

Being An Accountable Christian **12-29-19 AM**

Accountability is Like Gym Membership

Preachers are most like personal trainers. The equipment we have is the Bible; our gym is the local church. The preacher's job is to show you the exercises you need to get into (spiritual) shape; his job is to show you how the equipment works, and what you need to do to change. The trainer's job is also to encourage you to be mindful away from the gym. Most of the effort of getting into shape is done outside the gym. You have to eat right. Imagine showing up to the gym with a donut! Like a personal trainer, the preacher can force nothing on you; he can only demonstrate the equipment and encourage you to work out on it. But he cannot make you change, and there is no magic pill for results. He can only tell you what to do for results.

Imagine now having been a member of a gym for a year. You have been paying a lot for this membership. Now you want to know, has it paid off? Am I better off now than I was a year ago? The most important point of this self-examination is that you understand that it is not the gym's job to make you change, it is yours. This is the idea of your personal accountability for change.

All Christians have accountability to God. Elders are told that they must give an account for the souls of the congregation (Hebrews 13:17). The Evangelist is accountable for the doctrine presented to the church (2 Timothy 4:2-5). Deacons must account for their service (1 Timothy 3:10), and Teachers must account for the things they have taught (2 Timothy 2:2). But above all, what we stress the most is that as Members we have the ultimate accountability for the church (Romans 14:12, Hebrews 4:13) and for 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 unforgiveable.

(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? 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.

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Mentioned in the lesson - [The Seven Principles of Highly Accountable Men](#) by Mark Laaser

Accountability begins with brokenness, confession and repentance.

Accountability requires your being able to talk about your feelings and needs.

Accountability always requires a group of men or women, not just one person.

Accountability means you must get rid of the garbage in your life.

Prepare when you are strong for a time when you will be weak.

Accountability means building and defending in equal measures.

To change a negative behavior, you must do whatever it takes for as long as it takes.