**Ecclesiastes 4**

**“Biblical BFFs”**

**Scripture:** Ecclesiastes 4:7-12

**Memory Verse:** Galatians 6:2 *“Bear one another’s burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.”*

**Lesson Focus:** The “Buddy System” should be familiar to all kids. Today’s verses emphasize the value of having trusted friends and companions in life. We will also emphasize how Jesus is the best friend of all.

**Activities and Crafts:** Coloring Picture of Paul and Silas. Word Search of different terms from lesson, Bring It Home Discussion for 3rd – 5th.

Craft for 1st & 2nd: “Bear” Each Other’s Burdens

**Introduction:**

Ecclesiastes is a book that challenges us to THINK.

To get kids brains in “think” mode, we will introduce each lesson of Ecclesiastes with some sort of riddle or brain teaser. For this week:

Q: How many months in the year have 28 days?

A: All 12!

**Starter Activity:** Dynamic Duo Challenge. There are many well-known dynamic duos that the kids should be familiar with. I’ve listed several below. Give them one and see if they can name the other (maybe pick the lesser known one in the pair).

1. Batman and Robin
2. Calvin and Hobbes
3. Mario and Luigi
4. Frodo and Sam
5. Shaggy and Scooby
6. Chip and Dale
7. C3P0 and R2D2
8. Dora and Boots
9. Han Solo and Chewbacca
10. Bert and Ernie

The point of this challenge is to introduce the idea of friendship and companionship. There are many, many well-known stories with characters who need each other and together are a force to be reckoned with. Our Bible study will further expound on this idea showing it was God’s design for us to be in community from the beginning.

**Bible Study:**

**Eccl 4:7**: The context of our study is that of work and labor. Solomon shows us something else that is “vanity under the sun”.

Q: (For review) What does vanity mean?

A: Pointless, like a dog chasing his tail

Q: (For review) What does “under the sun” represent?

A: Life focused apart from God (in previous lessons we have pointed out how we need to look “above the sun” to Jesus, the “Son” of God.

**Eccl 4:8:** This describes perhaps the loneliest, greediest, most miserable type of person. He has all of the riches of the world, but has no one to share them with.

Q: Who knows who Ebenezer Scrooge is?

A: He is the famous character from “A Christmas Carol” who has everything and gives nothing. He coined the phrase “Bah! Humbug!” which characterizes this type of person’s response to any kind of giving or sharing with others.

Notice it says that his eye is never satisfied with riches. Solomon has warned us about this before. In Eccl 1:8, we mentioned Edmund from Narnia. What was his greedy desire for? Turkish Delight! Remember how alone he felt after betraying everyone for that Turkish Delight? That is what happens to the Scrooge-type person. They are all alone.

This person is to be pitied. This person needs to look “above the sun” to Jesus Christ.

**Eccl 4:9**: Two are better than one! This is true in so many aspects of life. The immediate context is in our work.

Q: What are some examples of work that you have done that became so much more rewarding when you did it with someone else? (maybe doing the dishes with a sibling)

Q: Do you sometimes have to stop and figure out how to work together? Yes! To do this requires you to think not just about yourself, but about the other person. The Scrooge-ish person in v. 8 is only thinking about himself.

**Eccl 4:10-11:** Moving on from work into other life situations, here we see the advantage of having a buddy.

Q: What is the “Buddy System”? What are some examples of situations where you are told to have a buddy? (i.e. swimming, field trips, at amusement parks, bike rides, etc.)

Q: Why is it important to have a buddy in these situations?

**Activity**: Trust Fall

Pick a few volunteers to come up and fall backwards with their eyes closed into your arms. This will teach them the lesson of trusting in someone else to catch them when they fall.

Q: What happens to the Scrooge-ish type person when he falls?

God did not design us to live life alone. God has designed man to be in community with others. In Genesis, we read about how God made the world and how He made everything good.

Q: Who knows the very first thing that God said was NOT good?

A: **Read Genesis 2:18:** It is **not good** that man should be alone.

Here we have what some people think is the ideal situation. Adam is in the garden, he has a perfect relationship with God, and yet God says that this is “not good”. Even though the greater context of Genesis 2:18 is one of marriage, this still teaches us more generally that God made us to be in fellowship with each other.

Let’s look at some other biblical examples of this.

Q: Before Ecclesiastes we looked at the book of Ruth. Naomi insisted on being alone and grieving all by herself (Scrooge-ish) after her husband and sons died. But who stuck with her and helped lift her up?

A: Ruth! And we saw how God used Ruth to not only take care of Naomi but to restore her joy so that she was no longer “Scrooge-ish”. **Read Ruth 4:14-15** where it describes Ruth as better to Naomi than seven sons.

**Read Luke 10:1-3:**

Q: How did Jesus send out these disciples?

Q: Why do you think he sent them out in pairs?

**Read (or summarize) Acts 16:25-34:**

Q: v. 25 mentions that Paul and Silas were singing hymns and praying together. How do you think they were able to stay upbeat and confident despite the fact that they were in prison?
A: Just like **Eccl. 4:11** mentions that two can keep each other warm, Paul and Silas were able to keep each other’s faith in God from growing cold when they were in prison!

**Eccl 4:12:** Notice that while two can withstand, three is even better!

Q: Who do you think is the “best” third person a pair can have?

A: Jesus!

A dynamic duo **without Jesus Christ** could still be just a pair of bad guys.

Q: Who has seen Home Alone? Remember Harry and Marv, the two burglars that little Kevin has to defend his house from? Or the two stepsisters from Cinderella, Drizella and Anastasia. These are examples of dynamic duos of evil.

A dynamic duo **with Jesus Christ** is a force to be reckoned with!

Q: Who was the One that was with Paul and Silas in jail? Jesus!

Jesus Christ is the best of friend of all.

**Read John 15:14**: Isn’t it amazing that Jesus would call us His friends?

Q: He said that He will call us His friends if we do what?

A: Keep His commandments which are to love Him and to love others.

Do you love Jesus? Do you care about others? Or do you think you can live your life on your own like Scrooge?

Jesus is the One who gives you an eternal reward for your labor. (v. 9)

Jesus is the One who will always catch you when you fall. (v. 10)

Jesus is the One who will always keep you warm when your faith grows cold. (v. 11)

Jesus is the One who will always help you withstand the power of the enemy. (v. 12)

**Key Point:** Make Jesus your BFF. Then He will help you not only be a good friend that will “bear the burdens” of others (Galatians 6:2), but He will also bring friends into your life who will help “bear your burdens”.

**Scripture from Lesson**: Ecclesiastes 4:7-12

**Lesson Theme**: “Biblical BFFs”

**Memory Verse:** Galatians 6:2 *“Bear one another’s burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.”*

**Teachers/Parents:** In our lesson we talked about how God designed us to be in community with each other. We gave several examples of popular dynamic duos that reinforce the idea that “two are better than one” (Eccl 4:9). Share with your kiddos someone special that God has put in your life and explain how together you were able to achieve what you could not have achieved alone.

**Discussion Questions:**

1. Read **Ecclesiastes 4:8**. We discussed how Ebenezer Scrooge is a well-known example of such a miserly person. Read **1 Timothy 6:10**. What do you think causes people to become so Scrooge-ish?
2. Everyone is familiar with the “Buddy System”. We discussed how this was God’s design for man from the beginning, that he not be alone (see Genesis 2:18). Read **Genesis 3:1**. It was when Eve was alone that Satan attacked. Why do you think Satan attacked Eve when she was alone?
3. The immediate context of the “two are better than one” statement in Eccl. 4:9 is one of work and labor. What are some reasons why two working together produces a better reward or return than one?
4. Read **Proverbs 27:17.** What does this verse suggest about what being in real community and fellowship with other believers can do for us? Is this “sharpening” always going to feel good? (Read **Proverbs 27:6**)
5. We discussed how Jesus is the best friend of all (our BFF). Read **John 15:14**. When you consider who Jesus is and who we are, why is it amazing that He would call us His friends?
6. Read **John 15:17**. If Jesus is our friend, He expects us to love others. Our memory verse also teaches us to “bear one another’s burdens”. Who is someone in your life that you could reach out to in love and compassion as a friend?