

Real Men Are Godly Men

Looking for Men of Accountability

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I remember when Ethan was six years old, my oldest, and Lee was three and a half. One day I was walking from the kitchen into the den and the two boys were in the den playing church. Have you ever watched your children play church, or did you do it as a child? I used to do it all the time. I was Mom's little preacher.

God is in the process of raising up men to make his church a better church for the generation ahead than it is right now. He is always looking for Men of Accountability.

Basic foundation stone:

1. All men are accountable to God. Christians believe that every human being, male and female, will stand before their Creator and give an account for how they have lived. There are so many verses that verify this, Romans 14:12, "So then, each of us will give an account of himself to God." Jesus said in Matthew 12:36, "But I tell you that men will have to give an account on the day of judgment for every careless word they have spoken." Hebrews 4:13, "Nothing in all creation is hidden from God's sight. Everything is uncovered and laid bare before the eyes of him to whom we must give account."

We may want to deny those realities, but the Bible clearly states we will all give an account of our lives before God. So, it's imperative that we live every day making preparation for that moment.

2. Most men don't have a real plan for developing a healthy, vibrant, vital, and spiritual life. Many men are religious, but precious few are spiritual. Men have settled for mediocrity in their spiritual lives that we wouldn't stand for in other parts of our lives. Men are wired so that we set goals and we chase those goals and we accomplish those things.

If we want financial security, we sit there and determine how much we need to work and how much we need to save and how we need to invest. If we want to get fit, we'll sit there and determine what we need to do and we'll exercise and exercise. A lot of men like to restore old cars and they'll work on it every afternoon and every evening. But when we stand before God, he's not going to ask about our net worth, and he's not going to ask about our percentage of body fat. He's not going to ask about the condition of our Model T. He is going to ask how intently we followed the model of Jesus Christ.

Romans 8:29 gives us our purpose, "For those whom he foreknew he predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son." The real question in life is; **how are you doing fellows on conforming to the image of Jesus Christ?**

3. Every man needs to discover the beauty and the benefits of Biblical accountability. By and large, short of the judgment, men don't have to answer to anybody anymore. We will often openly state that we want to get to a position in life where we don't have to answer to anybody. But the problem is, left to our own direction and our own devices, we deceive ourselves. Scripture is quick to tell us that we're not as smart as we think we are.

Jeremiah, the prophet, said "The heart is deceitful above all things and beyond cure. Who can understand it?" (Jeremiah 17:9) Like the man who put a quarter into the weight machine and stood on the scales. It gave him a little card, turning to his wife he said, "Look, honey, this card says that I'm intelligent, handsome, and witty." She looked at the card and said, "Yeah, and it got your weight wrong, too." A man's heart will lie to him. Left alone, it will tell him that things are all right when they're not and that he's spiritually healthy, when in fact, he's spiritually sick.

The Bible speaks with disdain about the attitude, "I answer to nobody and I chart my own course and I take care of myself." Instead, Scripture urges us to practice Biblical accountability among brethren. "Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others." (Philippians 2:4) "Brothers, if someone is caught in a sin, you who are spiritual should restore him gently. But watch yourself, or you also may be tempted. Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you fulfill the law of Christ." (Galatians 6:1-2) "The kisses of an enemy may be profuse, but faithful are the wounds of a friend." (Proverbs 27:6) That's a deep and rich verse.

Then one that really hits the nail on the head, James 5:16, one of the least obeyed verses in all Scripture, "Therefore confess your sins one to another and pray for each other so that you may be healed." People, we can't get around it, the Bible teaches that we pour our lives into each other and that as God's children, we protect and we guard one another. Accountability is the missing link that's keeping most men from achieving their full potential in Jesus Christ and most of us do not know what it is.

I ran across this definition of accountability "It means to be regularly answerable for the key areas of our lives to qualified people." (Patrick Morley Man in the Mirror) To be regularly answerable; a) to have periodic times where there's a check-up, b) key areas of your life, social, physical, emotional, spiritual, and c) to qualified people.

Accountability is deeper than fellowship. Accountability gives somebody permission to ask the hard questions and to help us stay on course.

Do you remember King David in the Old Testament? His courage and his integrity when he was in the company of his mighty men; when he was in their presence he was straight as an arrow, he wouldn't even lift his hand against God's anointed and kill King Saul though Saul was hunting him down like a dog. But when he sent his mighty men off to war, and David stayed home by himself, that's when he got into trouble. That's when he yielded to sin and even betrayed the trust of one of his covenant brothers.

We need men who love the Lord, who love us, who want us to reach the goal of being Christ-like and who will recognize the need for accountability in their lives as well. Men who believe "As iron sharpens iron, so one man sharpens another." (Proverbs 27:17) Who's sharpening you? Who's sharpening you right now, to reach your full potential in Jesus Christ?

Why don't we engage in Biblical accountability?

Why don't we share our lives with just a precious few people the way scripture admonishes? The following are reasons why we tend not to. It's important to understand these because they've got to be overcome if we do.

1. Pride.

To be accountable to others admits a need for others, and we men consider that a weakness. So rather than confessing sins to each other, we become rather proficient at, "blowing smoke." We put up this smoke screen. Someone once said, "To err is human, and to cover up is human, too." We know that there are areas in life where we struggle and where we fall short, but we don't want others to know that. So instead, we just grit our teeth and are determined to fix ourselves even though experience and God's Word teaches us otherwise. Men, we've swallowed a lie. A lie that is covering up and building walls around ourselves and being isolated is strong when the fact is, man is a wimp. Man doesn't have the courage to face himself and the truth. But the brave man can say to a brother that he knows, and that he loves, and that he trusts: This is who I am, this is where I'm weak, and this is where more than anything I need your prayers.

The Bible is right. My heart isn't honest enough to really deal with what I want to cover up. Yours isn't either. If a man could just always fix himself, then that's what the Bible would tell him to do. But the Bible says, "Confess your sins to each other, and pray for each other so that you may be healed."

2. Fear of abuse.

Sex, cults and false religious groups have been formed by the dozens through the improper use of accountability. Even in the Lord's church, unscriptural hierarchies, manipulation, guilt motivation, are just a few of the abuses that have come from an improper application of accountability. Each Christian is to be accountable:

- a) to God, the Father, and our Lord Jesus Christ;
- b) to the elders and shepherds of the local church, because those men are going to have to give an account of our souls, and
- c) to other Christians that I love and trust and to whom I've chosen to be accountable - not those who tell me I'm accountable to them - but those I have chosen to be accountable, and that's usually just a small group of people.

There are a lot of people who want to fix what they perceive is wrong with you. You would be foolish to try to correct everything they want to correct. You would also be foolish not to heed the warnings of those closest to you – those who desire the best for you whatever the cost.

Accountability is like any other major theme in Scripture; like grace, discipleship, and spiritual freedom. We simply cannot let abuse by some, distract or intimidate us from implementing the full and good extent of what God's Word tells us.

3. The lack of a plan.

Accountability does not evolve naturally. It will not just show up one day in our lives. It is the result of a purposeful decision to live transparently before someone you trust. You need some structure to give you discipline to what you know you should do.

One of the joys in my life, I've been a part of three different small groups who have met early in the morning, 6:30 a.m., one day a week to study the Bible together and pray. Though none of the three started out to be any kind of accountability structure, but just through reading and studying and getting into each other's lives, we began to make each other accountable to one another in such a way, that in a healthy way, we were iron sharpening iron, keeping one another on track. I urge everybody, but particularly the men; you need to find some brothers who will help you do that.

What to look for in a person to help you be accountable.

1. Unconditional love:

It must be somebody who unconditionally loves you and that you unconditionally love. People have to earn the right to hold someone else accountable. "A friend loves at all times, and a brother is born for adversity." (Proverbs 17:17) I will only be accountable to a brother who will love me at all times and who will stand by me, not patronize me, but stand by me no matter what because he loves me that much, like Jonathan did David.

2. Honesty

Honesty means two things.

- a. Courage to be transparent.
- b. Courage to say what one needs to hear. "Wounds from a friend can be trusted, but the kisses of an enemy are profuse." (Proverbs 27:6) Oh, there are people in your life who will just butter you up and flatter you, and they're trying to use you every way they can. It hurts a genuine friend to tell you the truth more than it hurts you to hear it.

The image from Proverbs 27:17 of iron sharpening iron gives the picture of two swords clashing against each other, creating friction, literally wearing off each other's rough edges, I need a few brothers in my life who will be like iron, sharpening my sword so that I can live for the Lord.

3. Availability

It is just good common sense that if you're never around those people, how can they help you? Don't make the mistake of trying to get with somebody that you never see or never will arrange a time to be with.

4. Confidentiality

Nothing will destroy relationships more than violated trust. If you ever get a small group together who want to bless one another's life through Bible study and prayer, you'll find that you'll go at least a year before anybody will open up and say, "I've got this problem in my life, would all of you pray with me about it?" Do you know why it will take at least a year? It will take at least that long before you know you can trust those individuals. It's not the kind of thing you hand over easily.

5. Prayer

Cover him with prayer, tons and tons of prayer, somebody who will pray for you. Somebody wrote: I sought my God, but my God I could not see. I sought my soul, but my soul alluded me. I sought my brother, and I found all three. That's what

Christians do. That's why accountability is needed. Amazing Grace #1208 - - Steve Flatt - May 7, 1995

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