



Is “accountability” Biblical or is it another word used to control or manipulate people? Many believers reject the concept of accountability altogether. They assume it is worldly, not biblical, and therefore unhelpful and needless. They refuse to accept any aspect of it – in their church and even in their own lives.

Unfortunately, “accountability” has been and is misused and abused by some church leaders as well as many believers. Many use the term “accountability” to hold over the heads of those who they may be over. However, they lack it themselves, refusing to be accountable to anyone else. In essence, whether they realize it or not, that type of behavior or thought process, is actually totally not scriptural and it is totally incorrect in the Body of Christ today.

In truth, the only one who is Lord over all is Jesus and even He yields to the desires and ways that have been established by God, the Father. The Holy Spirit then comes within the believer and causes them to yield to the authority of God, the Father, Jesus and the Holy Spirit – “if.” That is a big “if!!!” It means that “if” we are totally new creatures in Jesus, then the old ways, the old man, the old sinful nature is now dead. Behold!!! All things are now new!!!

Yet, the Bible clearly shows that accountability is essential for all true believers. We are to be accountable to God **AND** we are to be accountable to each other. Yes, every one of us must be accountable to each other. If not, then there is a problem!!! HmMMM.....

The definition of the term, “accountability” is as follows: it is an obligation or willingness to accept responsibility or to account for one's own actions; it is taking responsibility; it means to be obligated to explain, justify, and take responsibility for one's actions, and to answer to someone, such as a person with more authority or simply to each other. In essence, the term accountability simply means that we are answerable to someone other than ourselves for the actions that we have done or will do.

Even though the word “accountability” or “accountable” is not really found in the scriptures, its essence is literally the whole Bible itself. As mentioned previously, the true believer must be always accountable to God and to other believers, whether they are in ministry, in marriage or simply just in relationship with each other as being members of the Body of Christ.

Romans 14:12 tells us very clearly, *“So then, each of us will give an account of himself to God.”* We all will give an account of our lives to God – all our words, every action and every hidden thought will be and is revealed to our God. We are to live our lives openly and honestly before our God. Nothing is nor can be hidden from Him.

We all should be grounded in the clear values brought forth in the scriptures. We are to align our lives unto God and His Word – we are to be accountable to His Word – all of His Word. Being accountable involves being in true relationship with God as well as with other people

We read in Ecclesiastes 4:9-12, *“Two are better than one; because they have a good reward for their labor. For if they fall, the one will lift up his fellow: but woe to him that is alone when he falls; for he hath not another to help him up. Again, if two lie together, then they have heat: but how can one be warm alone? And if one prevail against him, two shall withstand him; and a threefold cord is not quickly broken.”*

That is what accountability means – we are to be accountable or responsible to and for each other. We are there to help each other – at all times; in the difficult times and the not so difficult times. Accountability is a two way street. We are to be accountable to each other as believers. It should not be a one way street. I should never think that I am above it!!!

Proverbs 27:17 says, *“Iron sharpens iron; so a man sharpens his friend’s countenance.”* We need each other to keep us sharp in the truth of God’s Word. We need each other to make each other stronger in our faith and in our walk and in our times of despair. That is what accountability does.

God said that it is not good for man to be alone – so He created out of man – a woman, Eve, to help Adam to be accountable. They were to be accountable to God and to each other. Each of them had a specific job or function. They were to be as one, together. Unfortunately, we can see the problems when accountability is misused and abused – it can cause us to sin. However, that is not the reason to stay away from being accountable to others.

“God ordained accountability” brings no condemnation. It can and will bring forth correction and discipline. However, Godly discipline does not, and never does, bring forth any type of

guilt or condemnation. It will always lead to freedom and life more abundantly. Biblical accountability is not a means to punish. Rather it is a tool, that if used properly, will bring forth restoration and growth and it will enhance relationship with each other.

Godly accountability means walking in love concerning every aspect of our lives, especially as we deal with or minister with and to, others. Godly accountability goes beyond just behavior. It should be a moral strong point in the believer's life and lifestyle.

In the armed forces and especially in the "special ops" forces, there is the rule of accountability towards everyone else in that unit. This rule that underlines every aspect in the process and behavior pattern, is known as "accountability." The special forces learn and then actually live out the process of accountability with and to everyone in their outfit. They come to the place where they are "in it together." And...they are there for each other. If you can not handle that, or you disobey this aspect of being accountable to and for each other, then you will not be in that outfit for long.

The same is true for, or at least it should be true, in every believer's life. We are in this life as believers in Jesus - together. If that is the case, then there must be a lifestyle of accountability towards each other. We must be there, not to condemn or tear down; not to control or manipulate; not to get my way... but rather we are in this, together, to bring forth Jesus and His Word to this lost world.

The Bible is very clear on this. It tells us that we all will give an account unto our God for what we do on this earth and how we act and speak towards others, whether they are in the Body of Christ or not. It is our behavior and attitude of heart that has been changed through our acceptance of Jesus as our Lord that God will see and know when we all stand before Him.

The following scriptures tell us that we all will give an account of our lives to our God:

"So then each of us will give an account of himself to God." (Romans 14:12)

"But I tell you that men will give an account on the day of judgment for every careless word they have spoken." (Matthew 12:36)

"No creature is hidden from him, but all things are naked and exposed to the eyes of him to whom we must give an account." (Hebrews 4:13)

Yes, one day we will all stand before God himself and give an account. We will say all the good things that we have done. However, the only thing that will allow us to enter into heaven and then the New Jerusalem is one word – Jesus. There is nothing that we can do to make us right with God. We are all sinful people – all of us. Jesus is our only way into eternal life.

However, the scriptures are very clear that each of God's people will receive crowns for their obedience to God, as well as, the accountability we show and have towards and with others. This accountability should be very important to each of us, today, as believers in Jesus. We are all held to the clear accountability of and to God's Word, both towards God and towards each other.

Matthew 18:15-17 speaks of this kind of accountability. Oh, yes I know that these scriptures speak of bringing correction to each other. However, we must understand that bringing correction or allowing ourselves to be corrected is a very high form of accountability.

If we notice, these scriptures tell us that we are to go to that person, tell them their fault and try to cause them to be accountable for their actions by repenting. The passage goes on to say that if the person refuses to listen, you can involve more people in the process. If they refuse to listen, then we are to treat them as if they are not saved and bring salvation to them.

It's the same when seeking accountability for our own actions. Accountability starts by admitting that I may be at fault to the people most affected by our errors, our mistakes or our sin. That is difficult for all of us to admit. But...that is what makes us different than the world.

Notice, Jesus does not give any qualifying statements about who is to be corrected or who is to do the correcting. Why? It is because we are all thought to be, and we are all called to be, brothers and sisters in the Lord. We should love one another and listen to each other and either give or receive correction. That is true accountability to each other.

We all must realize that accountability in the Body of Christ is so very, very valuable and so very, very important. It actually shows that we are now in the image of our God. After all, God shows us the importance of accountability. God expresses to His people the importance of accountability. The scriptures tell that even God will be and is accountable to all of His creation, according to His Word.

In the covenant that we have as seen throughout the Bible, the emphasis is that “*God will be our God and we shall be His people.*” That is the essence of accountability. God declares that He will be our God. However, the scriptures are also very clear in that it tell us that yes, God will be our God, however, we must allow Him to be our God. We are to be His people. It is only when there is a two way street, that accountability truly works.

In Jeremiah 31, God promised a New Covenant with Israel. Israel repeatedly violated the terms of all the previous covenants, but God promised this would be different because it would deal with the hearts of the people. It depended on who would accept God’s covenant by changing their hearts and simply trusting in God and in who He is. Those who accept God’s New Covenant, now available through Jesus, need to simply desire and choose to become faithful to God and His ways. That is true accountability.

If we accept God’s covenant, through Jesus, God tells us that He will be accountable to us to give us New Life, Eternal Life. We just need to accept it. That is called accountability. Yes, we are accountable to God but He chooses and He tells us that He will be accountable to all of His people by giving us eternal life. It is His Word and God is “*not a man that He should lie...*” (Numbers 23:19) Wow!!!

Being accountable with God for each of us is so very valuable. However, we must now also be accountable to every believer in the Body of Christ. It does not depend on position or “rank.” It simple depends on if we are children of God. This can become very difficult. Especially in churches and ministries.

What I mean is that in some ministries, leadership can take advantage of the “accountability” thinking. They may think that their congregation or members are accountable to them but at the same time those leaders are under a wrong impression by thinking that they are not to submit or be accountable to anyone else.

In many ministries, the pastor or leader is the “final authority.” Now, I am not saying that is wrong or incorrect. However, there must be accountability set up somewhere in the system. There must be room for every leader to be approached and to be able to discuss things. Why? It is because even God holds Himself accountable. He is accountable to His Word. He must keep His promises. Why? Simply because He is God and He has set it up that way.

Isaiah 1:18-20 tell us that God exhorts all of His people as He declares, *“Come now, and let us reason together, saith the LORD: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool. If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land: But if ye refuse and rebel, ye shall be devoured with the sword: for the mouth of the LORD hath spoken it.”*

In this scripture God is telling His people what will happen if they do not keep His Word. He implores us to reason it out with Him so we can see the truth of His ways. That is accountability. God is talking it out with His people. That is what leadership must do. Talk things out with their people. Yes, simply put, leadership may be wrong or incorrect. That may be a possibility. Leadership needs to understand that. Hey, no one is God but God!!! But even God allows Himself to be accountable to His Word and to His people. Hmmm.....

Many times, leadership tells people this is what we will do and if you don't like it you can leave. No. Accountability means to reason with each other. Hey, believe it or not, the leader may be incorrect in their thinking. A good leader will listen to all sides, not just their own. A good Godly leader will not think that what they think or want is always the absolute correct way to do things. Again, no one is always right or sees and knows everything.

Hebrews 13:17 says, *“Obey your leaders and submit to them, since they keep watch over your souls as those who will give an account, so that they can do this with joy and not with grief, for that would be unprofitable for you.”*

The first part of this scripture discusses submitting to church leadership. However, notice the second part. Leaders in the church are *“those who will give an account.”* By voluntarily seeking out accountability in the here and now, church leaders acknowledge that they will give an account before God for their leadership in the church. There is an accountability involved in being a good leader.

In Galatians 2, the Apostle Paul recounts a problem where the mission of the church was threatened by “cliquish behavior” among the Jewish leadership of that church. They were not permitting Gentiles in to the church body. It seemed that even Peter was bowing down to peer pressure from that “in-crowd,” those Jewish believers, within the church.

What did Paul do? He held Peter accountable to the Gospel. He reminded Peter that the Gospel message is inclusive, not exclusive, and that believers are called to love and have fellowship regardless of class, race, or background. This is just one example among many.

In fact, one way to think of the epistles of the New Testament is as a series of “accountability letters,” where the writers are reminding churches of the mission of the church and warning against distractions that may have or may lead them astray. We are all in it together. That is accountability.

Churches need accountability to stay on track! Perhaps the most common reason “accountability” fails is inconsistency. We have a habit of letting things go by under the false guise of saying that we are walking in love. But is that love? Hmmm.....

1Corinthians 13:4-8 tells us, *“Love suffers long, and is kind; love envies not; love vaunts not itself, is not puffed up, Doth not behave itself unseemly, seeks not her own, is not easily provoked, thinks no evil; Rejoices not in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth; Bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never fails...”*

Accountability is love in action. **It will never fail if done in the Biblical way.** We must all be accountable to God and to each other. The Bible is clear as it states that the first commandment is that we are to love the Lord our God. The second is just like it, we are to love others. We love others by keeping each other accountable for our walk with our God.

Whether it is a church, a ministry or simply friendship, we need each other. We are to be accountable to each other. No one is above anyone else. We are all equal in the eyes of our God. We may have different functions but we are all the same. We are the children of God.

We must love and care for each other which means that we must always be truthful and open with each other. Yes, church leadership will make the final decisions for the Body that they are overseeing. However, we must always be open to recognize that I may not always be right. We need each other and we should be accountable to each other. We must remember, no one is God but God!! However, even God chooses to be accountable with and to His people!!!