



Building Accountability through Acknowledging Weaknesses James 5:13-16

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¹³Is any one of you in trouble? He should pray. Is anyone happy? Let him sing songs of praise. ¹⁴Is any one of you sick? He should call the elders of the church to pray over him and anoint him with oil in the name of the Lord. ¹⁵And the prayer offered in faith will make the sick person well; the Lord will raise him up. If he has sinned, he will be forgiven. ¹⁶Therefore ***confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed.*** The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective.

INTRODUCTION:

Questions to ponder:

1. How consciously aware are we that we have a calling from God on our lives? Whether we are called to full time ministry or not, we have a calling from God. We have an eternal destiny.
2. How conscious are we that if we fulfill our calling it will mean glory to God and loss to our Enemy/Satan?
3. If this is so do you suppose that Satan knows this and seeks to disqualify you from fulfilling your calling?

Thoughts to consider:

4. Our culture is closing in on the church with its value system. They try to quickly introduce shocking worldly standards thru the media. The church reacts, so the world backs up a bit, but, they consistently advance by taking 2 steps forward and only 1 step back.
5. We all know both spiritual leaders, as well as friends, who have caved in to serious sins.
6. And, we all personally feel the same pressure on our own lives. We may not have totally given in, but have we slipped a bit, and are we moving into the danger zone.
7. We need to put a road block or series of road blocks in the way of these present tendencies.
8. I'd like to address one powerful road block that I have never personally seen fail in my own life or any other person's life that I have known.
9. Let me warn you that your response may be to say "Amen", but the tendency is that you "Will Not Follow Thru".
10. What is it? **ACCOUNTABILITY!** Just a head's up...I'm not talking about having a "Covering."
11. Let's build some biblical support for this, and then suggest a few steps for implementing the principles.

A. SIX BIBLICAL PRINCIPLES OF ACCOUNTABILITY.

1. Accountability acknowledges personal weaknesses.

James 5:16

Confess = Grk. - Exhomologeō. Five distinct meanings:

- a. To say the same thing as. It means to sit in the witness stand and be asked by the prosecuting attorney for a complete statement regarding a specific area of your involvement, and to tell him just "exactly" how it happened.
- b. The little prefix "Ex" means to get it out, as it were to get it out and off of your chest. God has designed the principle of confession and accountability to be an opportunity to get rid of something that had been burdening your soul so that His peace can replace the burden that was removed.
- c. It is in the Imperative Mood, meaning that it is a command, and not an option.
- d. It is in the Middle Voice, meaning that it is something you do, but that it isn't for anyone else's benefit but your own. It directly benefits you. James uses the middle voice to make just this point. "Do it, it will really strengthen you!"
- e. Finally, it is in the Present Tense, meaning, do it on a regular basis; a personal element of lifestyle to be open and honest about your sin tendencies.

Please note, the above passage has two elements, vertical and horizontal, but the horizontal must only be an outward expression of the vertical. Our accountability is first and foremost to Jesus, not man. When people confuse this, or leaders confuse this, it leads to many forms of abuse, whether leadership abuses or legalism. Keeping the focus of accountability on Christ is the key to its success.

I'm also not referencing what is commonly referred to as a "Covering." I do not believe the traditional teaching on "Covering" has sufficient biblical support, and lends itself to the leadership abuses I mentioned.

2. Accountability is a powerful means of protection.

I wish we had an excellent example of a man or woman in Scripture who was sorely tempted to do something sinful, and sought an accountability relationship with someone and as a result was spared great sin, but I know of no one.

So, we learn this principle in reverse, by learning what not to do, thru seeing a man fail in this area.

Our example is David. All of human history shouts down through time "David, you had Nathan the prophet close to you, you had Zadok the priest close to you, why didn't you share your weaknesses with them and spare you, your family and the whole nation such pain?!"

John 10:10 The devil/thief is just looking for ways to get at you. Don't give him an inch or he'll take a mile.

Consider the mile he took from David:

- a. Perpetual family strife and immorality. 2 Sam.12:10-12
- b. The child born of immorality with Bathsheba would die. 2 Sam.12:14

- c. Amnon, David's son rapes Tamar his daughter and Absalom his other son killed Amnon for it. 2 Sam.13:1-36
- d. David banished Absalom from his kingdom for 3 years, only to later be confronted by a woman from Tekoa and his military general Joab. David consents to allow Absalom to return, but because he has not been accountable to anyone about the bitterness of his soul, concerning Absalom, he wouldn't speak to him even when he allowed him to return. 2 Sam.14:1-24
- e. As a result Absalom became angry and bitter and began to draw Israel to himself and against David his father. 2 Sam.15:1-6
- f. Absalom then makes his move to unseat his father from the throne, drives David out of Jerusalem, rapes his concubines and takes the throne.
- g. Joab kills Absalom, trying to defend his king, David. And so it goes. Does this provide some incentive to be accountable?
Remember I Peter 5:8,9 "Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. Resist him, steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same sufferings are experienced by your brotherhood in the world."

3. Accountability frustrates the devil's purposes.

Luke 4:1-13 records the devil's temptation of Jesus in the wilderness, but listen to vs.13, it should send chills up your spine:

"Now when the devil had ended every temptation, he departed from Him until an **OPPORTUNE TIME.**"

Accountability robs him of such an opportune time.

Since he can't force the believer to sin, all he can hope to do is to allure him away from his points of safety and into his dark sphere, where confusion, frustration, anger, and anxiety are some of his chief methods to get to us.

4. Accountability confronts Pride.

I Tim.5:22 "Do not lay hands on anyone hastily, nor share in other people's sins; keep yourself pure."

I Tim.3:6 The Elder candidate must be one who is "not a novice, lest being puffed up with pride he fall into the same condemnation as the devil."

Both of these Scriptures warn against entrusting ministry to an individual that hasn't had time to prove his accountability and integrity. We are admonished to hold them to an account. To fail to do so is to encourage Pride.

Pride is probably the greatest contributing factor behind not establishing an accountable relationship. When we are afraid to have another brother or sister know our areas of weakness and hold us to a righteous account to Christ, it is usually because we don't want to admit we have a problem and we think we are well capable of handling it "Alone".

"I don't need anybody to help me with this. I can handle it by myself!"

Hear Proverbs 18:1:

"A man who isolates himself seeks his own desire (Pride's true inner motivation); He rages against all wise judgment."

5. Accountability confronts issues of Trust & Fear.

"What if someone knew I struggled in this area?"

We must not let "saving face" keep us vulnerable to Satan's plans for our lives.

They struggle with sin too. It will probably encourage them to open up to someone themselves, as well as encourage them that they aren't the only one who fights against sin. Secondly, don't choose someone you anticipate to be judgmental of you. Seek out a grace oriented person.

"Wouldn't they lose all respect for me?"

If they do they don't understand grace themselves, but probably they will respect you all the more for being willing to deal with a potentially dangerous area in your life.

"I might lose my function of leadership if they knew..."

That is possible, but if it's that serious, then you are ensnared so deeply that to step away from responsibilities and repair the breach in your life would be the best thing that could happen to you.

If you aren't ensnared, and only very infrequently stumble in your area of weakness, then loss of function will not likely be necessary anyway. Unless your infrequent stumbling is like committing adultery, robbing a store or some such level of sin.

I realize for some, issues of trust may be very sensitive for you. If you have been sexually abused, or other forms of abuse, or have grown up in a legalistic religious environment, trust comes hard, but it is still God's means of pulling you out of your problem. Find someone you think you can trust and begin disclosing, a little at a time.

6. Accountability requires Transparency.

I John 2:28 "And now, little children, abide in Him, that when He appears, we may have confidence and not be ashamed before Him at His coming."

Confidence: Grk. Parrasia = A boldness due to transparency which is based on living in the light of God's truth and letting it expose anything that hinders the light's rays.

Hebrews 4:13 says:

"And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are naked and open to the eyes of Him to whom we must give account."

Let's determine to break free from our denial systems, where we have real issues that need accountability, but we have refused to let anyone else shine God's light into them and help

us get free from them.

Denial is a powerful thief!

II 5 PRACTICAL STEPS OF ACCOUNTABILITY.

1. Identify your points of weakness.
2. Identify a wise and mature believer to disclose to.
3. Commit yourself to regular meetings of accountability.
4. Be 100% honest in the context of accountability.
5. Commit yourself to God to follow thru with this.