

SERIES: RELATIONSHIPS

SERMON: Who is Surrounding You?

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Today we are going to be continuing our Relationship Series, which has been amazing in my opinion, I personally have learned so much through this series, I hope all of us in here can say the same.

Let's get into the Word for today

Ecclesiastes 4:7-12

7I observed yet another example of something meaningless under the sun. 8This is the case of a man who is all alone, without a child or a brother, yet who works hard to gain as much wealth as he can. But then he asks himself, "Who am I working for? Why am I giving up so much pleasure now?" It is all so meaningless and depressing. 9Two people are better off than one, for they can help each other succeed. 10If one person falls, the other can reach out and help. But someone who falls alone is in real trouble. 11Likewise, two people lying close together can keep each other warm. But how can one be warm alone? 12A person standing alone can be attacked and defeated, but two can stand back-to-back and conquer. Three are even better, for a triple-braided cord is not easily broken.

Today the title of my message is called, "Who is surrounding you?" I want to talk to you today about the importance of friendships.

We just read in Ecclesiastes that it is better to have a friend than to be alone and live and work for nothing.

Now I want to be clear from the start that when I talk about friendships this morning I am not talking about your spouse, or even a family member, yes I hope that those people are your friends, if not you may have a problem.

It is important for us to have friendships outside of relationships and outside of family. God has people for us outside of these circles that we can put in our life to help us grow stronger and just to have that companionship.

There is nothing greater than having a best friend. Some of us in here may have one or may have multiple like me, some people used to think it was silly because I have a few best friends, but I think they were just jealous or something. Or maybe some of us don't have any; if that's the case I'm going to pray that God sends someone your

way. Or look around, this is the best place to find your best friend, tell your neighbor “You’ve got a friend in me.”

I know for me personally my best friends that I have are game changers in my life. They help me grow, they push me to go further in my walk with God, they make me want to be a better person, and they laugh with me and cry with me, I am extremely blessed to have them in my life.

Now that we know how important it is to have a friend, it’s time to look into our friendships. There can be a danger to friendship if you are not careful you can surround yourself with friends who you shouldn’t have anything to do with.

Before you shut me out because you have heard this so many times, understand that maybe you don’t want to listen because you don’t want to let go. But we can’t keep pretending like these “friends” in our life are good for us, because we have to be 100% in with God or out with God, you can’t keep holding on to those who are pulling you away.

We have taught on this several times in ELEV8 I think every year we have a series on the importance of having the right friends, because we know those who you surround yourself with is greatly effective in your relationship with God.

If you don’t believe me, let’s look at what the Bible has to say.

*Proverbs 13:20,
20 Walk with the wise and become wise;
associate with fools and get in trouble.*

*Proverbs 22:24-25
24 Don’t befriend angry people
or associate with hot-tempered people,
25 or you will learn to be like them
and endanger your soul.*

*1 Corinthians 15:33
33 Don’t be fooled by those who say such things, for “bad company corrupts good character.”*

Proverbs 12:26

*The godly give good advice to their friends;
the wicked lead them astray.*

Now there are more scriptures on the subject but for the sake of time, I just wanted to read these four off to you.

We see in these scriptures 4 Dangers of a bad or ungodly friend:

1) Get you into trouble

I'm sure some of us can say Amen to that, they talk you into something that gets you into trouble you tried for so long to stay away from.

2) Endanger your soul

This one seem so harsh, like can someone I hang out with really endanger my soul? Absolutely! There are people that you can let into your life that will fill you with lies from the enemy, that will tear you so far from God that your soul is affected.

3) Corrupts good character

I don't know about you but I have known some people that tried to corrupt my character, they would think that my standards were too high, "Oh Keshia it's totally fine to do this or that, you're too good, it's okay to let loose every once in a while", how many of you have hear that before? Trying to corrupt our good character.

4) Leads you astray

They will give advice that will make you uncertain, confused, lead you down a path you aren't supposed to be on

The Bible is very clear that you will be destroyed, you will be corrupted, you will get in trouble, and you will endanger your soul, and be led astray if you associate or attach yourself with the wrong people.

It is serious you guys, we can't take lightly the people we let into our lives.

We must be careful who we let in our lives. Now don't get me wrong I am not saying we shouldn't minister or be there for those who are lost, I'm talking about your inner circle of friends, those who you are in constant contact with, those who you hang out with a lot, and those are the ones that are affecting your life.

Some of us think that we are strong enough in our relationship with God that we can

have friends that are of the world, but in most cases we end up becoming weaker, we end up getting hurt. We have to get rid of the Superhero mentality that we are indestructible, or invincible against the temptations of this world.

Chair Example - It is a lot easier to pull someone down than it is to lift someone up.

Church, please evaluate who you let in your life, who you are attaching yourself with.

Now that we know the negative affect I want us to see the positive affect of having amazing, Godly friends.

Let's look back at the scripture we started with, *Ecclesiastes 4:7-12*

7I observed yet another example of something meaningless under the sun. 8This is the case of a man who is all alone, without a child or a brother, yet who works hard to gain as much wealth as he can. But then he asks himself, "Who am I working for? Why am I giving up so much pleasure now?" It is all so meaningless and depressing. 9Two people are better off than one, for they can help each other succeed. 10If one person falls, the other can reach out and help. But someone who falls alone is in real trouble. 11Likewise, two people lying close together can keep each other warm. But how can one be warm alone? 12A person standing alone can be attacked and defeated, but two can stand back-to-back and conquer. Three are even better, for a triple-braided cord is not easily broken.

4 Blessings to having Good, Godly Friends:

1) Help each other succeed

Succeed means to achieve the desired aim or result. A good friend will help you succeed in everything you do, they won't tear you down, they will build you up, tell you, you can do it. They will help you succeed in your physical life and in your spiritual life, they should challenge you to want to grow closer to God, to succeed in your walk with Him, not tempt you to fail with them.

2) They will reach out and help you

A good friend will help you when you fall rather than let you stay down because it makes them feel better. They won't contemplate it either; they will immediately pick you up and bandage you up and tell you to walk again.

3) Keep each other warm

I take this as they will always be there for you, they are close to you, in Proverbs it tells us that unreliable friends come to ruin, but there is a friend that sticks closer than a brother. A good friend is always there for you they are close by, even if not physically, they are just one phone call away. You know that you can count on them no matter what; they are there to keep you warm, to let you know that you are not alone.

4) They help to make you victorious, so you are not easily broken

This one is powerful, he tells us a person standing alone can be attacked and defeated but someone who has a friend can stand back-to-back and conquer, and three is even better because a three stranded cord is not easily broken. A good friend fights with you, they don't want to see you defeated, they will pray with you, and they will remind you that you are victorious, they will intercede on your behalf, and they will fight when you can't seem to any more

We see here 4 blessings of a Good or Godly friend.

Let me ask you today, are the friends in your life ones that show you these blessings or do they show you the dangers. Are the people you allow in your life pulling you down or lifting you up, are they praying for you or talking bad about you, are they sharpening you, *Proverbs 27:17, 17As iron sharpens iron, so a friend sharpens a friend.* Or are they making you dull in your walk with God, are they causing you to join hands with the world or turn your hands out towards the world? *James 4:4, "4You adulterers! Don't you realize that friendship with the world makes you an enemy of God? I say it again: If you want to be a friend of the world, you make yourself an enemy of God."*

It's time to evaluate your friendships today, be careful who you walk with.

Who is surrounding you? If we were to look down at an ariel view of your life, would the circumference be one that is strong and powerful or one that is weak and detrimental?

Surround literally means something that forms a border around a thing- do you have a strong border or a border that can be easily broke through by the enemy.