother (even if it is a sin) if I keep the whole thing to myself? Isn’t it *my* business how I run my life? There was a man once who reasoned that way. His name was Achan.

Everyone knows about the battle of Jericho (Joshua 6). But unless you have read the story, you may have missed the most important lesson in the whole thing.

God had cursed the city of Jericho. The city, everything and everyone in it were to be destroyed. The things that wouldn’t burn (silver, gold, iron, and brass) were to be brought into the treasury of the Lord (Joshua 6:19). But a man named Achan found an expensive imported garment, a wedge of gold, and some silver. He took them and hid them in his tent. Maybe God would be displeased, but he would chance it. No one would know, and God rarely acted immediately to punish specific sins. He could repent later.

But it turned out to be much more serious than that. You can read the story in Joshua 7. The wording is interesting: “But *the children of Israel* committed a trespass in the accursed thing: for Achan. . . took of the accursed thing: and the anger of the Lord was kindled against *the children of Israel*.” Achan sinned, and *the children of Israel* were guilty!

When I was in the Navy, I recall that the principle of collective punishment was the order of the day. If one man lost points on an inspection, the whole company suffered. Needless to say, there was much muttering about the fairness of the procedure. Why should all of us suffer because of the laziness of one feckless sailor? But when we saw that the rule was not going to change, we all began to put pressure on the laggards in our midst. It

The Resurrection Story
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worked, but that wasn't the real lesson. The real lesson was that we all depended on one another, and that in battle, one man's negligence could cost us all our lives. We had to accept responsibility for one another.

So it was that when Israel next went into battle, they were defeated. Thirty-six men lost their lives because one man walked in the way of Cain. Achan could have argued that his sin was his own business. As it turned out, it was very much the business of the thirty-six men who died at a little town called Ai. God wanted all Israel to understand how the sins of one man affect everyone around him.

WOE IS ME

There is yet one more characteristic of the way of Cain and one more man who walked in that way. When Cain was caught in his sin, he might have repented. Instead, *he felt sorry for himself!* There was no pity for his dead brother, mind you. All he could do was groan, "My punishment is greater than I can bear" (Genesis 4:13).

There was a man named Baruch, who had the unenviable task of acting as a scribe for the prophet Jeremiah. Only after reading these prophecies can we understand the depression that must have settled on Baruch's shoulders. But Baruch could spare no pity for Israel. He could only feel sorry for himself: "Woe is me now!" he lamented, "for the Lord hath added grief to my sorrow; I fainted in my sighing, and I find no rest" (Jeremiah 45:3).

Listen to God's reply: "Behold, that which I have built will I break down, and that which I have planted I will pluck up, even the whole land. And seekest thou great things for thyself? seek them not: for, behold, I will bring evil upon all flesh, saith the LORD: but thy life I will give unto thee for a prey in all places whither thou goest" (vv. 4-5).

Here we are, living in the last days of man's misrule on this planet, and some of us can only think about *our* rights, *our* feelings. We could be the custodians of God's

last message for mankind, and still be worried about whether we are getting the credit we are due.

What this all means is that we can't spend the rest of our Christian life by the "every man for himself" philosophy. We are indeed "our brother's keeper" and, as such, we need to spare a little thought, a little consideration, and a little pity for our brother.

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It all comes down to a question of whether we will be self-centered and walk in the way of Cain, or whether we will be God-centered and walk in the way of Jesus Christ. His way is different, you know. Paul described that way thus: "Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves. Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others. *Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus:* who. . . made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross" (Philippians 2:3-8).

Ignite Summer Camp

2018 Ignite Summer camp, co-sponsored by CEM and Church of God International (CGI), will be held July 6-10 at the Timberline Camp and Conference Center in Linwood, Texas. Registration is open now for children and teens ages 10 through 17. Cost is only \$99 per student. Register early—there are only 36 spaces available this year. Visit www.cgi.org/camp for more information.

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That the man of God may be proficient and equipped for every good work.

CEM Mission Statement

Christian Educational Ministries (CEM) was founded in November 1995 by Ron and Allie Dart as an independent, non-denominational ministry to serve the public and individual Christians of every kind through the ministry of Ronald L. Dart. Mr. Dart, an ordained minister and evangelist, has served God through hundreds of sermons, broadcasts, Bible Studies, and books—bringing clarity and simplicity to topics.

CEM promotes Ron Dart’s radio ministry, *Born to Win*, which is heard from coast-to-coast. His clear, conversational, and inviting style can be heard the world over. The *Born to Win* website, www.borntowin.net, features more than 1000 of Mr. Dart’s timeless sermons and studies at any one time.

Our mission is:

- First, to share the Gospel of Jesus Christ to the world. (Matthew 28).
- Second, to teach the disciples of Jesus Christ so that they may be “proficient and equipped for every good work.” (2 Timothy 3:17).
- Third, to teach and train this generation and the next with studies and programs focused on youth, through the Dart’s special passion, Youth Educational Adventures (YEA). (Deuteronomy 11:19, Proverbs 22:6).
- Fourth, to bring God’s people closer together, through cooperative efforts wherever they may be. (2 Corinthians 5:18).

To this end, we teach the Bible and its Truth, with a goal of helping people make their own lives work while they are a positive influence and blessing to those around them. Follow Mr. Dart and CEM at www.borntowin.net, Facebook, YouTube, and other media.

May Scripture Writing Plan

We encourage you to read each day’s scripture and then write it down in a notebook, a journal, on index cards, in a text message or whatever method you know works best for you. If you can’t write it down, consider speaking the scripture and recording it on your cell phone or voice recorder. Our goal is to have read and written down a minimum of 365 scriptures by the end of 2018. Let’s do this and see the value it brings to our lives.



May 01	Ecclesiastes 2:26	May 11	Philippians 4:4	May 21	Psalms 126:5-6
May 02	John 16:24	May 12	Galatians 5:22- 23	May 22	Jude 1:24
May 03	1 Peter 1:8	May 13	Isaiah 30:29	May 23	Psalms 51:12
May 04	James 1:2-4	May 14	Jeremiah 15:16	May 24	2 Corinthians 7:4
May 05	Psalms 16:11	May 15	John 16:22	May 25	Romans 5:10-11
May 06	Isaiah 55:12	May 16	Romans 14:16-17	May 26	Psalms 118:24
May 07	1 John 1:4-5	May 17	2 John 1:12	May 27	Zephaniah 3:17
May 08	Psalms 71:23	May 18	Luke 15:10	May 28	Hebrews 12:2
May 09	Nehemiah 8:10	May 19	Colossians 1:10-11	May 29	John 15:11
May 10	Psalms 4:7	May 20	Acts 13:52	May 30	Psalms 30:5
				May 31	1 Thessalonians 5:16

Born to Win

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Two Messages on One **FREE** CD

Agape: Love or Charity?

What is *agape* love? What role does it play in being our brother’s keeper? Is it feelings and emotions? Does it have something to do with the kind of person you are and how you put God’s law into action in your life? In this remarkable message about *agape* Mr. Dart shows us that it is about how you behave, not how you feel. It is not a matter of liking or not liking, it is a matter of action toward others. He gives excellent examples and scriptures showing how practicing *agape* toward others is better for you.

The Authority of Christ

Jesus Christ, our LORD —what does it mean? Does Jesus Christ have ‘authority’ in your life? Is He the boss? If Jesus Christ is your LORD does that impact how you live your life? How does it fit with Deuteronomy 29:29, “The secret things belong unto the LORD our God: but those things which are revealed belong unto us and to our children for ever, that we may do all the words of this law.” This is an excellent message by Ronald L. Dart reminding us of what it means to put Jesus Christ in charge.

Thank you so much for supporting this ministry with your prayers and generous donations. We appreciate you and all that you do to help us share God’s Word to those who are called to hear.

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