

The answer is growth and maintenance. Therefore, the question of accountability turns into whether you set goals for yourself in terms of spiritual growth.

Why Do We Resist Accountability?

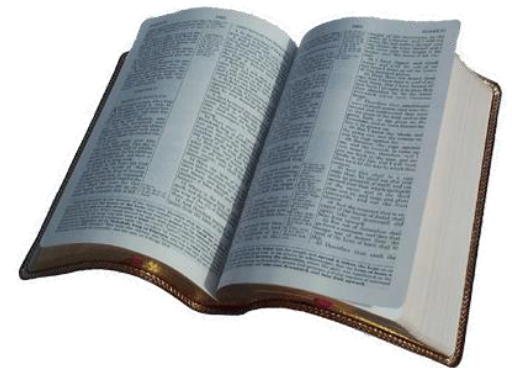
Fundamentally, most people resist accountability. One reason we resist being held accountable or holding others accountable is because we hate conflicts or confrontation. We don't want to be challenged about not being accountable nor do we want to hold others accountable for their actions. Too, we love privacy; we do not want to have our lives interfered with, and sharing accountability with others requires sharing intimate parts of our lives. It may be that we think accountability means we are necessarily guilty of sinful conduct, and to engage in an accountability process seems to indicate we have failed. Perhaps we have had a past experiences of bad accountability. People are flawed, and perhaps in the past we were held accountable in an inappropriate or incorrect manner. Maybe we simply lack spiritual friendships where we are comfortable being accountable. Whatever the reason, the lack of accountability in our lives is a major reason Christians do not spiritually grow.

Spiritual Growth Needs Accountability

So you want to grow? The world uses tools to grow that we could learn to use as well. We ought to work on growth by goal setting. If we don't grow, we will die: *"These likewise are the ones sown on stony ground who, when they hear the word,*

immediately receive it with gladness; and they have no root in themselves, and so endure only for a time. Afterward, when tribulation or persecution arises for the word's sake, immediately they stumble." (Mark 4:16-17). So Jesus said about the failure to grow.

Accountability



Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God and keep His commandments, for this is man's all. For God will bring every work into judgment, including every secret thing, whether good or evil. Ecclesiastes 12:13-14

What is the meaning of life in one word? In our society, many would probably define it as pleasure or happiness, but those are empty pursuits. Others might point to love or service, but those are expressions of the ultimate meaning. According to Ecclesiastes 12:13-14, the meaning of life is **accountability**. We must orient our lives in the understanding that we will ultimately be held accountability for everything.

One of the keys to success in being a spiritual person is accepting that we must live in an accountable fashion. The nature of accountability (which is described as *answerability, blameworthiness, liability, and the expectation of account-giving*) is the understanding that there needs to be an answer for our actions or inaction. Businesses understand this; the most successful “change” oriented businesses (consider Weight Watchers or Alcoholics Anonymous) are built around mutual accountability. Consider this quote from a leading businessman: *“Most business managers preach that the key to success is holding employees accountable for actions, but I have found that successful entrepreneurs are all about holding themselves accountable. They skip the*

*blame and complain game, and make things happen despite major obstacles. As a startup investor, I view any evidence of a victim mentality as the kiss of death.”*¹ This is precisely the case with being a Christian. As Christians, we are accountable to God, to the church, and to ourselves.

You Are Accountable To God

Scriptures speak at length and most often of our accountability to God. We are accountable for:

What is **said** - Matthew 12:36

What is **done** - 2 Corinthians 5:10

What **can be done** - James 3:13; 4:17

What is **owned** - 2 Corinthians 9:6-8

What is **thought** - Matthew 5:28

On the Day of Judgment we will stand before God and give an account of all of these things. Of course, if we are a Christian, we do not stand before God without an advocate (1 John 2:1). Otherwise, we would be utterly lost. But the advocacy of Jesus Christ is only for those who abide in Him.

You Are Accountable To The Church

Scripture also speaks to our accountability in the Church. Consider the words of James 5:16 *“Confess your trespasses to one another, and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much.”* Is it not clear that this commandment revolves around the idea of an accessible accountability to one

another? Many people do not want to be accountable to a collection of Christians (the church). Perhaps they fail to appreciate that it is not a matter of our discretion as to our relationship with a local church. Are you a Christian? Then you must necessarily submit to a local church (1 Peter 5:5). What does that sort of accountability look like? Consider that it ought to appear to your fellow Christians as:

(1) Accepting responsibility for your behavior. No blame game can be tolerated.

(2) Meeting/exceeding agreed upon expectations. Christians have the right to expect you to participate in the work of the church.

(3) Admitting mistakes. Again, not owning up to our sins is unforgivable.

(4) Admitting limitations of knowledge. No one can do everything; we need to accept this truth of ourselves and each other.

You Are Accountable To Yourself

What about your accountability to yourself? Paul said in 2 Corinthians 13:5 *“Examine yourselves as to whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves. Do you not know yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you? --unless indeed you are disqualified.”* Do you hold yourself accountable? In what way do you do so?

¹ Martin Zwilling, Forbes Magazine, April 30, 2015