

WEEKLY GROUP GUIDE



Scripture: Ecclesiastes 4:1–16



Week of: February 8, 2026



Message Title: Contentment and Cooperation in a Cutthroat World



Speaker: Ps. Lenard Tavernelli

1. ICEBREAKER (5–10 MINS)

What is one area of life where you feel pressure to keep up with others right now? It could be work, money, family, school, or something else.

2. READ TOGETHER

*Have someone from your group read aloud **ECCLESIASTES 4:1–16**.*

Ask: As you listen to the passage, pay attention to what stands out to you. What words, images, or repeated ideas feel heavy, surprising, or unsettling? What caught your attention in the text, and why do you think it stood out to you?

3. Group Discussion (30–40 mins)

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS: *(Use the most helpful questions for your group.)*

- 1.** The passage begins with repeated emphasis that “there was no one to comfort them.” Why do you think isolation makes suffering feel unbearable, even when the suffering itself does not change?
- 2.** Why do you think Ecclesiastes describes oppression without offering resolution? How does that challenge our instinct to demand immediate answers or fixes?
- 3.** Verse 4 claims that much toil and achievement flow from envy. When you strip away the activity itself, what are you hoping comparison will secure for you? Safety? Worth? Visibility? Control?

4. How does competition, as described in verse 4, reveal a fear that what God has given is not enough?
5. Laziness is rejected, but so is restless striving. What does faithful work look like when it is no longer driven by fear of falling behind or being overlooked?
6. What limits in your life make it hardest to live with “a handful of quietness”? What do you fear losing if you stop striving?
7. The man who lives for fortune never asks, “For whom am I toiling?” What question about meaning or purpose are you avoiding by staying busy?
8. Cooperation is described as protection, warmth, and endurance. Where have you resisted depending on others because it would expose weakness, need, or lack of control?
9. How does Ecclesiastes 4 connect to our mission to “Proclaim the truth of Jesus and grow mature disciples for the glory of God”?

This passage dismantles the myth that self-made success leads to life. By exposing the emptiness of competition and isolation, it clears the way for us to proclaim Christ as the true source of contentment and community. Disciples mature not by self-sufficiency, but by learning to live dependently, faithfully, and together under Christ’s rule.

10. How does this passage reshape our core values as a church?

Living with contentment and cooperation reorients us away from self-preservation and toward shared faithfulness:

- **Worship:** We worship God as our sufficiency, not our success.
- **Bible Knowledge:** Scripture confronts envy and re-forms our desires.
- **Fellowship:** We pursue interdependence rather than independence.
- **Prayer:** We confess need rather than perform strength.
- **Service:** We serve together instead of seeking recognition.
- **Giving:** We give freely because we are not defined by what we keep.
- **Evangelism:** We invite others into grace, not competition.

- **Missions:** We participate in God's work rather than building our own legacy.

4. Prayer (10–15 mins)

Thank God for true contentment in Christ and ask for grace to live in humble, loving cooperation

Prompt:

Father, we confess how easily we look to competition, success, or isolation for meaning and security. Forgive us for envying others, striving for more than You have given, or pulling away instead of loving well. Thank You that true contentment is found in Christ alone and not in possessions, status, or approval. Teach us to receive our work and our circumstances as gifts from You. Shape us into a church that resists selfish ambition, bears one another's burdens, and walks together in humility and love. Help us to live as a compelling community that reflects the grace of Jesus in a restless and lonely world. In His name, amen.