

## **“Two Are Better Than One”**

The name of a fictional character always becomes very popular this time of year. His name is Ebenezer Scrooge. The first name, Ebenezer, is from a Hebrew word meaning, stone, and the last name, Scrooge, is defined as one who is a miser or stingy. The idea given then is that of a man who is a miserly, old tightwad who has a heart made of stone. Such a man is referenced in the Scripture.

There is one alone, and there is not a second; yea, he hath neither child nor brother: yet is there no end of all his labour; neither is his eye satisfied with riches; neither saith he, For whom do I labour, and bereave my soul of good? This is also vanity, yea, it is a sore travail (Ecclesiastes 4:8).

The wise preacher, while contemplating the vanities of this world, discusses the life of a man who has decided to work himself almost to death, is never satisfied with what riches he has gained, has isolated himself from others so that he not have to share his wealth, and even refuses the comforts that he could afford for himself in order to add to his profits. It is important to note that the Bible commends hard work and good stewardship (2 Thessalonians 3:10; Luke 12:36-43). However, Jesus also stated,

Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal: For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also (Matthew 6:19-21).

The man referenced in Ecclesiastes 4:8, was laying up treasures here on this earth and they were doing him no good. In fact, the inspired writer states that he was bereaving his own soul and brought upon himself “sore travail.” In other words, he was not benefitting from his labors and hard work, rather his drudgery had become an evil affliction.

Solomon, by inspiration, then concludes, “two are better than one; because they have a good reward for their labour” (Ecclesiastes 4:9). In the movie, *The Christmas Carol*, a young Ebenezer is seen choosing his work and desire to accumulate wealth over his first love. A decision he seemed to regret, stating that he almost “ran after her.” Scrooge was alone and in his dream, saw that even at his death, there was no one who cared. The reason he had no friends was because he was not friendly (Proverbs 18:24). Solomon gives several evidences as to why “two are better than one.” First, he states that their combined efforts bring forth good rewards (Ecclesiastes 4:9). Second, they afford one another with comfort during times of distress (4:10). Third, they benefit from the warmth of friendship and companionship each offers (4:11). Last, they offer security, protection, and added strength to one another (4:12). This idea has been stated in many ways: “two heads are better than one,” “a man without a friend is like a left hand without a right,” etc.

The phrase, “two are better than one,” is proven by the unity which exists in a marriage. God said, “It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him”

(Genesis 2:18). The claim is also proven by the unity declared by earthly friendships (Proverbs 17:17; 18:24; 27:9) as well as the fellowship which is in Christ. Abraham “was called the Friend of God” (James 2:23) because of his faithful service and obedience to God. God emphasizes the importance of keeping fellowship pure by imparting that “whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God” (James 4:4). Christians are to be friendly to those outside of Christ and those in error, but are not to participate with them in any way that would suggest that the world and those in error are right in the sight of God. Allowing *friendliness* to morph into *fellowship* is to bid God-speed to error and thus become a “partaker of his evil deeds” (2 John 11). The Prophet Amos asked, “Can two walk together, except they be agreed” (Amos 3:3)? “Two are better than one,” but only if the two are following the standard of God’s Word and are faithful to it. Otherwise, there will always be a gulf fixed between the two.

Let us do the Will of God and be in fellowship with Him, first and foremost. Let us enjoy the benefits of friendship, companionship, and Spiritual fellowship with faithful brothers and sisters in Christ. Let us not be isolated, place trust in self, place emphasis on treasures here on earth and thus exclude ourselves from the riches offered only by sharing the company of one another.

– *Brad Green*