

## ACCOUNTABILITY

*One of the great weaknesses of the church today is affirmation without accountability. H.Hendricks*

### A. What is accountability?

Dictionary: subject to the obligation to report, explain or justify something; being responsible or answerable to someone.

1. The ACCOUNTER is the one desiring and requesting accountability in various areas of his life (character, morals, spiritual growth and ministry, family, business, etc.)
  - Accountable
  - Liable to be called to account
  - Answerable
  - Capable of being accounted for
  - Responsible for explanation of reasons, causes, grounds for, facts, motives, actions in events
2. The ACCOUNTANT is the one holding the accounter responsible for adequate and permissible results. Definitions:
  - He assigns projects
  - He determines value and estimates
  - His opinion is foundational
  - He states the terms of his findings
  - He is accountable to some else (or to a body) for the integrity of his evaluations and conclusions
  - He is an analyst who unlooses, dissects, breaks down, divides a complex whole into its components, calculates, resolves
  - He is a reckoner who calculates, computes, regards, considers, concludes after an enumerating of chances, determines settlement, assesses and calculates position.
  - Makes a statement and explanation of his conclusions
  - He evaluates causes and effects
  - Concludes ones discharge of responsibility
  - He is liable to render account and is skilled in accounting.

*You can see this is MUCH MORE than sitting back giving opinions and making off hand judgments.*

SUMMARY: Accountability is the voluntary acceptance of a personal responsibility to report, explain, or justify the progress or status of something\* to another. The counter and accountant are both responsible. (\*The something can be almost anything: a fruit, quality, duty, discipline, responsibility, sin, goal, achievement, etc.)

- Accountability is asking someone to help enhance your relationship with Jesus Christ.
- It is having someone who knows me for who I really am, and will listen, advise and challenge me to live an upright, godly life.
- It is having someone to help me follow through with my commitments.
- Accountability means I am liable to be called to account for my life; held responsible for whom I am and what I do.
- Accountability is something I receive from others and give to others.
- Accountability is love in action as we seek to challenge one another into growing toward wholeness.
- Accountability is the body caring for each member.
- Accountability is not having all the answers, taking responsibility for his decisions, a license to be obnoxious, open hunting season on any and everything.

#### B. Biblical examples

- Abraham and servant
- Moses and Joshua; Moses and his family (Jethro, Aaron)
- Naomi and Ruth
- Gideon and his chosen men
- David and Jonathan
- Nehemiah and workers
- Elijah and Elisha
- Jeremiah (carrying out God's instructions)
- Jesus and John; Jesus sending out the disciples
- Mary and Joseph
- Paul and Timothy. (also with John Mark, Barnabas)

#### C: Why is it needed? (discussion)

#### C. Two purposes for accountability :

1. Deterrent. Prevent others from having similar problems.
2. Detergent. Clean up those who need it.

D. Who is qualified to hold another accountable?

1. Spiritually mature
2. Same gender
3. Someone who cares for me
4. Someone who has access to my life and me. Probably should be in same town as me.
5. Family
6. Other sources of accountability:
  - spiritual leaders
  - government (police)
  - employer or supervisor
  - stockholders / investors
  - systems
  - measurable visible results

E. Areas of accountability :

(discussion: finances, morality, use of time, spiritual disciplines, etc.)

F. How should we do this?

1. Voluntary
2. Mutual
3. His list, not mine.
4. Loving leadership, not judgmental tyranny
5. Advice and counsel, not abdication of all decisions. Don't take over his life.
6. Overt Vs covert. Sometimes we use very obvious structures with regulated and specific questions. This is overt. Everyone knows just exactly what is happening. Other times, we are gentle and careful. We learn what the other person is doing without direct examination. He or she is not totally aware that we are gathering information that we can use to love the person with truth and encouragement.

I. Stumbling blocks.

1. Strong personality. The intimidating type. "You don't understand." "Yes, but..."
2. Success. I can handle it alone. Everyone assumes this guy has it all together.
3. Secrecy. He likes to keep a low profile.
4. Structure. It is difficult to get a regular time with him. Good golfers have a standing game to get the consistency they need.
5. Specimen. He has not seen a model of this process.
6. Security. He just does not feel comfortable doing this. He may have been burned before.

## Discussion:

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1. Think of a time when accountability helped you or would have helped you if you had it. Don't tell the details, but think what principle was revealed.
2. Why do you personally resist accountability? (Oh, yes you do!) Why do you personally resist offering accountability?
3. At what point do we discuss accountability?
4. How do I explain what it is?
5. How do I ask if he wants this? Or should I ask?
6. How do we agree on the degree of accountability?



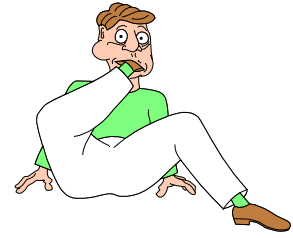
## Taking Advice



1. Don't require more than truth of your advisor. A man in financial trouble may be advised by a rich man and resent it. "That is easy for you to say because you don't have to make these tough choices. You are loaded." If what he told you is true and right, you should accept it even if he has never suffered like you or has experienced the same difficulties and decisions you face. Can a cardiologist who has never had heart trouble help me? Of course. (But I don't like it as much. I may think he is not sympathetic enough. I must understand whether I need sympathy most, or truth).
2. Don't expect him to be non-biased. The advice will definitely be slanted to his own experience. For example, asking someone about the necessity of Seminary education for ministry, or asking which seminary.
3. Don't hide behind your advisor. This is especially likely if you are **paying** your advisor like a CPA, lawyer, and therapist. You alone must decide. You are looking for an advisor, not a decider.
4. Don't try to get others to do all your work for you. Deciding takes much hard work in getting the facts and analyzing and then praying. Do this for yourself, relying on others to answer your questions, but not to take over your responsibilities in these areas.
5. Don't argue with your advisor on every statement, being the "devil's advocate", or he may tire of you and quit talking to you.
6. Traits of an excellent advisor: wise, mature in spiritual matters, mature in years (in some cases), Bible knowledge, loves you, has no hidden agenda.

## **GIVING ADVICE**

*Everyone enjoys giving good advice, and how wonderful it is to be able to say the right thing at the right time! Proverbs 15:23 LB*



1. Ask, "Who else have you talked to?" or "Who else are you talking to?"
2. Listen first. Proverbs 18:13, *If one gives answer before he hears, it is his folly and shame.* "More lives have been changed by a great listener, than by a great speaker." (Tim Hansel) In general, don't give advice unless you have been asked, especially to FAMILY MEMBERS.
3. Help him decide rather than GIVE a decision. In James 1:5, even God promises to give us wisdom to make decisions, not necessarily and in all cases to give us a decision.
4. Base your advice on Biblical principles. Do a study on the issue before wading in.
5. Give an assignment where possible. Ask her to gather facts, talk to someone more in the natural line (like spouse or parents), do a Bible study, make lists, etc.
6. Advise with gentleness. Gal 6:1-2, 2Timothy 2:24-25
7. When necessary to rebuke,
  - Make multiple observations. 2 Cor 13:1-2
  - Do a Bible Study on the topic. Make sure your rebuke is not based on opinion or prejudice, but on scripture.
  - Pray whether you should approach the man and how and when.
  - Start with, "It seems to me..."
8. Don't make your relationship dependent on him taking your advice. Don't assume you are disgraced if your advice is not taken. In 2 Samuel 17:23, Ahithopel hanged himself when his advice to Absalom was refused. Remember Jesus had many reject his advice.

## Accountability Questions

Ask each other directly periodically - perhaps monthly:

1. Are you involved sexually with anyone other than your wife?
2. Are you using pornography?
3. Are you masturbating? (*This is certainly a controversial issue. I suggest you examine the chapter on sexual morality in Honesty, Morality and Conscience. Many believe that masturbation is not a serious issue. I tend to view it differently.*)
4. Are you watching "R" or "X" rated movies or videos?
5. Are you indulging in sexual fantasies about other women?

### Preventatives

1. Daily time with God in His Word and a commitment to spiritual growth.
2. A commitment to the battle for winning the lost.
3. A committed accountability relationship with one or two other men.
4. A deepening marriage relationship with your wife.
5. Setting up a constant guard in your thought life and actions.
6. Determined and continually renewed commitment that you will not enter into sexual sin.
7. Pray defensively.
8. Disciplined control over what your eyes see.
9. Highly cautious about counseling women in any way whatsoever.
10. Do not touch another man's wife.

### Principles:

1. Sexual sin is always generated in the mind before it is acted out in the body. Thus, to guard one's thoughts is absolutely indispensable.
2. A struggling marriage is never an excuse for sexual sin.
3. A widower, divorced person or sexually experienced man will likely have more temptation, mainly due to knowledge.
4. In cases I have seen, some common threads emerge and seem characteristic of men who have fallen into sexual impurity:
  - a. The macho image and a sense of dominance.
  - b. A perceived failure in one's job or a blow to one's ego or pride.
  - c. A feeling of being "above the rules."
  - d. Going easy on one's self... in many areas like diet or exercise.
  - e. Carelessly allowing one's self to be in places or situations that boost temptation.
  - f. Roving and undisciplined eyes.
5. Accountability is a major key to prevention, though not the only answer.
6. Even with accountability, one who wants to sin sexually will find a way to lie and deceive others and himself to avoid the truth. Thus, we must uphold one another with prayer.
7. Regardless of spiritual maturity or chronological age or the best of marriages, everyone is vulnerable to sexual sin.

From Jerry White's letter of September 28, 1987

Sexques:BP Materials