

THE YEAR OF FULFILLMENT.

3. NURTURING MEANINGFUL RELATIONSHIPS

Ecclesiastes 4:9-10

Introduction

Greetings, dear community, as we gather for the third installment of our series, "The Year of Fulfillment." Today, our focus is on the **theme of nurturing meaningful relationships**. Join me in exploring the profound significance of connections that uplift and support, guided by the wisdom found in **Ecclesiastes 4:9-10**: "Two are better than one because they have a good return for their labor: If either of them falls down, one can help the other up."

As we reflect on Ecclesiastes, we recognize the **divine design of human relationships**. The passage underscores the inherent strength and mutual support found in meaningful connections. Let's dive into the message of nurturing relationships that contribute to our overall well-being.

Message: Nurturing Meaningful Relationships

Consider the beauty of companionship and shared endeavors. God designed us to thrive in community, finding strength and encouragement in our relationships. Meaningful connections not only enhance our individual journeys but also create a collective impact that glorifies God.

Nurturing relationships involves intentional efforts to uplift, support, and share life's joys and challenges. As we invest in these connections, we echo God's desire for us to love and care for one another, fostering a community where everyone is valued and supported.

Support Verses:

- **Proverbs 17:17** - "A friend loves at all times, and a brother is born for a time of adversity."

- True friendships endure, providing unwavering support during both joyous and challenging seasons.

- Ecclesiastes 4:12 - "Though one may be overpowered, two can defend themselves. A cord of three strands is not quickly broken." The strength of relationships is multiplied when grounded in shared values, faith, and commitment.

Example: The Impact of Meaningful Connections

Let me share examples of individuals whose lives were profoundly influenced by meaningful relationships. Think of Ruth and Naomi, whose bond transcended familial ties, showcasing loyalty and support during difficult times. Their story illustrates the transformative power of nurturing relationships.

Ruth 1:16-17

¹⁶ But Ruth said:

“Entreat^[a] me not to leave you,
Or to turn back from following after you;
For wherever you go, I will go;
And wherever you lodge, I will lodge;
Your people *shall be* my people,
And your God, my God.

¹⁷ Where you die, I will die,
And there will I be buried.
The LORD do so to me, and more also,
If *anything but* death parts you and me.”

Consider the early Christian community as described in Acts, where believers shared their lives, resources, and encouragement. This model of fellowship exemplifies the strength and impact that meaningful relationships can have on individuals and communities.

Acts 2:42-47 And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' ^[a]doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers. ⁴³ Then fear came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were done through the apostles. ⁴⁴ Now all who believed were together, and had all things in common, ⁴⁵ and ^[b] sold their possessions and goods, and divided^[c] them among all, as anyone had need.

⁴⁶ So continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they ate their food with gladness and simplicity of heart, ⁴⁷ praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added ^[d] to the church daily those who were being saved.

Application: Building and Strengthening Relationships

Reflect on your own relationships. How can you intentionally nurture and strengthen them? Consider reaching out to someone in need or expressing gratitude to those who have supported you. Let's commit to fostering an atmosphere of love and encouragement within our community.

Conclusion and Prayer.

As we conclude, remember that meaningful relationships are a gift from God. May we cherish and invest in these connections, creating a community where love and support abound. Let's pray for guidance in building and nurturing relationships that bring fulfillment to our lives and glory to God.

May the Lord bless you with enriching and meaningful connections on your journey of fulfillment. Amen.

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