



THE WISDOM OF ECCLESIASTES

06.26.16 | A PROBLEM WITH GOD | ECCLESIASTES 4

1. THE PROBLEM

There are times of suffering and pain that appear to have no redemptive purpose.

- Oppression (unjust or cruel exercise of power of authority).
Ecclesiastes 4:1-3

2. GOD'S SOLUTION

- Authentic community with others.
Ecclesiastes 4:9-12

3. WHAT GETS IN THE WAY OF AUTHENTIC COMMUNITY?

- Envy (the feeling of wanting to have what someone else has).
Ecclesiastes 4:4
- Sloth (reluctance to work or make an effort, laziness).
Ecclesiastes 4:5
- Discontentment (not content, dissatisfied).
Ecclesiastes 4:6
- Excessive work (mental or physical activity as a means of earning income).
Ecclesiastes 4:7-8
- Popularity (the state or condition of being liked, admired, or supported by many people).
Ecclesiastes 4:13-16

FURTHER STUDY

1. When someone you care about questions God's lack of intervention in times of oppression or evil, how do you answer those questions?
2. How do our expectations of God lead us to disappointment with Him? How do those expectations affect you? (Read Ecclesiastes 4:1-3).
3. Of the five things listed in the sermon outline that get in the way of authentic community, which do you struggle with the most? Explain. (Envy, sloth, discontentment, excessive work or popularity).
4. Do you have friendships that you would say resemble Ecclesiastes 4:9-12? If so, how have you maintained those relationships through the years?
5. Authentic community with other believers should be a regular part of the Christian life. Read Hebrews 10:24-25 and discuss how the New Testament church lived this out in practical ways.

6. Read the verses and jot down the "one another's" mentioned in the passage:

Romans 12:10; 2 Corinthians 13:11; Galatians 5:13; Ephesians 4:32

7. In Acts 2:42-47 we see a community of believers that made a tremendous difference in the world for Christ. Read the passage and discuss how you and your small group can grow in each of the areas mentioned.

8. If God's answer to our struggles with life's deepest questions is to have authentic relationships with other believers, then take a few minutes this week to take an inventory of your life and relationships:

- How many people know the real you?
- Do you have any 2:00 AM friends? (Those whom you can call at any time if you are in a crisis).
- What is getting in the way of authentic community in your life? What are you willing to do about that which is getting in the way?

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