

Series: Below the Surface.

Scripture and Background Information for April 18-24.

To prepare for your group discussion each week, group members should use the **Community Group Discussion Guide** to complete the **GOD'S WORDS** and **MY WORDS** columns using the scripture below.

This week continue our new series: Below the Surface. The series will help us face our everyday challenges and go below what we try to show other people. With **Ecclesiastes 4:8-12** as text, we approach the topic "Loneliness."

Background for Ecclesiastes 4:8-12:

The teacher, probably Solomon, describes in Ecclesiastes the meaningless of life. Again and again, he uses the metaphors that our lives are vanity. In our passage, the teacher breaks with the meaningless of life and praises God's simple gift, friendship or community.

The teacher introduces his praise of friendship by describing a man who was alone. The man described was too busy to build any relationships. Solomon notes, the man was even too busy to find someone who would heir his estate after he would die. The man worked hard and had a difficult life, but his life amounted in the end for nothing, vanity! Then, Solomon shifts his observation to people who spent their time with other people. Here, Solomon shows our dependency on community and fellowship.

Some questions to engage with the text:

1. When reading the text, why should any person want to be alone? What is the deception of the success of being alone?
2. When the teacher talks about community, what benefits does he mention? How does that apply and benefit the church and your involvement in the church?
3. When describing the community with others, note the teachers increasing benefit of the increasing community?

Note: Genesis 2:18 shows us that God said it was not good for man to be alone! Solomon shows us the vanity of life. Life is hard, repetitive, and short. Nevertheless, as Chris preached a few weeks ago, Solomon shows us a break of the vanity of life (12:13-14). Our life becomes meaningful when we live for God and His Kingdom. God's Kingdom is made out of humans; thus, we are called to live in a community. In a Christ-centered community, we can help others with their life situation and find fulfillment for our life, meaning, and ministry!

Scriptures for upcoming weeks:

April 25-May01

Addiction

May 02-08

Shame