

Thank you for your interest in the “*Folks Like Us*” Bible studies by Fran Sciacca. Whether you’re using them for your own spiritual growth and journey, or as a resource for your small group, Sunday school, or homeschool program, you’ll soon discover why these studies originally sold over 600,000 copies in their print editions. The recent decision by the publisher to discontinue print editions and to return the publishing rights back to Fran has given him the freedom to make the nearly 70 individual character studies available to you...at no cost.

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Other great resources on fransciacca.com

Now that you’ve begun to explore the Bible study resources developed by Fran Sciacca, you will almost certainly benefit from the other things that he has made available:

- **“*The Road to Shalom*” podcast** – thought-provoking and thoroughly biblical, Fran explores what the Bible calls “shalom,”—the way things are *supposed* to be in God’s Kingdom, why they’re not, and how to restore them. All three seasons are available on the website.
- ***Biblical literacy courses*** – Three, 13-week Bible courses covering the entire Bible. Includes individual course books, audio, and optional animated slide supplements. Course books and animated slide supplements may be purchased on the web store.
- **“*What’s Wrong With the World?*”** – A 14-part video series exploring the questions, “*What is the gospel, and does it really matter?*” and “*What is a disciple, and what does one look like?*” Each episode includes a small group handout as well as supplemental leader’s notes. You may take the series for a “test drive” and purchase the series.
- **“*Knot or Noose? - Recovering the Mystery of Marriage*”** – A 9-part video series for singles, engaged, or married couples exploring marriage from a radical perspective. Instead of trying to figure out how to get God into marriage, this series will guide you into how to place marriage into the center of the larger redemptive plan of God. This conference has been presented live throughout the U.S. in a multitude of different settings. Each episode includes everything needed for a small group. You may take the series for a “test drive” and order the series.



FOLKS Like Us

CAIN

“Self Pity - Doorway to Destruction.”

Timeless truths from our ancient past,
for a journey with God in the modern era.

Fran Sciacca

“*Folks Like Us*” — an introduction

Over the years I’ve written and published a number of Bible studies that collectively have sold well over a half-million copies. They were forged, most of them, in the furnaces of pain, doubt, and loneliness. Maybe that’s why they were well-used, they touched people where they hurt most.

Recently, my publisher decided that they no longer wanted to handle the books that contained these 60 or so individual studies. So, I’ve decided to make them available to any who might benefit from them. At no cost.

I have always believed that because God thought it best to become human in the Incarnation, that perhaps “incarnational truth” was His preferred method of revealing Himself and His purposes to us. I suppose that’s where the basic genre of these studies originated. I wanted to provide believers with Bible studies rooted in our ancestral past. The lives of men and women, who it turns out, are “folks just like us” in so many ways.

So, please take your time and work slowly through as many of these studies as you care to do... there’s a lot of them! And may God use the combination of the struggles and insights of your *ancient* brothers and sisters, combined with those of mine, your modern brother, to help you in your spiritual journey. That is the goal of this project.

Warmly in The Lamb,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Fran Sciacca". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Fran Sciacca
Birmingham, AL

CAIN

“Self-pity - doorway to destruction.”

A **BIDING PRINCIPLE** – Feeling sorry for yourself is the first step on a downward staircase of destructive emotions and behavior.

“When a man is all wrapped up in himself he makes a pretty small package ”— John Ruskin

Cain and Abel were the first children born of human parents. Little did the proud parents, Adam and Eve, realize that the names of these two boys would become synonymous with everything that can go wrong in a family. Cain and Abel experienced sibling rivalry at its worst. They stand as a classic example of human conflict.

But although we're all familiar with *what* happened, few of us understand the cause of Cain's anger. What was it that drove him to kill his own brother that terrible day in the field? Even though it's not clearly stated in the biblical account, enough clues are present for us to come up with a possible explanation. And even more importantly, the tragic life of Cain provides us with a warning about similar tendencies in our own lives.

KEY SCRIPTURE: Genesis 4:1-17

STUDY QUESTIONS...

1. Explain briefly which of the two young men had the harder life, and why. Be creative. (See Genesis 4:2, and also Genesis 1:29-30 and 3:17-19. **Hint:** People didn't begin to eat meat until after the Flood. See Genesis 9:1-3.)

In what way could this have tempted Cain to feel sorry for himself?

2. Self-pity always begins with us comparing our circumstances with someone else's. How do you see this to be true in the case of Cain (Genesis 4:3-5)?
3. God meets Cain at an emotional crossroads in Genesis 4:6-7. What are Cain's options at this point? What is God's counsel?
 - Cain's options:
 - God's counsel:

4. Self-pity's typical pattern is presented below. Trace this pattern in Cain's life using the the four steps below:
 - Step1- I compare myself to someone else, and conclude that life is not "fair."

 - Step 2- I resist the truth about myself.

 - Step 3- I cast blame rather than admit guilt.

 - Step 4- I become angry at others (including God), and isolate myself.

5. In Luke 15:11-32, we see a profound parable told by Jesus. The younger son (the "prodigal son") had his own problems with rebellion. But we see some- thing about the nature of self-pity in the attitude and behavior of the older son (verses 28-30). Read this passage and describe the similarities you see in the rivalry between these brothers and the rivalry between Cain and Abel.

6. In 2 Corinthians 10:3-7, Paul gives some sound counsel regarding spiritual warfare. One of his comments contains a principle that can be applied to our battle with self-pity: "We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ." Write out what you can see in this passage that tells where the battle for self-pity must be fought, and some insights about how to fight it.

7. What basic truth about comparing and complaining do you see in Romans 9:20-21?

12. If you have been battling self-pity lately, pick at least two of these courses of action, and then write out what you intend to do and when.
13. Perhaps you *don't* struggle with self-pity but know of someone who does. How could you help that person find the way out of the mire of feeling sorry for himself or herself? (You may want to consider one or more of the above “antidotes.”)

SCRIPTURE MEMORY (optional)

- The seriousness of self-pity – Genesis 4:7
- A solution for self-pity – Philippians 2:4