



Small group discussion questions November 2016

Chapter & verse – Francis Brienen (page 18)

Read Genesis 4:1-16, followed by Francis Brienen's article.

1. What, for you, are the most over familiar Bible stories? Is there any way to hear them afresh?
2. The first verse of the Bible passage suggests that Eve named her first son Cain because the name sounds like the Hebrew word 'produced' ('I have produced a man with the help of the Lord.'). Francis notes in paragraph two what Abel's name means. What do you think the significance of the sons' names is?
3. Francis suggests in paragraph three that 'Am I my brother's or sister's keeper?' is an important but relatively easy question. Do you agree? What is the answer?
4. What does God do in the story of Cain and Abel that makes Francis call God 'arbitrary' in paragraph four, and do agree with that description of God's activity in the story?
5. Francis says in paragraph five that such arbitrariness is a theme in the book of Genesis. Can you think of other examples?
6. God goes on to offer Cain 'a challenge and a hope' Francis says in paragraph six. What is the challenge and what is the hope? And how might this apply to our own experience of difficult times?
7. After Cain's crime, Francis says, God meets him with 'judgment and grace'. What form do these take? Does this ring true from your own experience?
8. What conclusion does Francis draw from this story in the final paragraph? What has the story said to you about your relationship with God and/or other people?

