

# The Need And Nature Of Accountability

Intro: My topic this morning is the need for and the nature of accountability.

## I. The Need For Accountability.

A. Whenever someone tries to sell me an idea, or hook me onto a new product, I want to know two things: (1) what is it; and (2) why in the world do I need it.

### 1. Cause I already have more stuff in my life than I can adequately take care of...

a. wife, 2 kids, in-laws, a growing ministry, 3 brother3, 3sister-in-law, nephews, nieces, lots of friends... 2 dogs, and a cat! This is a lot to worry about.

**b. My plate is full. I'm busy and so are you so what is accountability and why do I need it....**

2. It's important to understand that, by accountability, we are not talking about coercive tactics, the invasion of privacy, or bringing others under the weight of one's legalism or manipulative and dominating tactics.

**a. Instead, when we say accountability for men, we mean developing friendships with other men that help promote spiritual growth, honesty and obedience to God**

b. And genuine evaluations of our walk with God and others. This is what I mean.

### 3. As Christians we make the mistake in overestimating the power of the will of a regenerated person.

a. You take for granted that because you knows God's will, that you will do God's will. That because you have knowledge that you will automatically act on it.

**b. Over and over again, I discover in my own Christian walk that no matter how much I know and how badly I may want to walk in all that I know, I cannot trust myself to actually do it.**

*Romans 7:14-23 - "The law is good, then. The trouble is not with the law but with me, because I am sold into slavery, with sin as my master. I don't understand myself at all, for I really want to do what is right, but I don't do it. Instead, I do the very thing I hate. I know perfectly well that what I am doing is wrong, and my bad conscience shows that I agree that the law is good. But I can't help myself, because it is sin inside me that makes me do these evil things. I know I am rotten through and through so far as my old sinful nature is concerned. No matter which way I turn, I can't make myself do right. I want to, but I can't. When I want to do good, I don't. And when I try not to do wrong, I do it anyway. But if I am doing what I don't want to do, I am not really the one doing it; the sin within me is doing it. It seems to be a fact of life that when I want to do what is right,*

*I inevitably do what is wrong. I love God's law with all my heart. But there is another law at work within me that is at war with my mind. This law wins the fight and makes me a slave to the sin that is still within me.” NLT*

4. This is the basis for your need for godly relationships.

**a You need to be related to people who will help you, either by encouragement or correction to walk in what you know.**

b. In order to walk in what you know you need to be related to people who will confront you with the gap between your information and your walk

**B. The question that has to be answered is this, “Am I my brother’s keeper?” Genesis 4:1-9.**

1. In verse 9 - God asks Cain a question.

**a. It’s a question that both God and Cain know the answer to.**

b. Cain evades the truth by answering with another question.

c. Cain’s question became God’s answer.

**2. I believe that God is still asking the question today, “Where is your brother?”**

a. To answer this question we need to take time and try to locate where our brother is.

**b. Once we locate him, we have the responsibility to do something about it.**

1) “Responsibility” is two words put together, respond & ability.

**2) God wants to help us develop the ability to respond redemptively to the things that we find when we locate our brother.**

3) “Accountability” means that I have become personally responsible for your growth and you have become personally responsible for mine.

**4) “Accountability” means that I give you the right to ask me about anything in my life, to meddle in my affairs, and to mind my business.**

II. The Nature Of Accountability: Hebrew 12:15 - *“Look out for each other so that none of you will miss out on the special favor of God. Watch out that no bitter root of unbelief rises up among you, for whenever it springs up, many are corrupted by its poison.” (NLT)*

**A. Look out** - *“Look out for each other so that none of you will miss out on the special favor of God” (God’s Grace)*

- Grace will retrain your anger towards someone's sin and at the same time release your love for the sinner.
- **This passage is saying that we need look out for the ones who are missing out.**

1. The Greek Word for "look out" is "episkopoo" which means to look upon others in such a way is that you are inspecting their lives for the purpose of caring for them.

**a. The inspection here is to keep them from falling short or lacking in some area of their life, not to judge them.**

- There will come a day when God will examine their lives and on that day everyone will be judged.
- **But not today - 1 Corinthians - "Don't pass judgment before the time." - We are still in the year of God's favor not in the day of His vengence. And not by me**
- The Greek word that is translated in the English "miss out" is "husteroo," which means to "be inferior, to fail, be lacking, and to be in want."
- **It is the same word translated "hurt" in the story of the Prodigal son.**

Luke 15:13-14 which states, "*There, undisciplined and dissipated, he wasted everything he had. After he had gone through all his money he began to hurt.*" (The Message)

- \* **Do you know what I want to say after reading this: "Well Duh"**
- \* In one sense he getting exactly what he deserves
- \* **But scripturally we can't take that posture.**
- \* That wasn't the posture of the Father and it was His money - It can't be our posture.

**b The implication is, that it is the ones who are messing up that are also missing out.**

c. In the midst of their messing up, it's our job to make sure they don't miss out.

**d. We have to restrain ourselves from focusing on why people are hurting and concentrate on the fact that they are hurting.**

2. Once we discovered who these people (the messer uppers) are, we then need to bestow the grace of God upon their lives.

**a. That is, we are not to treat them the way their sins deserve but treat them the way the Son deserves.**

- In other words we don't condemn people for how they are , but seek to conform them to how they should be.
  - **It's not our job to bring punishment to their sin but to bring production to their soul.**
- b. This will be difficult for us, because our human propensity is to want to judge their sin instead of loving their soul. The reason we do this is because it is easier.
- **It is easier to point out a weakness instead of pouring in His Strength**
  - It is easier to denounce people's flaws instead of developing their faith.
  - **It is easier to criticize people's failings instead of caring for their future**
  - It is easier to condemn people's habits instead of comforting their hurts.
  - **We find it easier to be fruit inspectors instead of fruit cultivators.**
3. Romans 2:1-2 - You who judge practice the same things.
- a. **You may not look at porn with lust in your heart, but you look at position, prestige, power and profit with lust in your heart. And it can be just as destructive.**
- b. You may not smoke and drink and thereby defile and destroy your temple, but your eating and exercise habits are defiling and destroying the temple.
- c. **Somehow drunkenness is wrong but gluttony isn't.**
4. I want to look at Romans 2:4 more closely. Lets look at 5 words that will help us understand the power of God's grace
- “Or do you think lightly of the riches of His kindness and forbearance and patience, not knowing that the kindness of God leads you to repentance?” (NASB)***
- a. The Greek word translated “*think lightly*” is “*katafronoo*,” which means to despise, disesteem, discount, disdain, or think little of.”
- **The literal meaning is to think that something has no value.**
  - You think lightly, because you don't know.
- b. **The Greek word translated “*kindness*” is “*chrestotes (khray-stot'-ace)*” which means an event or action that is useful and benevolent.**
- Benevolence is defined as “a desire to promote prosperity and happiness at no cost.”
  - \* **You can't extend kindness with an agenda**
  - \* The moment you attach a condition or requirement to your kindness you strip it of its power.

- \* **Kindness pays most when its done for no pay**
  - \* Kindness is most powerful when it is done without thought of profit.
  - **It signifies "not merely goodness as a quality, rather it is goodness in action, goodness expressing itself in deeds."**
  - \* Kindness is love in work clothes
  - \* **Kind words are short to speak, but their echos are endless**
  - \* You need to train your heart to feel kindness and your hand to give help.
  - **Kindness had converted more sinners that either zeal, eloquence, or learning.**
- c. The Greek word translated "*forbearance*" is "*anochē (an-okh-ay')*" which means "a delay or suspension of punishment in order for repentance to be worked out.
- **It is a putting up with what you don't like until what you do like comes forth.**
  - You have to suspend the punishment of the person he or she is in order to support the person God wants them to be.
  - **Jeremiah 15:19 - "If you extract the precious from the worthless."**
  - \* Example of the Samaritan woman  
Others saw trash, Jesus saw a treasure  
Others saw problems, Jesus saw potential  
Others saw promiscuity, Jesus saw promise
  - \* **Jesus extracted the treasure from the trash through kindness.**
- d. The Greek word translated "*Longsuffering*" is "*makrothumia (mak-roth-oo-mee'-ah)*" which means "a state of emotional calm in the face of provocation."
- **It also means a slowness in avenging a wrong done to you.**
  - It self-restraint in the face of injury, which does not hastily retaliate or promptly punish. (*Helping the squirrel hit by car*)
  - The implication is that as you seek to help those who are hurting, they in all likelihood will inflict hurt on you. (*Pete or the people who lived with us*)
  - **This is where most people bail in the process of befriending a sinner.**
  - \* But it is continual kindness in the face of injury that releases the most power.
  - \* **Kindness is most effective with cruelty as its backdrop.**
- e. The Greek word translated "*leadeth*" is "*ago (ag'-o)*" which means to carry or accompany. Our kindness will carry people until they can repent.

**5. It takes the whole package in order to bring someone to repentance.**

- a. First we have esteem, count on, and think highly of God's kindness.
- b. Then we will have to delay and suspend our judgement about their past actions.**
- d. And we will have restrain ourselves from retaliating when their continued actions provoke and injure us.
- e. We will do this knowing that each act of kindness, forbearance and longsuffering is releasing power and is moving the one who has fallen short of the grace God one step closer to the day, he or she repents.**

B. Watch Out - *“Watch out that no bitter root of unbelief rises up among you, for whenever it springs up, many are corrupted by its poison.”*

**1. Where the word “look out” implied action that needs to be taken. The word “watch out” implies actions that needed to be avoided.**

- a. In other words after you look out for the individual who is in need of God's grace, you need to watch our for the ones who don't believe the individual should have gotten it.
- b. Because God blessed someone who you believe doesn't deserve it, then you become bitter.**

2. You can see this dynamic in the following stories. The Story of the Prodigal Son & The story of the laborers in Matthew 20

**3. Who are the ones that we need to “watch out” for?**

- a. They are the ones who refused to “look out” for the ones who are missing out.
- b. A heart that doesn't easily allow grace to spring forth from it, is a heart that easily allows a bitter root to grow out of it.**

4. We need to watch out for the ones who aren't looking out for those who are missing out.