

Accountability relationships are an important part of our Christian walk



Confess your trespasses to one another, and pray for one another, that you may be healed. James 5:16

The Importance of Accountability

I have recently been thinking much about how we as Believers can stay steady and faithful over a lifetime. We should be sobered by certain Christian leaders being exposed as having some measure of a double life...but we don't need to be in a fearful panic. These leaders have clearly violated some basic, wise constructs of their faith-walk over a consistent period of time. One of the most important areas intended to help us walk in holiness before God and others is basic accountability.

I remember as a young college student hearing a leader share about the

importance of living in integrity in private and how having a same gender friend to regularly share and pray together was an important part of growing in our relationship with God. Years later I heard of the phrase "*If you never want to get free just tell God*" that has been true in my life at certain times. There were issues in my life as that college junior that I was unable to walk in righteousness with until I had a friend who I could consistently share with and who would pray with me. There have been other times too where I wasn't able to walk obediently to God's ways without sharing and having accountability with another friend.

With an accountability friend we are just attempting to walk out what the Bible states that we are to confess our sins one to another (James 5:16). 1 John 1:7 states: *But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin.* The flip side of that is also true: if we aren't walking in God's light, we won't have true fellowship with other Believers.

Here are a couple of other helpful tips. First, be realistic--you're not looking for a super-Christian to be your partner; most any godly, growing Believer will do. Second, it is not your friend's job to ask the right questions and dig the truth out of you. It is our responsibility to share humbly and transparently how we are doing.

In closing, the essence of these times is to speak freely and plainly, the true state of our souls, with the faults we have committed in thought, word and deed, and the temptations we have felt since we last met together. The following questions adapted from Neil Cole are the ones that I've been using recently to help in this process:

1. Devotional Times: Have you maintained your devotional times with God? How vibrant is your relationship with God? What is He impressing to you?
2. Evangelism: Have you shared your faith this week? Explain.
3. Sexual Purity: From 1-10 how pure has your thought life been? Have you been exposed to sexually alluring material or allowed your mind to entertain

inappropriate sexual thoughts about another this week?

4. Financial Integrity: Have all your financial dealings been filled with integrity? Have you coveted something that does not belong to you?

5. Relational Investment: Have you been honoring, understanding and generous in your important relationships this week? [Define your important relationships]

6. Tongue Issues: Have you damaged another person by your words, either behind their back or face-to-face? Have you spoken life and encouragement to another person this week? Explain.

7. Bondages: Have you given in to an addictive behavior this past week? Explain.

8. Heart Issues: Have you continued to remain angry toward another? Have you secretly wished for another's misfortune?

9. Obedience: Are you walking in total obedience to God right now?

10. Bible Reading: Did you finish the reading and hear from God? What are you going to do about it?

11. _____

(Your Personalized Accountability Question)