

Two Are Better Than One: Working Together

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In my previous article I shared that many Men's Ministries use Proverb 27:17, "*Iron sharpens iron, and one man sharpens another*" (ESV) as their scripture verse for the ministry. Though this is true, we need to understand how this is done, how does one man sharpen another? It is not done just because you attend church together, sitting next to each other in a church service or at a men's conference. We need to understand how to sharpen each other and I believe Ecclesiastes 4:9-10,12 helps us understand how men need to go about sharpening each other. We read this from those verses;

⁹Two are better than one because they have a good reward for their efforts.

¹⁰For if either falls, his companion can lift him up; but pity the one who falls without another to lift him up.... ¹²And if someone overpowers one person, two can resist him. A cord of three strands is not easily broken. (CSB)

I have come to appreciate this text in Ecclesiastes more for what ministering to men should be all about. In the previous article I shared there are three actions I see that we can glean from this text for us to apply in our lives to help us minister to men.

Today we are going to look at the first of these actions which is **working together**. Look at verse 9 again,

⁹Two are better than one because they have a good reward for their efforts.

In the New American Standard Bible, the last few words of this verse read, "good return for their labor." We see in this verse the attitude of working with another and not working alone. As we work together we increase our output, our efficiency, our effectiveness in accomplishing the task we are about.

Working with others has advantages. God designed us for companionship, not isolation and not loneliness. We men sometimes prefer isolation. I know that I do. I enjoy my time alone and to be perfectly honest with you, I like working alone. I feel like I can get more accomplished when I am by myself. But that is not true.

Working together we not only have a good reward for our efforts; but, we also begin to develop relationships with those we are working with. Working together gives us an opportunity to get to know the people God has place in our lives. By getting to know these individuals, winning their trust, you will earn the privilege to speak into their lives as God leads.

Working together also helps us to recognize the work God is doing. We have the joy of seeing God's hand as He is transforming men into His image. Those who are more

mature in Christ can also be an example to those who are new in their walk. They can provide encouragement.

A few months ago, I had the privilege to travel to Big Pines Key, Florida with about 15 others to help in the recovery effort from Hurricane Irma. Though it was a blessing to help the people in Florida there was even an additional blessing to work alongside other men. We walked into some sad and devastated areas that most would not know where to start. But because there were men working together we encouraged each other and got right to work on the property and house we were assigned and within a few short hours had the property and the outside of the house cleaned up to allow reconstruction.

What we did in Florida was a massive undertaking, I know that, but there are tasks and mission opportunities in our communities that men need to be working together to encourage each other to complete. To advance the kingdom of God and bring needed help to those in our communities that cannot do it on their own. Sometimes just getting together to fellowship with each other over a meal, or watching a sporting event, or some other activity can go a long way to help create those relationships.

We see this throughout scripture. Jesus sent the disciples out in twos. The apostles worked together in at least groups of two. Always ministering and supporting each other wherever they went. This is the example men need to take and apply to their own lives. Working alone can and will allow you to be an easy target for the enemy.

Men need to be building relationships, so they can be there when men need encouragement and together we can advance the kingdom of God by working alongside each other to help those who are in need.

Through work activities men can encourage and support other men who may be struggling and as you develop relationships with these struggling men we move to the next action we see in this text.

Next time we will look at the second action we need to apply to our lives; **Walking Together**.

Together in the adventure and challenge to disciple men – Mike.