

# LEAD SHEET

## ECCLESIASTES - WEEK 4 STANDING ALONE APRIL 24, 2016

### **THIS MONTH'S FAITH SKILL:**

### **SHARE YOUR GRACE STORY**

If you want to know God better, tell other people about Him!

### **GETTING STARTED**

#### **General Discussion:**

- What is great about having friends?
- What can be hard about friendship?
- What do you think life would be like if you had no friends or anyone to count on?

We're going to be talking about the benefit of friendship and the difficulty of trying to live alone, but first, we want to do a little imagining.

#### **Stranded for Seven**

Let's all imagine we are on a deserted island—stranded all alone. There is fresh water on the island and--fortunately--a phone with a direct line to a rescue helicopter. Unfortunately, there are so many other people stranded on deserted islands all over the world, it is going to take seven days for the helicopter to come and get you. Now, suppose beforehand, you were able to grab three things to take with you. Only three things besides the clothes on your back. You selected these three things because they would help the most in keeping you alive. Everyone think about this for a while. Okay, now let's answer a few questions.

### **General Discussion Questions:**

1. What three things would you bring, and why?
2. How do you think you would feel after day one? Day two? Day three? Day Seven?
3. What would be the hardest part about being alone for that long?

## **DIGGING IN**

### **Read Ecclesiastes 4:1-3**

#### **Discussion Questions:**

1. What group of people does Solomon mention in this passage? (*The oppressed.*)
2. Solomon says those who are dead are happier than those who are alive. What do you think that means? (*That the world is a sad place to live.*)
3. According to verse 3, who is the most fortunate group? (*Those who have not been born.*)
4. Why do you think Solomon is so upset by the oppression he saw?

Solomon now shifts gears and talks about the opposite of the oppressed--the wealthy.

### **Read Ecclesiastes 4:4-8**

#### **Discussion Questions:**

1. What is better according to Solomon, one handful or two? (*One*)
2. Why do you think people chase more, bigger, and better?
3. Does it surprise you that this was true even back in Solomon's day?
4. Do you believe that stuff can make you happy? Why/why not?

After talking about those who are oppressed and those who are wealthy, Solomon seemingly changes the subject.

## **Read Ecclesiastes 4:9-12**

### **Discussion Questions:**

1. In verse 9, why is it better for people to work together?  
*(Because they have a good return for their labor.)*
2. Why is it better for one who falls not to be alone?  
*(They will have someone to pick him or her up.)*
3. Why is better to lie down with another?  
*(You keep warm.)*
4. Solomon ties together sections on oppression and wealth by talking about how much we need each other. How do they relate? *(It doesn't matter if you are rich or poor, living alone is meaningless. We need each other!)*

## **MAKING IT REAL**

### **Read Proverbs 17:17 and Proverbs 18:24**

#### **Discussion Questions:**

1. What does a friend do at all times? *(Loves)*
2. Does this mean that they always get along, never confront, or give you the easy way out?  
*(No, sometimes love is tough love.)*
3. Solomon says friends are for what kind of time?  
*(Hard times.)*
4. What happens to those with unreliable friends?  
*(They come to ruin.)*
5. By contrast, what kind of friend should we strive to have? *(Those who stick closer than a brother.)*

So having friends isn't just about having stuff in common or hanging out, is it? It's much deeper than that. If you are wondering how to be a good friend, think about the things we've just talked about:

Friends are there in difficult times.

Friends think about what they can do for others.

Friends are those who keep you accountable to commitments

Friends keep you strong

Friends warn you of danger

Friends are loyal

Friends make you better, not worse.

Solomon sees the importance of having true friends that we can count on. I challenge you to BE a true friend to someone and to SEEK OUT true friends for yourself.

## **CLOSING PRAYER**

Have students pray for a friend they have hurt, been hurt by, or to find a friend they can trust.

**#CRAZYFORCHRIST**