

BEING A LIGHT IN A DARK WORLD, PART 3

A Call For Personal Accountability

I. Scandals in the Christian World

- High profile ministers all too frequently become headlines for adultery, sexual perversions, embezzlement and fraud.
- Contributing factors include: relentless schedules, pressure to raise millions of dollars, produce continual success, celebrity treatment and lack of personal boundaries and spiritual renewal. Their life-giving ministries morph into life-draining machines.
- Order of Digression: Personal renewal, marriage, ministry staff, disillusioned followers, media. The first symptoms begin at home.
- Reveals a lack of accountability on many levels

II. Accountable, defined

- **Taking full responsibility of one's actions**
- A scriptural principle of answering to and allowing a fellow believer to correct or instruct you for the purpose of emotional wholeness and spiritual maturity.
- The act of being required to explain actions and defend decisions

III. Why is it important?

- Constant stress = weariness = vulnerability = skewed focus
- A critical step towards maturity and leadership
- Prevents distractions or the sin of pride
- Prevents negative social patterns of loneliness and isolation
- Promotes personal wholeness, completion of spiritual calling or secular goals

IV. Three Types of Accountability *(of many)*

1. Personal Accountability - to self
2. Relational Accountability - to spouse and team members
3. Spiritual Accountability - to God

V. Personal Accountability

- Relational - *evaluating health of relationships; multiple broken relationships reveals character flaws*
- Time management - *confronting tardiness, laziness, procrastination, unfruitful activities*
- Money management - *ignorance, greed, budgets, excessive generosity*
- Stewardship - *management of all personal belongings; dorm, clothes, car ...*

VI. Spiritual Accountability; Types of

- Teacher - Disciple: *1 Tim. 1:2, Paul // Timothy*
- Co-laborer in Christ: *Prv. 27:21, Paul // Barnabus*
- Small Group: *Rom. 12:16*
- Husband / Wife: *Eph. 5:21*
- Local Church: *Heb. 13:17, Pastors*
- Intentional Interaction: *Daily, Weekly, Monthly, Quarterly, Annually*
- Levels differ: *Spiritually mature not as vulnerable as a new convert*

VII. Benefits

- Keeps you focused on spiritual growth
- Forces you to recognize your vulnerable areas
- Reinforces healthy choices or exposes unhealthy choices

VIII. Scripture References

- Proverb's definition of a fool is one who is unteachable.
- **Prov. 13:1** - "...a wise son heeds his father's instruction, but a scoffer does not listen to rebuke."
- **Prov. 18:1** - "A man who isolates himself seeks his own desire; he rages against all wise judgment."
- **Prov. 27:17** - "As iron sharpens iron, so one man sharpens another." Rubbing dull knives together returns the shine and effectiveness.
- **Gal. 6:1** - "Brethren, if a man is overtaken in any trespass, you who are spiritual restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness, considering yourself lest you also be tempted."
- **Heb. 10:24 NLT** - "And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works."
- **Heb. 10:24 Amp.** - "Let us think of ways to motivate one another to acts of love and good works ...consider and give attentive, continuous care to watching over one another, studying how we may stir up (stimulate and incite) to love...."
- **Heb. 13:17** - "Obey those who have the rule over you, [your spiritual leaders - Amp.] and submit yourselves: for they watch over your souls, as they that must give an account.."
- **James 5:16** - "Confess your sins to one another and pray for one another, that you may be healed."

IX. Accountability Attributes

- A teachable spirit - a willingness to be convicted, corrected or instructed. (Jms. 1:19)
- Honesty - Am I willing to submit my personality, approach, accomplishments, and plans to other godly believers without reacting in pride and defensiveness? If not, why?
- Humility - How do I respond when someone exposes pride or questions my motive?

X. Bible Examples

- Roman Centurion - Matt. 8:5-13
- Apostle Paul - Requested consultation and gave an account to chief apostles in Jerusalem twice.
Gal. 1:15. Again, after 14 years of successful ministry!
 1. "After 14 years, I went up again to Jerusalem with Barnabas ..." Gal. 2:1-2
 2. Gave an account to the church of Antioch. Gal. 1:15, Acts 14:26, Gal. 2:1-2
 3. "From there they sailed to Antioch, **from where they had been committed to the grace of God for the work which they had fulfilled...**" Acts 14:26
 4. Paul was not a lone ranger. He always travelled with godly associates.
 5. Five-fold ministers are not exempt. "Let the prophets speak, two or three, and let the others discern." I Cor. 14:2

XI. Practical Applications

- Guard your marriage - Never be alone with the opposite sex.
- Guard your money - Never have secret accounts or hidden cash.
- Guard your ministry - Never quit listening your ministry team.

XII. Guidelines and Guardrails

- A Biblical accountability leader should guide, but not control you.
- A Biblical accountability leader should not require your financial support.
- A Biblical accountability leader should not force marriage or any other life decisions.
- Apollos declined Paul's suggestion and that was the end of it! (I Cor. 16:12)
- Paul rebuked Peter for telling the Gentiles how to live. (Gal. 2:14)
- Paul advised the Corinthians not to submit themselves to abusive "disciplers." (II Cor. 11:1)

XIII. Conclusion

- No one is above the law. (*Even more so, the Word of God!*)
- Everyone should be accountable to others in some degree.
- Accountability will prevent personal and ministry setbacks.
- Accountability will promote spiritual maturity and long-term fruitfulness.

“Let me be clear. No one is above the law. Not a politician, not a priest, not a criminal, not a police officer. We are all accountable for our actions.” Antonio Villaraigosa



The Leader's Challenge

Recognizing the pressures of false success and the dangers of selecting charisma over character, I view biblical accountability as a gift from God to keep me focused on eternal values. With a commitment to finish my race with joy, I will *a/ways* remain accountable to God, to my spouse and to those He has connected me to.

Name

Date