

Accountability by Charles Stanley

Scripture: 1 Timothy 4:12-16

I. Introduction: Do you have someone to whom you can confess sins? Have you given anyone in your life permission to counsel, challenge, and rebuke you when necessary? That kind of relationship is one of accountability, which is repeatedly emphasized in the Word of God. Throughout Scripture, people learned the value of leaning on one another for spiritual support and inspiration.

Why is accountability so important? It helps us become more submissive to the Lord and more fruitful for His kingdom. Answering to a godly friend or leader helps us prepare to stand before the Lord and give an account of our lives (Rom. 14:12).

II. Accountability is a biblical principle.

A. Jesus sought only to please the Father in everything He did (John 8:28).

B. When He sent the disciples out to minister, they were responsible to obey His instructions (Luke 10:1-9).

C. The church is still accountable to Christ (Eph. 5:24).

D. Missionaries report back to the churches that send them (Acts 15:3-4).

E. Churches also are accountable to their pastors (1 Thess. 5:12), as leaders are to their congregations.

F. Children must obey their parents (Eph. 6:1-3), and parents have a responsibility to treat their kids fairly (Eph. 6:4).

G. Husbands and wives should be accountable to one another (Eph. 5:21-25).

F. Employees should faithfully carry out their work responsibilities (Eph. 6:5-8), and employers should not threaten their workers (Eph. 6:9).

III. Why do people avoid accountability?

A. Ignorance

B. Fear of exposure

C. Fear of rejection

D. Arrogance or pride

E. Bondage to sin

IV. Why is accountability important?

Our enemy, the Devil, is always looking for an opportunity to destroy the lives of believers (1 Peter 5:8). No one is immune to temptation, but our vulnerability does vary from situation to situation. Accountability is especially helpful for . . .

A. Employees tempted to view pornography on the job.

B. College students away from their parents' supervision for the first time.

C. Singles on their own in a big city—with too much money, free time, and privacy.

D. Those who travel frequently.

E. People working in ministry, especially those with no overseeing board.

V. What are the advantages of having an accountability partner? Such an arrangement . . .

A. **Develops a sense of responsibility.** If you confess your temptations and sins to another believer, you are more likely to live a responsible life.

B. **Promotes integrity.** This type of relationship encourages honest confession and openness.

C. Protects us from abusing God's grace. Freedom in Christ should be used to serve others—not to indulge our flesh (Gal. 5:13).

D. Sharpens us. Accountability can help us reach our full potential professionally, personally, and socially.

E. Fosters healthy self-examination. Before we can confess our sins, we must first examine ourselves in the light of God's truth.

F. Safeguards us from unwise relationships. For example, an accountability partner can help keep a male-female work relationship from becoming an immoral affair.

VI. What should you look for in an accountability partner? Someone who . . .

A. Walks in the Spirit.

B. Is trustworthy.

C. Will give you godly wisdom based on Scripture.

D. Allows you the freedom to be yourself.

E. Has the courage to confront you.

F. Demonstrates a forgiving attitude toward you.

G. Is sensitive.

H. Encourages you.

I. Listens well.

J. Has your best interest at heart.

VII. Our Accountability to God

A. Bible characters who were held accountable to God include:

1. Adam and Eve (Gen. 3:9-19).

2. King Saul (1 Sam. 13:8-14).

3. Peter and the other disciples (Matt. 16:23; 17:17).

B. Followers of Christ are held accountable to:

1. Use their gifts wisely (Luke 12:48).

2. Prepare for judgment day (1 Cor. 3:10-15; Rev. 22:12).

VIII. Conclusion: Genuine accountability can stimulate your spiritual growth as almost nothing else can. An honest friend can alert you to blind spots and enable you to overcome sinful habits. And this kind of relationship will help guard you against spiritual ruin.

I challenge you to find an accountability partner. Be genuinely honest and vulnerable about your weaknesses and mistakes. Pray together and support each other spiritually. When you invest in authentic accountability, your life will change in amazing ways.