

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

ESAU

“The Quiet Assassin of Godlessness”

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

ESAU

“*The Quiet Assassin of Godlessness*”

A **BIDING PRINCIPLE** – A devastating and serious sin for believers is the attitude-conscious or unconscious, that God is not really necessary. Even though we may profess the right "spiritual" things, in consciously or unconsciously ignoring Him where it really matters, we are living as practical atheists.

“The big sin is not idolatry or witchcraft, but those hidden kingdoms of the spirit where Jesus is not Lord.”

– Linda Beach

Abraham had two important grandchildren before he died: a set of twin boys. Everyone knows them as Jacob and Esau, yet few give a passing thought to the fact that whenever the two names are spoken of together, Jacob, the younger, is mentioned *first* (see Joshua 24:4 and Hebrews 11:20).

Esau made a simple and spontaneous choice one day in a field near a warm fire. A choice that stood as a confession about his attitude toward *God* more clearly than anything he would ever do in his entire life. Esau's crucial flaw was forgetting about the Story of God and his place in it. In Scripture, this one deed is identified with a subtle, insidious attitude that has potential for devastation in the life of any follower of Christ.

KEY SCRIPTURE: Genesis 25:19-34

STUDY QUESTIONS...

1. Read over the following passages in Genesis and in your own words, write out the amazing things must *Isaac* have heard, seen, and believed about himself *and* his descendants?
 - a. Genesis: 12:1-2 –
 - b. Genesis: 13:14-16 –
 - c. Genesis: 18:16-19 –
 - d. Genesis , 22:1-18 –
 - e. Genesis 26:1-5 –

2. Why is it reasonable to assume that Esau and Jacob knew all of this too?

3. Look at the verses below that deal with some of the things that were true of firstborn sons in the ancient world. What do these verses say about the firstborn?
 - a. Exodus 22:29 –

 - b. Deuteronomy 21:17 –

 - c. Genesis 27:18-29 (Keep in mind that Isaac *thought* he was describing his firstborn son, Esau, here!)

4. Look back over your responses to the three questions above. What is it that Esau likely knew about himself and the place he was to play in the promises of God as the firstborn?

5. In Genesis 25:29-34, Esau gives away something of great significance for a moment of satisfaction in the form of a warm meal. It says he "despised" his birthright. This is the same word that is used to describe Goliath's attitude toward David in 1 Samuel 17:42. Imagine what the Philistine Goliath was *thinking* about David, and use that to write out in your own words what was very likely Esau's perspective on God and His will for his own life.

6. Read Hebrews 12:14-17 a couple times. The word "godless" in Hebrews 12:16 has its roots in pagan, not Christian, thought. It meant "profane" or "unholy." The word was used to describe a person for whom *nothing* was sacred, one whose life, as it was lived out, had no genuine thought for God. The following passages describe or illustrate what "godlessness" looks like. Use what you see in each passage to help you complete the phrase, "A godless person is one who"
 - a. Genesis 25:30-34 – *"A godless person is one who...*

 - b. Isaiah 29:13 – *"A godless person is one who...*

 - c. Ezekiel 33:30-32 – *"A godless person is one who...*

- d. Matthew 23:28 – “*A godless person is one who...*”
 - e. Luke 12:16-21 – “*A godless person is one who...*”
 - f. 2 Timothy 3:1-5 – “*A godless person is one who...*”
 - g. James 4:13-15 – “*A godless person is one who...*”
7. The word "ungodly" is also used with the word, "godless" in 1 Timothy 1:9. How would you differentiate between these two words? Write out a brief definition of each:
- a. ungodliness
 - b. godlessness
8. Godlessness is essentially leaving God out of places where He belongs. What principle does Paul lay down about the *relationship* between our conversation and our conduct in 2 Timothy 2:16?

Manifestations of godlessness	Gods desired attitude
1 Corinthians 6:19-20	Romans 12:1
James 3:2,9	Psalms 71:8
Deuteronomy 8:17	Deuteronomy 8:10,18
James 4:13	Matthew 26:39
2 Timothy 3:2-5	Colossians 1:9-12

9. Look back over what you have studied so far in this chapter on what godlessness is and how it manifests itself. Think back over the significant decisions in your life since becoming a Christian, and make a list of them. Which of those decisions did you make that were informed by a consciousness of what God might want? Briefly describe them.

10. Describe the decisions you made that you now realize were "godless" choices.
11. Are there any issues in your life right now in which you are in essence ignoring God? Jot them down, and take time right now to ask His forgiveness, and strength to commit these things into His hands, as you pray and study His Word for guidance.

SCRIPTURE MEMORY (optional)

- Preventing godlessness – Proverbs 23:26
- Defining godlessness – Mark 7:6

OPTIONAL

Probably the best examples in the Bible of godless people are some of the prominent religious leaders during the time of Christ, the Pharisees. They truly were “religious” without God (2 Timothy 3:5). Jesus addresses them very forcefully and honestly in Matthew 23. Study this chapter for additional insights into what godlessness looks like and what God values and what He dislikes.