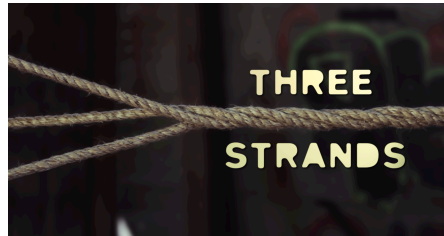




# SERMON

## SMALL GROUPS



### Sermon Series: “3 Strands” – Three Stranded Life

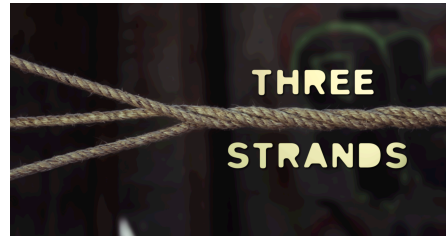
#### USING THIS SERMON DISCUSSION GUIDE

- This Sermon Discussion Guide is only a tool to aid you in meeting the needs of your group. For most groups, there are too many questions to answer in one session together. After considering the needs of your group, you may choose one of the following options:
  - ◆ one section of questions
  - ◆ one or two questions from each section
- Feel free to adapt the format to meet the needs of your group. If your group is mature and wants to dig deeper, add Scripture and ask suitable questions. Remember that this is only a guide.
- Personal application is key to everyone’s growth and should be included in every discussion. When asked how he or she intends to apply a certain principle a group member may say, “I need to spend more time in the Bible and in prayer.” It is important for you to help group members make applications that are more specific and commit to a specific plan of action by asking, for example, “How are you going to begin?” An example is to get up 30 minutes earlier each morning, spending 15 minutes reading the Bible and 10 minutes in prayer. Encourage each group member to be accountable to the group for personal progress at the next meeting.
- As the leader your goal is to help bring the group into a stimulating discussion that helps the members recognize their need for personal life change. Ultimately you want them to be willing to commit to change with accountability to the group. Accountability helps us to persevere in our commitments and achieve the blessings of success.



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### Introduction

God has designed us to be in relationship. In fact, the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit show us such a harmonious example. Jesus even prayed that God's people "would be one as, they are one...so that the world would know that You sent Me and know that You love [them] as much as You love Me." Yet, our fallen human propensity is to drift toward isolation. Unacceptable! This week, we discuss how to move from disconnection to

**“God created us with a hunger for relationships! At our very core we are relational”**

**“The best version of you is experienced as your life is centered in Jesus and connected with others through Christ-centered relationships”**

#### *Key Scripture:*

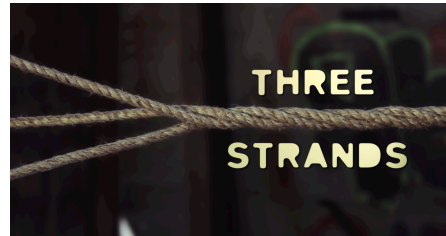
**[Ecclesiastes 4:12]**

“A cord of three strands is not easily broken”



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- 3 strands is God's design for relationships: A minimum of 2 people with God in the center of the relationship is the 3-stranded chord

### **[Matthew 18:20]**

*“For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there I am in the midst of them” –Jesus*

Regarding the Jesus final recorded prayer:

*“It is sometimes said that when someone faces death, one’s conversation reveals his or her deepest passions, hopes and dreams. That’s why we go out of our way to honor dying wishes. In his final hours, Jesus gives us clues to His chief concerns”*

Russ Robinson

### **[John 17: 20-23]**

“I am praying not only for these disciples but also for all who will ever believe in me through their message.<sup>21</sup> I pray that they will all be one, just as you and I are one—as you are in me, Father, and I am in you. And may they be in us so that the world will believe you sent me.<sup>22</sup> “I have given them the glory you gave me, so



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they may be one as we are one.<sup>23</sup> I am in them and you are in me. May they experience such perfect unity that the world will know that you sent me and that you love them as much as you love me.

- “If God’s desire is oneness, connection & unity then the primary work of the enemy would have to be **Disunity, Division & Isolation**”

An isolated life produces:

**1. A loss of perspective** (describe what this looks like)

**2. A person who is vulnerable to attack**

- *“Sheep are never attacked in herds, they are attacked when isolated from the flock”*

**3. A fear of intimacy**

**4. Selfishness**

- **[Proverbs 18:1]** A man who isolates himself seeks his own desire; He rages against all wise judgment.

**5. Poor Health**



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“A study on relationships that tracked the lives of 7,000 people over a nine year period found that the most isolated people were 3 X’s more likely to die than those with strong relational connections. People who had bad health habits (such as smoking, poor eating habits, obesity or alcohol use), but maintained strong social ties lived significantly longer than people who had great health habits but were isolated. In other words “*it’s better to eat twinkies with friends than eat broccoli alone*”

### Advantages of living a 3-stranded Life!

#### **1. A more productive life!**

- [Ecclesiastes 4: 9] Two are better than one, because they have a good return for their labor:

#### **2. A Life that recovers from failure**

- [Ecclesiastes 4: 10] If either of them falls down, one can help the other up. But pity anyone who falls and has no one to help them up.

#### **3. A life that does not grow spiritually cold!**

- [Ecclesiastes 4: 11] Also, if two lie down together, they will keep warm. But how can one keep warm alone?

#### **4. A life that experiences victory in spiritual battles!**



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- **[Ecclesiastes 4: 12]** Though one may be overpowered, two can defend themselves. A cord of three strands is not easily broken.

### **[Acts 2:46-47]**

Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts,<sup>47</sup> praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.

*"Currently, people who profess faith in Jesus Christ yet do not attend church make up the largest religious category in America"*

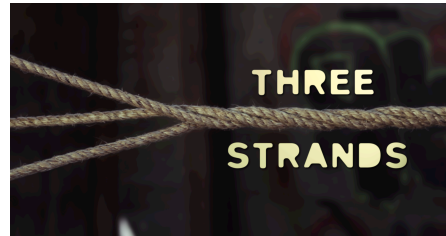
### **[Hebrews 10:25]**

Let us think of ways to motivate one another to acts of love and good works. And let us not neglect our meeting together, as some people do, but encourage one another, especially now that the day of his return is drawing near.



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### Small Group Questions

1. Have we seen the best version of you? How do your current relationships encourage or distract from that being drawn out or seen?
2. According to Ecclesiastes 4.9-12, how would you describe God's design for relationships?
3. If God's desire is for unity for His people, why does the enemy use the tools of disunity, division, and isolation? How does he try to accomplish that?
4. What does the "fruit" of isolation produce? (Small Group Leader/Facilitator: loss of perspective, vulnerability to attack, fear of intimacy, selfishness, poor health)
5. In this season, which of these qualities of the three-stranded life do you desire most:
  - a more productive life
  - a life that recovers from failure
  - a life that does not grow spiritually cold
  - a life that experiences victory in spiritual battles
6. If you could design a person for your child or loved one to be connected to, what would be some of his or her characteristics?
7. What are some spiritual victories in your life that you have experienced through the power of relationships? (Small Group Leader/Facilitator: be prepared to filter and/or direct the conversation)