

TWO IS BETTER THAN ONE

In chapter four, Life Under the Sun, could be studied by the following three passages:

(Eccl.4:1-3)	Evil oppression	Despair of life under the sun.
(Eccl.4:7-12)	Exclusion of a significant other	Discouragement of life under the sun.
(Eccl.4:13-16)	Evaluation of leadership	Deduction of life under the sun.

Today's lesson will come from the second passage entitled, Exclusion of a Significant Other.

However, I chose a different title for today's lesson. The title of today's lesson comes from one of the most quoted lines of Eccl.4:7-12 – "Two are better than one" (Eccl.4:9).

**Today's lesson will study five aspects of Solomon's view of why
two are better than one in life under the sun.**

1. Notice that our lesson text began with the most quoted phrase in Ecclesiastes:

"Then I looked again at **vanity (hebel)** under the sun."

In fact, the Hebrew word: hebel, [vanity or meaningless] is used twice in our passage (Eccl.4:7-8).

Solomon discovered another aspect of 'life under the sun' that seemed meaningless:

"There was a certain man without a dependent, having neither a son nor a brother." (Eccl.4:8a)

Solomon concluded that being alone in 'life under the sun' was not only meaningless but grievous.

In Hebrew, grievous (ra) refers to something unpleasant, unhappy, emotional pain, or a source of misery.

What has happened in this believer's life that would cause him to call 'being alone' in life as not only meaningless but also a miserable existence? **We will answer this question before we leave here to day.**

2. There are different English translations of the Hebrew word (sheni) [alone] (Eccl.4:8).

- NIV "There was a man all alone."
- NAS "There was a certain man a dependent."
- KJ "There is one alone, and there is not a second."

Actually, the KJ translation is the most accurate this time.

The Hebrew word is the ordinal number **SECOND**.

This same word is used in Eccl.4:15 – "With the second lad." (NAS) referring to the king's successor.

3. We are introduced to the idea of alone with the first man of the human race, Adam – “It is not good for the man to be alone.” (Gen.2:18a)

However it is a different Hebrew word for alone (bad). ‘Bad’ means alone because of a separate category of creation.

Man was made in the image and likeness of Godhead (tselem demuth) while the rest of creation is in a special category called (min) – “after their kind” (Gen.2:24-27).

“But flesh is not the same flesh. There are also heavenly bodies and earthly bodies.” (1 Cor.15:39-41)

God didn’t tell Adam to do something about this problem of being alone. In fact, we are not told if Adam even understood that it wasn’t good for him to be alone. It was God who said that it wasn’t good for him to be alone and that God would make and bring him a helper suitable.

And God didn’t do it right away. But when it did happen, it happened because God is faithful to His word – “Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful.” (Heb.10:23; 1 Thess.5:24; 1 Cor.1:9)

When God fulfills His promise, it will be GRACE – “He who finds a wife finds a good thing, and obtains favor (grace) from the Lord.” (Prov.18:22)

Therefore it is important for believers to **learn to be content** with the Lord whether single or married – “Not I speak from want; for I have learned to be content in whatever circumstances I am - I have learned the secret – I can do all things through Him who strengthens me.” (Phil.4:11-13)

4. Solomon used two proverbs in our lesson text to emphasize how alone he felt in life and why he felt miserable and that his life was meaningless under the sun.

In fact, our lesson title came from one of these proverbs – “Two are better than one.” (Eccl.4:9) He gives three reasons that two are better than one (work, warm, and welfare/ Eccl.4:9-12a).

Then Solomon gives us the third proverb – “Three are better than two” (Eccl.4:12b).

Here is Solomon’s conclusion as the wisest man in the world.

- 3 are better than 2
- 2 are better than 1
- **1 is meaningless and miserable**

Do you remember that we began with asking, “What has happened in a believer’s life so that he could call being alone or single as not only meaningless but also a miserable existence?”

5. Single status is not a meaningless existence unless you do not have Jesus Christ and the word of God or like Solomon you are living in reversionism (Heb.13:5).

Paul addressed this very question in 1 Cor.7:1-3, 17-24, 32-35 – “Only, as the Lord has assigned to each one, as God has called each, in this manner let him walk. Thus I direct in all the churches.” (1 Cor.7:17)

“And this I say for your own benefit; not to put a restraint upon you, but to promote what is seemly, and to secure undistracted devotion to the Lord.” (1 Cor.7:35)