

Why It Matters for You That “a Cord of Three Strands Is Not Easily Broken”

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What is the value of a friend? What is the value of being in close relationships? From the very beginning one of the things God said is that it is not good for man to be alone. God was establishing a principle recognizing how important relationships are. This was not just true for Adam; this is still true for you and me. We were created for relationship, fellowship, and friendship.

Because of how we were made, I want to direct your attention to the book of Ecclesiastes, where Solomon underscores how necessary close relationships are. Here is one thing he said.

“Though one may be overpowered, two can defend themselves. A cord of three strands is not quickly broken” ([Ecclesiastes 4:12](#)).

Solomon is emphasizing an age-old truth; there is [strength](#) in numbers. What is fascinating about this verse is recognizing it doesn’t take a lot of numbers to increase your strength. In his analogy, he focuses on a cord of three strands. So let’s figure out what he means when he says that a cord of three strands is not easily broken.

What Does This Verse Mean?

A cord of three strands speaks to the interweaving of three cords into one. This symbolism is used in some [marriage](#) ceremonies. One strand represents the bride, one

represents the groom, and the other represents God. These three strands are then intertwined into a braid that is not easily unraveled.

The braided cord is much stronger and harder to break than the three individual cords separately. This analogy is not just true of marriages; the imagery here can really apply to any close relationship.

What Makes the Cord of Three Strands Stronger?

Before we make a spiritual analogy, how about a scientific one? I went to the website Keepthatshort.com to get a scientific explanation of a braided rope. Here is what they said.

“In the simplest sense, fiber that is twisted or **braided** is **stronger** than the same bundle of fibers that are straight because the cord has more capacity to stretch. It won't stretch to the same length as the straight fibers, but in exchange the fibers (and the spaces between them) can compress.

In this regard, why does braiding increase rope strength?

The twist of the strands in a twisted or **braided rope** serves not only to keep a **rope** together, but enables the **rope** to more evenly distribute tension among the individual strands. Without any twist in the **rope**, the shortest strand(s) **would** always be supporting a much higher proportion of the total load.”

When you look at this, you understand one reason why a cord of three strands is not easily broken. When it is braided, you keep the rope together. You also get increased capacity, even distribution, and more support.

What Does It Mean That "a Cord of Three Strands Is Not Easily Broken"?

Using this scientific analysis, here is what it means that a cord of three strands is not easily broken. When you are in close relationship with others and you are braided together you will stay together, you will have more support, you will increase your capacity, you will be more productive, and you will have better results.

However, there is one critical point to this; it only works when the cords are braided together, not when they remain separate. This means you are not competing against others, but you are connecting with them. For you to have more support or be more productive, you must get connected or intertwined with other people, where you each strengthen each other. You must resist the temptation to be a lone ranger and you must have someone who is engaged in your life.

If you are a lone ranger, you may think that is a sign of strength, but the truth is you are much weaker then when you are connected.

Jesus Modeled a Cord of Three Strands

When Jesus was on earth, he chose twelve disciples,, but out of the twelve he had three he was closest to. He revealed things to them, and they had experiences with him the others did not share. In one instance as Jesus was getting closer to his crucifixion, he went to the garden to pray. Notice who Jesus took with him.

“Then Jesus went with his disciples to a place called Gethsemane, and he said to them, ‘Sit here while I go over there and pray.’ He took Peter and the two sons of Zebedee along with him, and he began to be sorrowful and troubled. Then he said to them, ‘My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death. Stay here and keep watch with me’” ([Matthew 26:36-38](#)).

Not only did Jesus ask them to pray with him, but he poured out his emotions to them. Remember he revealed things to them he did not reveal to the others. This is a cord of three strands in action, and if Jesus modeled this, then what about you?

Does Your Life Model a Cord of Three Strands?

In my book [The Pursuit of Victory](#) I devote a chapter to building a team which is part of your cord of three strands. I want to ask you seven questions, and please be honest in how you answer them.

1. Do you have a friend or friends in your life with whom you can talk openly and honestly about how you feel and how you are doing?
2. Can you tell them the truth about any struggles, fears, or temptations you deal with, without fear of being judged?
3. Do you have people you can call at a moment's notice who will pray for you, and with you, if you need it?
4. Do you have people you can talk and fellowship with, and not just talk about the Bible or “spiritual” stuff?
5. Do you have people in your life who will tell you the truth, even when you don't want to hear it?
6. Does everyone in your circle always agree on everything and see life in the same way? (This may not be so healthy.)

7. Are there people in your life where you can just let your guard down, laugh, joke with, hang out, and just be human?

How did you answer these questions? Hopefully, you got a lot more yes's than no's. If you are going to build a cord of three strands that is not easily broken, you need these types of people included in it. You need people you can laugh with, cry with, pray with, eat with, watch a movie with, talk on the phone with, share your goals, worship together, workout together, and the list goes on and on. These people will challenge you, comfort you, correct you, and encourage you in your journey with the Lord.

As I said before, you don't need a lot of them, but when these people exist in your life then you are understanding what it means that a cord of three strands is not easily broken.

What Does This Mean for Us Today?

When you think about what this verse, "a cord of three strands is not easily broken," means today, it all goes back to what God said about Adam in the garden. It is not good for you to be alone. It wasn't good for Adam then and it is not good for you now.

If you read this section of [Ecclesiastes 4:8-12](#), this is the issue Solomon is dealing with. Let me reiterate this for you. You were never meant to be alone. You were always meant to be connected and if you are not connected you are far weaker and more vulnerable. Your Christian journey was never meant to be walked in isolation. Jesus didn't journey alone, and neither should you.

I want to end this with a prayer for you. I know for some of you there are trust issues because you have been hurt by those close to you. Guess what – so was Jesus, yet he still walked closely with others. Some of you have been deserted by your "friends" when you needed them most. Guess what – so was Jesus, after he was arrested they all ran away.

My point is you need people, and as hard as you may try you cannot escape this fact. For this reason, I want to pray that God would connect you to the ones he wants in your life. Here is my prayer for you today.

Father,

For my brother or sister who needs connection, bring the right people into their lives. You said it is not good for us to be alone, so don't let them stay alone. If there have been past hurts, heal them and remove them so they can trust people again. Let them experience the joy of true fellowship and true relationship as this is what you desire for them. In the same

manner they enjoy relationship and fellowship with you, allow them to do the same with others in the body of Christ. Let this be done for your glory and for their benefit.

*I pray all this in Jesus' name,
Amen.*