



STUDY GUIDE & DAILY READINGS

Sunday, February 21, 2010

They Said

“He Said. She Said.” (Week 3 of 3)

Ecclesiastes 4:9-12 – The Word from the Bible (TNIV)

Two are better than one, because they have a good return for their work:

If one falls down, his friend can help him up.

But pity the man who falls and has no one to help him up!

Also, if two lie down together, they will keep warm.

But how can one keep warm alone?

Though one may be overpowered, two can defend themselves.

A cord of three strands is not quickly broken.

Ecclesiastes 4:9-12

There is a joy and purpose when we fully commitment ourselves to a partnership with God. Love is incomplete, no how much we love another person, without the presence and partnership of God.

This passage speaks of the importance of relationships. ***“Two are better than one.”*** In the ancient world from which this passage comes, it was especially true. No one could prosper or even exist for very long living alone. Life was too hard. Labor and existence was multiplied when people traveled or existed in families or tribes. They kept warm together by sharing their tents. They depended on each other when they were sick. The elderly had care and protection.

The first line make sense in the ancient cruel culture, ***“two are better than one.”*** But in verse 12, the writer adds a strange twist to this theme by adding something new. The writer states, ***“A cord of three strands is not quickly broken.”*** Some scholars believe the author is simply adding the concept of community – three is even better than two. Is this really what the author is telling us? Are three so much better than two that the “three-fold cord” can not be broken?

I believe, as many other scholars do, that the third cord is the presence of God. This is the cord that makes our relationships very difficult to break – God’s presence. The key is to make sure we truly link and intertwine our lives together with God.

As Christians, we can link our lives together with each other, and still leave God on the outside of that relationship. Many couples attempt this kind of relationship with God. We practice our faith, but never really make God an integral part of our relationships. We worship and serve God at the church, but we keep God at a distance at home.

God make us to be joined together emotionally, physically AND spiritually. We were made to exist as a three-fold cord – including God. While our culture is very different from the ancient, nomadic times of the Ecclesiastes writer, our society presents even more challenges to couples. We are constantly bombarded by temptations and stresses beyond our ability to handle as couples. The need for God’s presence is greater now than ever.

In Genesis 1:27, ***“So God created humankind in God’s image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them.”*** From the beginning, we were created different, yet complementary. As male and female we were created for each other. Further, in Genesis 2:18-25, God is quoted as stating the reasons for these differences – it is

not good to be alone. The ancient language of the Hebrew tells the story how Adam (man) and Eve (woman) are made. Intentionally God made Adam and Eve for each other – different yet the same, made to be together.

So what are we going to do about it?

Making a marriage – or any relationship – successful takes work. This final sermon in the *He Said. She Said.* series is about how we can make our differences work for us by joining our individual cords together with God into a three-fold, unbreakable bond.

As you read this study guide, let me remind you that on the past two Sundays we have been discussing what men and women generally want. At this point, I do want to assert that though men and women are clearly different, there are times when men and women switch roles. I would call this the “*give and take*” of a relationship. Strong long lasting relationships are those partnered with God where give and take and the willingness to shift roles exist. The greater the understanding, the stronger the bond.

Today as we talk about what it means to create the threefold cord; here are the foundation words for our time together:

Pray together
Respect each other
Respond to each other
Communicate, communicate, and communicate
Rejoice together

Prayer Focus

Trietsch is a praying church. This morning, as you worship, one of our prayer volunteers is praying for everyone in each section of our worship center. We believe that prayer changes lives and hearts for good and for God.

We invite you to join these volunteers by praying for those persons around you. We believe these prayers will have an immediate impact on those for whom you are praying.

Remember... someone is praying for you. As we focus on relationships here are a few prayers to use with your family or mate.

A Prayer for Your Husband

(You are encouraged to insert your loved one's name into this prayer. Make this prayer your own as you add other qualities, blessings or need for forgiveness)

God, thank you so much for (name). His love and devotion is a blessing to me even when we don't agree.

May I always love (name) and treat him with honor and respect.

- ☞ May I always remember that we are partners – side by side.
- ☞ Help me to understand and fulfill (name) needs.
- ☞ Teach me to love (name) and show appreciation.
- ☞ Inspire me to draw on (name) wisdom and strength.
- ☞ Lead me to treat (name) with tenderness and humility.
- ☞ Help me to be unselfish at all times in all places.
- ☞ Forgive me when I have failed as a wife.
- ☞ When I have been harsh and unfair.
- ☞ When I have been lazy and self-centered.
- ☞ When I have put my needs above him.
- ☞ When I have failed to listen and be attentive.

God, strengthen (name) and bless him daily:

- ☞ Keep (name) safe.
- ☞ Keep (name) strong.
- ☞ Give (name) wisdom.

Lord, I thank You so much for all that (name) does for me, and our family. Thank You for blessing me with such a wonderful companion, helpmate, and best friend.

In the name of Your Son, and our Savior, Jesus Christ,
Amen.

Have a great week!

***Next week we begin the sermon series on the book of Galatians, called "MythBusters."
Come learn Paul's lessons on what Christianity is really all about.***

***Invite someone to worship this week. You will be glad you did.
God is doing great things through the ministry of Trietsch.***

Daily Readings

This is the third and final sermon in our series on “He said – She said”. During this series we are focusing on the scriptural teachings that will help us strengthen our relationships. The entire Bible is focused on relationships – our relationship with God and our relationships with each other. Too often we assume that because the Bible is centuries old that it will not have relevance for our modern challenges. Let’s remember in reading these passages that times may change, but the way we relate to each other is the same today as it was in the beginning. Hopefully these readings and reflective questions will prepare you for the sermons. The study guide readings allow us to dig deeper.

Monday, February 22 – Read Genesis 1:27-31 — This passage notes that God created humanity as male and female. These differences have a purpose. Together, men and women are to be stewards over the earth. We are to be fruitful as well as multiply. When the scripture says, **“be fruitful,”** how do you define this passage? How have you been fruitful in your life and relationships this week? What does it mean to be a steward of the earth?

Tuesday, February 23 – Read Genesis 2:18-25 — The Genesis writer continues the story of creation with a different more detailed description of creation. The account is more narrative. Adam is created out of the dust. Eve is created out of the existence of Adam, but created in a completely different manner. Adam is molded like one would shape clay, while Eve is constructed like a carpenter would build a structure. They are different, yet the same. Genesis is clear that these two first humans are made for each other because it is not good that we should be alone. In your relationships, how are you different from those around you? What are you doing to celebrate differences and make them a source of strength not conflict?

Wednesday, February 24 – Read Song of Solomon chapter 1 and 2 — This book is a collection of love poetry. It comes as an affirmation of the love and sexual attraction of husband and wife. Read all it the book if you can. Select portions and read them to your spouse as an affirmation of your love and devotion. Which passages are your favorites?

Thursday, February 25 – Read I John 3:18-24 — **“Little children, let us love, not in word or speech, but in truth and action.”** John refers to his readers as children, adults who have been seduced by the things of this world. **“Children,”** he calls them, because they are immature in their faith. John defines love not by what we say, but by what we do – **“truth and action.”** How have you defined love in your life? Would John consider you mature in your faith, action and love?

Friday, February 26 – Read I John 4:7-21 — Love comes from God. Since God is love, then those who follow God are defined by the love they share with others. John says, **“let us love one another, because love is from God; everyone who loves is born of God and knows God.”** How do you define love in your life? How do you show love to others? Would you describe your life as being **“born of God”**? What needs to change to make this happen?
