

venom on to his progeny. When he said, "My punishment is worse than I can stand," he was not expressing a penitent attitude but one of self-pity. He continued to think God unfair and justified himself.

Cain hardly seems a likely candidate for a place on a ministerial team. Yet every minister of Christ is capable of the kind of attitudes and behavior that Cain exhibited. When John writes to believers and says, "Do not be like Cain,"<sup>17</sup> he is talking of the avoidance of a real possibility. We can and sometimes do become embittered toward our closest associates. We may not club them to death in a field someday, but murder may be in our hearts. ("Anyone who hates his brother is a murderer." 1 John 3:15.)

Bitterness most often is a possibility when a person loses something he wants very much to retain. Grief can turn to bitter anger if the loss of a loved one is not accepted and their demise blamed on God or some human being. Some people react in bitterness to financial loss or the loss of health. At times it comes as a sinful reaction to a lost opportunity. In one such case, money saved for a person's college education had to be used to defray the expenses of a serious illness in the family. The boy who was to go to college had to go to work to help in the economic crisis. He became bitter and stayed that way through much of his life.

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<sup>17</sup>1 John 3:12