

# ETERNITY IN THE HEART

*Ecclesiastes...The Search for a Christian Worldview*



## “A CORD OF THREE STRANDS” *Ecclesiastes 4*

*“Two are better than one, because they have a good return on their work. If one falls down, his friend can help him up. But pity the man who falls and has no one to help him up!...A cord of three strands is not quickly broken.”*

—Ecclesiastes 4:9-12

### I. “I SAW...OPPRESSION” (4:1-3)

- A. Emptiness in oppression.
- B. Life minus comfort.

### II. “I SAW...LABOR AND ALL ACHIEVEMENT” (4:4-6)

- A. The frustration of self-gratification (vs. 4, 5).
- B. The gratification of tranquility (v. 6).

*“Success is neither fame, wealth nor power; rather it is seeking, knowing, loving and obeying God. If you seek, you will know; if you know, you will love; if you love, you will obey.”*—Charles Malik

### III. “I SAW...SOMETHING MEANINGLESS” (4:7, 8)

- A. The limits of labor.
- B. The unending chase for wealth.

### IV. “A CORD OF THREE STRANDS” (4:9-12)

- A. The partnering principle (vs. 9, 10).
- B. Parable of shared life (vs. 11, 12).
  - 1. The triad of strength—an illustration of spiritual dynamics.

### V. “I SAW ALL WHO LIVED AND WALKED” (4:13-5:1)

- A. The philosophy of life succession (vs. 13, 14).
- B. The inevitable winds of change (vs. 15, 16).

*“How fickle people are! Today’s hero is tomorrow’s bum. While rulers tremble and diligently seek to make their thrones secure, the people clamor for change and revolution.”*—Walter C. Kaiser

- C. The royal solution...the fear of God (5:1).

### FOR REFLECTION...

1. Compare Ecclesiastes 4:13-16 and James 1:9-11. In essence, are they saying the same thing?
2. Expand on the illustration of the “cord of three strands”. How might it apply to family life? To the Church? To the balance of body, soul, and spirit? To the Trinity?

