



## Two Is Better Than One

Text: Ecclesiastes 4:4-16

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1. Think about the journey of your faith. Have you ever had seasons where you tried to do it alone? What was that time like? What or who brought you back into community? How did it change or impact your walk with Christ?
2. “To be loved but not known is comforting but superficial. To be known and not loved is our greatest fear. But to be fully known and truly loved is, well, a lot like being loved by God. It is what we need more than anything. It liberates us from pretense, humbles us out of our self-righteousness, and fortifies us for any difficulty life can throw at us.” Timothy Keller
  - a. Read Romans 5:1-11. How does the love of God address the fear of being known and not loved?
  - b. Read John 13:34-35. What does Jesus command us to do? When you look at the Romans 5 and John 13 passages together, how should that influence how we live?
  - c. Think about your closest relationships. Do you have someone with whom are you fully known? How did that relationship develop?
  - d. How has it impacted your life and walk with Christ?
  - e. If you do not have relationships where you are fully known, why not? What keeps you about being completely vulnerable with another person?
  - f. Do deep, meaningful relationships create safety or does safety create deep, meaningful relationships? Explain your answer.
3. Read Ecclesiastes 4:4-16. Found in these verses are reasons that some are pulled towards isolation. Envy? Competition? Drive? Laziness and apathy? Pride and lack of teachability? Is it something else? Fear? Bad experiences? Which of these reasons most resembles your past or current struggles to have deep, meaningful relationships? How do you overcome these?
4. Read 1 Peter 5:7-9.
  - a. How does 1 Peter 5:7–9 instruct us to fight against Satan?
  - b. How does the “knowing” of 1 Peter 5:9 help us resist the devil?
  - c. Is there any place in your life that you have not been resisting Satan?
  - d. How can your community help you wage war in that area?

Challenge: All good relationships take intentionality. What is one thing you can do this week to intentionally build open, honest, relationships that strengthen your walk with Christ?

Prayer: See prayer exercise in Study Deeper. Using this model, divide into same gender groups of two or three using some of the questions (you won't have time for all), seek to grow in openness and honesty, deepening relationships in your group. Commit to praying for each person and following up with them during the week.

## **STUDY DEEPER**

### **Prayer Accountability Partner**

The purpose of accountability is "To each day become more Christ-like in all of your ways." Remember it is Jesus who is the object of our search, our devotion, our sacrifice, and our affection. Anything less than intimacy with the living Lord will be a pallid achievement of your time together. Usually accountability is with one or two others, but no more. "A three-fold cord is not easily broken."

#### **Suggested Guidelines:**

1. Try to ensure each person gets equal "air time." However, if one of you has a particular hard struggle one week, be flexible enough to focus on that issue even if it takes an hour.
2. Let each person work through a section at a time, then let the other(s) answer. This will keep things moving better. In a one-hour meeting each has 15 minutes to share, then pray a minimum 15 minutes.
3. Don't get bogged down on the questions and neglect the prayer time. Focus on praying for and with one another.

#### **Questions to Start Off the Meeting:**

1. How has God blessed you this week? (What went right?)
2. What problem has consumed your thoughts this week? (What went wrong?)
3. Has any temptation overcome you?

#### **Spiritual Life**

1. Have you read God's Word every day? (If not, why not?)
2. Describe your prayer life. (Is it regular, consistent, rewarding? Is God answering your prayers? What are you believing God to do? Be specific.)
3. How is your relationship with Christ changing? (Is anything stagnate?)
4. Did you really worship in church this week? Was your faith stimulated, challenged, strengthened?
5. Have you shared your faith this week? With whom and in what way? How can you improve?

#### **Critical Concerns**

1. Are you in the center of God's will right now? Do you sense God's presence? His peace?
2. What are you wrestling with in your thought life? (Be honest, specific, real.)

3. Is your ethical behavior what it should be? Have you told little white lies, skirted the truth, cheated a little, or compromised your standards in any way?
4. Are your priorities in the right order? What are they? Are you tithing? Serving in a ministry? Sacrificing? Are you discipling or mentoring anyone?
5. What is happening in your marriage and family? Struggles? Failures? Do you have devotions with your spouse? Your family? (If not, why not?)