

My Brothers' Keeper

- Notice where the apostrophe lies?

Gen 4:3 And in process of time it came to pass, that Cain brought of the fruit of the ground an offering unto the LORD. 4 And Abel, he **also brought** of the **firstlings** of his flock and of the **fat** (*Heb.2459- richest or choice part*) thereof. (*Gives the idea that Cain brought the best of what he had to offer. But sometimes our best isn't what lines up with what God expects.*) And the LORD had respect unto Abel and to his offering.* 5 But unto Cain and to his offering He had not respect. And Cain was very wroth, and his countenance fell. 6 And the LORD said unto Cain, Why art thou wroth? and why is thy countenance fallen? 7 If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted (*Heb.7613- figuratively elation or cheerfulness*)? [*"If you had done the right thing, you would be smiling."* - CEV] and if thou doest not well, sin lieth at the door. And unto thee *shall be* his desire, and thou shalt rule over him. (*"It wants to rule you, but you must overcome it."* - GNB) 8 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. 9 And the LORD said unto Cain, Where *is* Abel thy brother? And he said, I know not: **Am I my brother's keeper** (*Heb.8104- guard; generally to protect: watch [-man])?*

Lev 17:11 For the life of the flesh is in the blood: and I have given it to you upon the altar to make an atonement for your souls: for it is the **blood that **maketh an atonement for the soul.***

- Because Cain's offering contained no blood it was not offered in faith (*Heb 11:4*) thus unacceptable to God in order to make atonement for his sins and was told to watch his temper over it. He could have bartered with Abel for a blood offering since he was not a shepherd as was Abel. Cain only had one brother at that time, and he was responsible for him since Abel was his younger sibling. But we are not in the same situation as was Cain in having only one brother for we have many who are in Christ. And many of them **are** our **younger** (*newer converts*) siblings in the Lord. And just because **other** brethren seem to be responsible for these siblings, ultimately we are all responsible to every brother/sister that we are in fellowship with, especially within the local congregation.

Heb 13:7 Remember them which have the rule over you (*here speaking of "leaders"*), who have spoken unto you the word of God: whose faith follow, considering the end (*"outcome" -ESV*) of *their* conversation (*Gk.391- behavior*).

"After all, they had taught the word of God to the believers, thereby displaying a faith worthy of imitation."
Gary Hampton

1Pe 5:5 Likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder. Yea, all *of you* **be subject one to another**, and be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble. (*Cain's pride got him in trouble.*)

A parable.

Mat 25:14 *For the kingdom of heaven is as a man travelling into a far country, who called his own servants, and delivered unto them his goods.* 15 And unto one he gave five talents, to

another two, and to another one; to **every man according to his several** (*Gk.2398- pertaining to self, that is, one's own*) **ability**; and straightway took his journey.

- There are many times when we might ask “how much more does God think I can handle?”, but we need to also understand that He knows us better than we know ourselves and won't put on our plates any more than we can handle. So just at the time we think we can't handle any more is the time we need to realize just how strong we truly are if we really do believe God's word. Which is why He gave only one talent to the individual that could only handle that amount. But, he was still responsible to use that single talent toward, as I believe the parable is leaning, the growth of the kingdom.

1Co 10:13 There hath no temptation (*Gk.3986- a putting to proof [by experiment {of good}, experience {of evil}, solicitation, discipline or provocation]*) taken you but such as is common to man: but God *is* faithful, Who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear *it*.

1Co 10:13 Every test that you have experienced is the kind that normally comes to people. But God keeps His promise, and He will not allow you to be tested beyond your power to remain firm; at the time you are put to the test, He will give you the strength to endure it, and so provide you with a way out. (GNB)

- These abilities that we are given have been given to us for good reason.

Eph 4:12 For the perfecting (*Gk.2677- complete furnishing*) of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ:

Mat 25:19 After a long time the lord of those **servants** (*members of the Lord's body*) cometh, and reckoned with them.

2Co 5:10 For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things *done* in *his* body, according to that he hath done, whether *it be* good or bad. (*What this parable is in referring here to is the judgment scene.*)

Mat 25:29 For unto every one that hath (*those who have used their God given* abilities in growing the kingdom while the King is away*) shall be given (*even more opportunities to use his God given abilities*), and he shall have abundance (*this is the “abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness” given only to those who “shall reign in life by One, Jesus Christ.-Rom 5:17*): but from him that hath not (*those who have not used their God given abilities toward the growth of the kingdom, the church*) shall be taken away even that which he hath (*every ability along with his life*). **30** And cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

**1Th 3:12 And the Lord make you to increase and abound in love one toward another, and toward all men, even as we do toward you: 13 To the end He may stablish your hearts unblameable in holiness before God, even our Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all His saints (Gk.40- sacred [ones]).*

Mat 25:31 When the Son of man shall come in His glory, and all the holy (*Gk.40- sacred*) angels with Him, then shall He sit upon the throne of His glory: **32** And before Him shall be gathered all nations: and He shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divides *his*

sheep from the goats: 33 And He shall set the sheep on His right hand, but the goats on the left. *(And then from among the sheep His angels will separate the good from the bad from within the His kingdom, a.k.a. the church.)*

Mat 13:41 The Son of man shall send forth His angels, and they shall gather **out of His kingdom** all things that offend, and them which **do iniquity**; 42 And shall cast them into a furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth. 43 Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Who hath ears to hear, let him hear.

- Doing iniquity would include not watching out for each other. It would be like burying our talent in the dirt thinking we can just coast through life without having to put forth the effort that being involved would require.

Mat 25:34 Then shall the King say unto them on His right hand, Come, ye blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: 35 For I was an hungered, and ye gave Me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave Me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took Me in: 36 Naked, and ye clothed Me: I was sick, and ye visited Me: I was in prison, and ye came unto Me. 37 Then shall the righteous answer Him, saying, Lord, when saw we Thee an hungered, and fed *Thee*? or thirsty, and gave *Thee* drink? 38 When saw we Thee a stranger, and took *Thee* in? or naked, and clothed *Thee*? 39 Or when saw we Thee sick, or in prison, and came unto Thee? 40 And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch **as ye have done it unto one of the least of these My brethren**, ye have done *it* unto Me. *(As you have been a “brother’s keeper” to one of the least of these brothers of Christ, you’ve been a brother to Christ!)*

- We are not called to do some **great** thing! We are called to do the **little** things. These are the ones that get God’s attention and which bring the **greater** rewards when we are our brothers’ keepers.

Mar 9:41 For whosoever shall **give you a cup of water to drink in My name** *(Gk.3686-authority)*, because ye belong to Christ, verily I say unto you, **he shall not lose his reward**. *(Even a cup of water can produce such a great reward in Heaven.)*

Gal 6:1 Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, **ye which are spiritual**, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted. *. (Even those who are spiritually mature can sometimes be provoked into sinning.)* 2 Bear *(Gk.941- [through the idea of removal]; to lift, literally or figuratively [endure, sustain, receive, etc.])* ye **one another's** burdens *(strong bear the burdens of the weak, and the weak bear the burdens of the strong)*, and so fulfil the law of Christ *(“...love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another.- Jn 13:34)*. *(“You obey the law of Christ when you offer each other a helping hand.”-CEV)* 3 For if a man think himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceiveth himself. *(He is not fulfilling the law of Christ because love “is not puffed up” -1 Cor 13:4)* 4 But let every man prove his own work, and then shall he have rejoicing *(Gk.2745- a boast in a good or bad sense)* in himself alone, and not in another *(“...without comparing yourself to others.” -GW)*. 5 For every man shall bear his own burden.

- Not only are we to “bear one another’s burdens”, we are **not** to be a burden on others by neglecting our own part of the work. Of course this takes spiritual maturity which can

only come from personal Bible study, our attendance **and** in fellowshiping with faithful brethren

What then is our responsibility to the brethren?

Act 20:26 Wherefore I take you to record this day, that I *am* pure from the blood of all *men*. 27 For I have **not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel** (*Gk.1012- advice: will*) of **God**. 28 **Take heed** (*Gk.4337- pay attention*) therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to **feed** (*Gk.4165- to tend as a shepherd [or figuratively supervisor]*) **the church** of God, which He hath purchased with His own blood. 29 For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. 30 Also of your own selves (*among you elders*) shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them. 31 Therefore **watch** (*Gk.1127- be vigilant*), and **remember**, that by the space of three years I ceased not to **warn** every one night and day with tears.

- Of course in order to do all these things, serious Bible study is of the utmost importance. In our case, we are to be our “spiritual” brothers’ keepers which far exceeds being natural guards to our physical family (*understanding the difference being that we will spend eternity with our spiritual family, the church, in Heaven*). And it would be extra special if members of our earthly family were also members of our heavenly family.

Mat 10:32 Whosoever therefore shall confess Me before men, him will I confess also before My Father which is in heaven. 33 But whosoever shall deny Me before men*, him will I also deny before My Father which is in heaven. 34 Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword. 35 For I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter in law against her mother in law. 36 And a man's foes *shall be* they of his own household. 37 He that loveth father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me.

Mat 12:50 For whosoever shall do the will of My Father which is in Heaven, the same is My brother, and sister, and mother.

- A person can say they believe in Christ, but would deny Him *when they refuse to do everything He asks him to do.

1Th 5:11 Wherefore **comfort yourselves together** (*Gk.240- one another*), and **edify** (*Gk.3618- build up, embolden*) one another, even as also ye do. (“...encourage one another and help one another, just as you are now doing.”- GNB) 12 And we beseech you, brethren, to **know them which labour** among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you; 13 And to **esteem** (*Gk.2233- consider*) **them** very highly (*doesn't say we are to put them on a pedestal*) in love **for their work's sake**. (*In other words we are to encourage those who stand before us to continue doing what they do. It doesn't take a lot to tell someone what a great job they did leading the Lord's table, praying or teaching. Such encouragement goes a long way toward making that brother want to lead again or even do more. This is why some congregations have a hard time getting men to do such things as heading the table, wording prayers or leading the church in songs. No encouragement is akin to discouragement!*) And **be at peace** among yourselves. 14 Now we exhort you, brethren, **warn** them that are unruly, **comfort the feebleminded** (*Gk.3642- little spirited, that is,*

faint hearted) [It doesn't take much to discourage some of the weaker brethren.], **support the weak, be patient toward all** *men.* 15 See that none render evil for evil unto any *man*; but ever **follow that which is good**, both among yourselves, and to all *men*.

Php 2:2 Fulfil ye my joy, that ye **be likeminded**, having the same love, *being of one accord, of one mind.* 3 **Let nothing be done through strife** (*Gk.2052- faction*) [This is what happens when some don't get their own way in certain matters and go around behind the scenes getting others to side with them.] **or vainglory** (*Gk.2754- empty glorying, that is, self-conceit*); but in lowliness of mind **let each esteem** (*Gk.2233- figuratively to deem, that is, consider*) **other better than themselves.**

- So to sum it all up, we are our brothers' keepers when we: are in subjection to each other, bear each other's burdens, teach the complete will of **God** without editing, pay attention to feed each other, be vigilant in remembering to warn each other when necessary and especially those who are spiritually insubordinate, console those in need of building up, embolden each other when it comes to telling the world about the gospel, know those who labor among us and encourage them, act peaceful, and on and on the list can go. But ultimately, when we can consider everyone else as being **better** than ourselves only then have we become "our brothers' keepers"!

So if you are not a brother/sister in **Christ**, but would like to experience the safety that comes with being in the family, **His** church, you need to...

Hear: **Romans 10:17** ... "faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of **God**."

Believe: **Heb 11:6** ... "for he that commeth to **God** must believe that **He** is"...

Repent: **Lk 13:3** ... "except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish."

Confess: **Mat 10:32** "Whosoever shall confess Me before men, him will I confess before My Father which is in Heaven."

Be baptized: **Acts 22:16** "And now why tarriest thou? Arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the **Lord**."

Remain faithful: **Rom 6:4** ... "even so we also should walk in newness of life."

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References: CEV- Contemporary English Version; ESV- English Standard Version; GNB- Good News Bible; GW- God's Word (*e-Sword*)

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