

Ecclesiastes V
The Labour with Others
Ecclesiastes 4:9-12

- I. THE BETTERMENT OF TWO (Ecclesiastes 4:9-10)
- a. Occasions of Two Together
 - i. In marriage (Genesis 2:18)
 - ii. In a friendship (Proverbs 27:17)
 - iii. In leadership (Haggai 1:14)
 - iv. In ministry (Mark 6:7; Acts 13:1-3; Acts 15:36-41)
 - b. The Reward of Their Labour
 - i. In a marriage (Genesis 2:18)
 1. The wife and husband are to help one another (Ecclesiastes 4:10)
 - a. The wife
 - i. She is the husband's help meet (Genesis 2:18, 20)
 1. History of the word "*meet*" in connection to its use with the word "*help*" here; the etymology of the word when used in Old English meant "proper, fitting". It could also mean "suitable, having the same dimensions".
 2. With this in mind is it no wonder that we understand from scripture that the wife and husband are to complete one another (Genesis 2:24; Proverbs 18:22).
 - ii. She is to be a crown to her husband (Proverbs 12:4)
 1. A prudent wife is from the LORD (Proverbs 19:14) – "*Prudence*" - mid-14c., "intelligence; discretion, foresight; wisdom to see what is suitable or profitable
 2. Her price is far above rubies (Proverbs 31:10)
 3. The qualities of a good wife presented (Proverbs 31:10-31)
 - a. Her husband trusteth in her (v. 11)
 - b. She does her husband good (v. 12)
 - c. She works willingly with her hands (v. 13-20, 22, 24)
 - d. She is compassionate (v. 20)
 - e. Her husband is known in the gates (v. 23)

- f. She is known for her wisdom and kindness (v. 26)
 - g. She looketh well to the ways of her household (v. 27; Proverbs 14:1; 1 Timothy 5:14; Titus 2:3-5)
 - h. She fears the LORD (v. 30)
 - i. She is in subjection to her husband (1 Peter 3:5)
 - j. Because of these things her children and her husband rise up and praise her (v. 28)
 - k. Her own works praise her (v. 31)
- b. The husband
- i. The husband should praise the wife (Proverbs 31:28)
 - ii. The husband should show benevolence to his wife (*benevolence* = good will, kindness) (1 Corinthians 7:3)
 - iii. The husband and wife both have power over one another's body (1 Corinthians 7:4)
 - iv. The husband is the head of the wife (Ephesians 5:22-33)
 - 1. As Christ is the head of the church, so the husband is the head of the wife (v. 23)
 - 2. The wife is to be subject to the husband (v. 24)
 - 3. The husband is to love the wife as Christ loved the church (v. 25), and gave himself for it.
 - 4. The husband is to love his wife as he loves his own body (v. 28) (Christ loves his body, the church)
 - 5. The husband ought to nourish and cherish his wife (v. 29)
 - 6. Remember that the first woman (Eve) was bone of a man (Adam) (v. 30)
 - 7. The husband and wife are to be one (v. 31)
 - 8. The husband is commanded that he should love his wife (v. 33; Colossians 3:19)
 - v. The husband is to rule his house well (1 Timothy 3:2, 4-5, 12-13)
 - 1. The husband should be able to teach the younger men how to be good men (Titus 2:2, 6-8) – Remember Paul was writing to Titus here.

2. The husband is told to rule his own house and to hold his position with gravity (1 Timothy 3:4; Titus 2:2, 7)
 - a. To rule: note – this does not mean that he is to be a tyrant or rule harshly.
 - b. With “gravity”: *gravity*: means with “weight, dignity, seriousness, from Middle French gravité "seriousness, thoughtfulness”.
- vi. The husband should give honour to his wife (1 Peter 3:7)
- ii. In a friendship (Proverbs 27:17)
 1. A friend can strengthen you (1 Samuel 23:16)
 2. The friendship of David and Jonathan – (This is one of the greatest friendships in scripture)
 - a. Their friendship was bound by a great love for one another (1 Samuel 18:1)
 - b. Their friendship was one of self-sacrificing for one another (1 Samuel 18:4)
 - c. They delighted much in each other (1 Samuel 19:2)
 - d. Their friendship was as such, that one would lay down his life for the other (1 Samuel 20:1-4; John 15:13)
 - e. Their friendship was so great that in death the other grieved over the loss of the other (2 Samuel 1:24-26)
- iii. In leadership (Haggai 1:14)
 1. The need for leadership to work together (Haggai 1:14)
 - a. Notice the Lord stirs up the spirit of both Zerubbabel and Joshua
 - b. Notice that Zerubbabel is the governor and Joshua is the high priest
 2. The Lord sends Haggai to encourage both Zerubbabel and Joshua (Haggai 2:4)
 3. Notice that these are two working together to accomplish what God would have them do (Haggai 1:12)
 4. We see this truth played out in the lives of Moses and Aaron (Exodus 4:27-31; 5:1)
- iv. In ministry (Acts 15:36-41)
 1. Notice that Paul and Silas went out together
 2. They were recommended by the brethren
 3. They went into Macedonia and as they were preaching and working with the people they encountered trouble with a certain damsel (Acts 16:16-19)
 4. Paul and Silas were placed in prison for their labour (Acts 16:23-24)
 5. Together they sang praises to God (Acts 16:25)

- c. The One Will Lift Up His Fellow (Ecclesiastes 4:10)
 - i. Notice that the wording of verse 10 tells us that they both have fallen
 - ii. However the other is there to lift his fellow up
 - 1. History of the word “*fellow*”
 - a. The etymology of this word means c.1200, from Old English feolaga "fellow, partner," from Old Norse felagi, the sense is of “one who puts money down with another in a joint venture.” – from: <http://www.etymonline.com>
 - b. Notice the above wording: “a joint venture.”
 - 2. A “fellow” is someone who is going in together on whatever you’re working on, what you’re labouring for.
 - 3. This makes perfect sense for the list of things we have looked at in our preceding notes.
 - a. In marriage you have entered an agreement to live together, love one another, face life’s trials together no matter what happens or comes your way.
 - b. We note the latter part of verse 10 of Ecclesiastes 4; “but woe to him that is alone when he falleth; for he hath not another to **help** him up.
 - i. In marriage the husband has that **help meet** (Genesis 2:18)
 - ii. Both are there to help the other, to encourage one another, to dream together, to aid each other.
 - c. In friendship
 - i. The friend is there to encourage
 - ii. Even in the face of discouragement.
 - d. In leadership
 - i. You have that business partner, or other leader to go to for advice.
 - ii. Someone to help bear the burden.
 - e. In ministry
 - i. You need that other labourer there to help bear some of the burden in ministering to others.
 - ii. Paul had Barnabas, later Silas. (Acts 16:25)
 - iii. Paul also had his Timothy, Titus, and other men that he was bringing up (training) in the faith, and they could over time take some of the burden.
 - iv. Much too often today, the common thought is “I will go it alone, and do some great work for God!”
 - v. The word of God teaches otherwise.
 - 4. We see from these different situations how the “fellow” could help the other up if he were to fall.

- d. The Two Lying Together (Ecclesiastes 4:11)
 - i. Two truths are seen in this
 - 1. From a practical view when two bodies lie close to one another they will warm each other.
 - 2. A husband and wife.
 - ii. The Truths illustrated
 - 1. David was old and stricken in years (1 Kings 1:1)
 - 2. David was cold (1 Kings 1:1)
 - a. His servants would cover him with clothes
 - b. However, he could not get warm
 - 3. A solution given by David's servants (1 Kings 1:2-3)
 - a. A young virgin to be sought out
 - b. To minister to the king
 - 4. Abishag ministers to the king (1 Kings 1:4)
 - a. She ministers to, and cherishes the king
 - b. David knew her not
 - iii. The Truths explained
 - 1. Abishag warmed David and ministered to him.
 - 2. David did not know her, whereas, a husband and wife would.
- II. THE WORKING OF TWO OR MORE (Ecclesiastes 4:12)
- a. Two Shall Withstand Him (Ecclesiastes 4:12)
 - i. Again we see the advantages of two working together.
 - ii. Whether in a marriage, a family, a ministry, or business.
 - iii. In battle to have someones back is key.
 - 1. Jonathan and his armourbearer (1 Samuel 14:1, 6-14)
 - a. Notice he had his armourbearer to go with him (v. 1)
 - b. His armourbearer encouraged him (v. 7)
 - c. His armourbearer was right by his side, he did not leave him (v. 12-13)
 - d. His armourbearer fought right alongside, and made sure of Jonathan's success (v. 13)
 - e. Jonathan and his armourbearer's victory (v. 14)
 - i. The first slaughter of the fight
 - ii. About twenty men
 - f. The LORD gives an even greater victory (1 Samuel 14:15-23)
 - i. The LORD took Jonathan's victory and used it to put fear in the hearts of the Philistines (v. 15)
 - ii. The Philistines turned on one another (v. 16)
 - iii. Every man's sword was against his fellow (v. 20)
 - iv. The LORD took Jonathan's "save by few" (v. 6), and caused a great victory that day (v. 23)

2. Aaron and Hur (Exodus 17:8-16)
 - a. Israel fights with Amalek (v. 8)
 - b. Aaron and Hur go to the top of the hill with Moses (v. 10)
 - i. You see two of Moses' aids taking the long journey up the hill with Moses
 - ii. When they get there they stay by his side
 - c. Moses' hands being lifted up directly affected the way of the battle (v. 11)
 - d. Aaron and Hur steady Moses' hands (v. 12)
 - i. Moses' hands became weary with time
 - ii. It took the aid of Aaron and Hur to steady them and to keep them up
 - iii. So we see this truth in today's working in the ministry
 1. The man of God (pastor, missionary, and etc.), needs someone that they can count on, someone they know will be there to help with the burden bearing.
 2. Many times that aid does not have to be the assistant, or someone on staff.
 3. This aid can come from a faithful Christian and his family in the congregation.
- b. The Threefold Cord (Ecclesiastes 4:12)
 - i. We saw a glimpse of this in the story of Aaron and Hur in Exodus 17.
 1. There were three men on the top of the hill.
 2. If you didn't count Moses, you still had three to some extent, if you counted Joshua; there were three men working with their leader.
 - ii. Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego (Daniel 3:1-30)
 1. The commandment goes out that all should fall down and worship the image at the time the musick is heard (v. 4-5)
 2. If one does not fall down and worship, they will be cast into the furnace (v. 6)
 3. The accusation by the Chaldeans (v. 8-12)
 4. The accusation confirmed (v. 13-15)
 5. The three fold cord holds fast (v. 16-18)
 6. God's deliverance from the furnace (v. 24-28)
 7. The course of law changed by their testimony (v. 29)
 8. Their promotion in the land (v. 30)
 - a. This promotion was made in the most powerful country in the world at this time.
 - b. As Christians we need to understand the following:
 - i. Together we can make a difference
 1. In our homes
 2. In our churches
 3. On the job

- ii. Leaders and others are watching our lives
 - 1. Just like in Nebuchadnezzar
 - 2. Bosses and peers are watching our actions.
- iii. One sees this in the Christian home (Psalm 128)
 - 1. The wife is a fruitful vine (v. 8)
 - 2. The children are like olive plants (v. 8)
 - a. The children are learning from their mother (the vine) and father (the leader).
 - b. Those olive plants will one day bring forth fruit
 - i. If cared for right, they will bring forth fruit that will be a blessing to those that raised them.
 - ii. This can come in multiple ways
 - 1. By how they raise their children (their plants).
 - 2. By how they will take care of those that raised them.
 - 3. By how they will live their lives, and bring honour to the ones that raised them and to God.
- iv. Conclusion
 - 1. Every Christian needs to examine to see how they are doing in their own life (Psalm 139:23-24)
 - a. We need to ask ourselves some questions
 - b. Are you being the help you should in where God has placed you right now?
 - c. Are you being that right husband/father, wife/mother?
 - d. Is your family a three-fold cord?
 - i. What can you do to change it if it is not?
 - ii. Are you taking time with the three-fold cord?
 - 1. Your husband/wife.
 - 2. Your children
 - iii. Are they learning the right things to strengthen that cord?
 - 1. The right walk with God
 - 2. The word of God
 - a. Reading
 - b. Memorization
 - 3. Are you being the correct example to the cord?
 - a. Remember it doesn't "just happen."
 - b. It takes work on your part to strengthen the cord.
 - 2. Are you apart of that two-fold or three-fold cord?
 - a. How are you in your church?
 - b. Are you one that can be relied on?