



“The Emptiness of Power”

Ecclesiastes 4:1-16

Listen! Once upon a time there was a dog that caught a car and then...

- **The problem:** Sometimes we “catch” something that we have been chasing feverishly and find out that it is either meaningless or outright painful.

The power of oppression is empty. (vv 1-3)

The power of rivalry is empty. (vv 4-6)

The power of driven labor is empty. (vv 7, 8)

The power of ruling is empty. (vv 13-16)

The power of companionship is wonderful and meaningful. (vv 9-12)

- Companionship gives synergy for greater impact. (v 9)
- Companionship gives mutual help in problems and crisis. (v 10)
- Companionship gives mutual provision in the face of needs. (v 11)
- Companionship gives mutual protection against attack. (v 12)

Two Questions:

- Is it possible that the harder we strive for power the more miserable we are?
- Is it possible that the harder we strive for companionship the more joyful we are?

Living differently—if we listen to God’s Word and leave unchanged, without personal transformation, we are only mocking God: What would you be willing to do in order to increase the quality and quantity of companionships in your life?

“Walking Papers”

Practical helps for walking the Christian walk each day this week.

Idea: The power of companionship is wonderful and meaningful.

- **Today:** Who are your five best companions? What is the state of those relationships at this time?
- **Monday:** How can you be a better companion to these five people?
- **Tuesday:** Are you embittered toward anyone because they have oppressed you? What do you need to do about this?
- **Wednesday:** Are you embittered toward anyone because they have taken an adversarial stance against you? What do you need to do about this?
- **Thursday:** Are you embittered toward anyone because they have ruled over you with an iron fist? What do you need to do about this?
- **Friday:** Are you in a pattern of “driven labor?” If so, why and what do you need to do?
- **Saturday:** What will you do this week to increase the quality and quantity of companionships in your life?

“Companionship Papers”

Dialogue questions for helping each other in the Christian walk this week.

GETTING STARTED:

- Describe the relationship style of your worst adversary.
- Describe the relationship style of your best companion.

LOOK AT THE TEXT:

- Why does Solomon say that it would be better for both the oppressor and the oppressed if they had not been born? (v 3)
- What is the cause of rivalry? (v 4)
- What are the foundational presuppositions and motivations of the man in verse 8?
- How does “the willingness to receive instruction” relate to foolishness? ...to wisdom? Honestly, how do you personally do in receiving instruction?
- Someone said, “Power corrupts and absolute power corrupts absolutely.” Is that true? What is the relationship between this statement and verses 13-16?
- Specifically what is the benefit gained from companionship given in verse 9?
- Specifically what is the benefit gained from companionship given in verse 10?
- Specifically what is the benefit gained from companionship given in verse 11?
- Specifically what is the benefit gained from companionship given in verse 12?

LIVE DIFFERENTLY:

- Specifically, what will you do to enhance the quality of your companionships?
- Read the Book of Philemon and share the companionship principles found there.