

Crying for Comfort

Ecclesiastes 4:1-16

LISTEN TO AMY GRANT "LEAD ME ON" <https://youtu.be/yPFS1pYux8g>

I. **THE TEARS OF OPPRESSION** (1-3)

A. **Abuse of Power** (Ps 36:1-2)—because they can

1. **They don't fear God.** (Job 31:13-23)
2. **They don't know their own hearts.** (Ps 36:2; Jer 17:9)

B. **No One to Comfort Them** (1)

1. **What They Need**—justice and sympathy
2. **Why They Don't Have It:** selfish & self-centered
 - a. **Afraid** of the bully
 - b. **Embarrassed** to be associated with victims & losers
 - c. **Inadequate** to fix the problem.

C. **Despairing of Life** (2-3)

1. The Pain of the **Moment**
2. The **Big Picture** of Life without God (*under the sun*)
 - a. **Suffering without meaning**—there is no reason
 - b. **No one to comfort us**—there is no savior
 - c. **No hope for the future**—there is no redemption

II. **THE EMPTINESS OF ENVY** (4-12)

A. **The Mindset of Envy** (Gen 4:3-10)—*selfishness, resentment, hatred*

1. You are the **center** of your own universe. Everything is about you.
2. You measure your worth by **comparing** yourself to other people. You are constantly evaluating your own value—it is never secure.
3. You are always in **competition** with others. Your place in the pecking order is always in jeopardy.
4. You **resent** the success of others. Their achievement *diminishes* yours.

- B. The Foolishness of Extremes** (5-6)—tend to unhealthy extremes
 - 1. **Driven by Envy**
 - 2. **Ruined by Sloth**
 - 3. **Quietness with Wisdom**—work hard but know when to stop and enjoy
- B. The Cost of Envy** (7-8)
 - 1. **Weariness** ()—No Rest
 - 2. **Discontent** ()—No Satisfaction
 - 3. **Futility** ()—No Reason...
 - 4. **Isolation** ()—No Friends or Family or loved ones
- C. The Blessing of Friendship** (9-12)—better than lonely envy

III. **THE VANITY OF KINGSHIP** (13-16; Ps 118:9 & 146:3)—

- A. Rank does not ensure character.**
- B. A king will decline.**
- C. He can't please everybody.**

IV. **THE GOD OF ALL COMFORT** (2 Cor 1:3-4; Rev 21:4)—Jesus, God's comfort to us

- A. The One Who Listens** (Gen 4:10; Ex 2:23-25 & 3:7-8; Ps 9:12 & 10:14, 17)
- B. The One Who Cares** (Mat 9:36 & 23:37)
- C. The One Who Judges** (Isa 11:4 & 33:22; Act 17:31)
- D. The One Who Redeems** (Rev 21:5)

LISTEN TO "Is He Worthy" (Andrew Peterson) at <https://youtu.be/Olahc83Kvp4>

WATCH VIDEO CLIP of King Theoden (LOTR) at <https://youtu.be/kzvAAAHVFB>