

Accountability – A Powerful Weapon for Demolishing Strongholds

ACCOUNTABILITY

A Powerful Weapon for Demolishing Strongholds

“Secret Sins” Series (Part Three)

A Sad Story. Hard to believe it has been twenty-plus years since that awkwardly, sad time. Our accountability group was composed of a few men from church–friends and golfing buddies. One was an associate pastor–a terrific man with a great family. At that point in the life of our group, I seem to recall we were not drilling down very deeply into our personal lives.

The first troubling key was our pastor friend began to join us less frequently. When we did see him, his countenance was not the same. He looked troubled in his spirit. Sadly, as happens all too often among church men, including pastors, his affair was uncovered and the “hell” began–perhaps more so for his sweet family. Even more tragic is that was the second moral failure of a staff pastor at our church within a few years. Where was the *accountability* of and from the church leadership?

***Accountability* is perhaps the most overused/under-applied word in “Christian-speak”.**

Most men avoid biblical accountability as much as eating liver! Interesting that we yield to being held accountable at work for attitudes and actions, but not spiritually for being the men God expects based on His Word and the many examples of

Christ.

The Accountability Caveat. I have learned over many years of doing (or attempting) life with men in AGs, it is impossible to hold men accountable who really do not want to go there. Most of us are pretty good at keeping things buried—to a point. Lesson learned:

Men must want accountability and surrender to the process—both of which create stumbling blocks for many church men, even for some who are solid Christians.

The Accountability Mandate. I do not recall a specific point in my walk with the Lord when the Holy Spirit burned this *desperate* need in my spirit, but I am so thankful He did. Perhaps it was early on when I was being disciplined by an older Christian man. While that really does not matter, what does is being true to this passionate concern for the spiritual health and well-being of men who say they belong to Christ.

On several occasions when writing or teaching on this subject, I searched the Scripture for specific use of the word(s) *accountability* or *accountable* in the present context—man to man. I found none. Does that mean we consider this an extra-biblical concept and excuse for not engaging? Hardly.

Following are three of many verses that point to the need for men to engage—holding one another accountable to biblical living and representing well our Savior.

1. Most men know this verse:

“Iron sharpens iron, so one man sharpens another.”
(Proverbs 27: 17 NASB)

Having had a strong background in metallurgy and metal working early in my career, I like to add when “iron sharpens iron” friction generates heat, sharp edges are honed, and sparks often fly. It was never intended as an easy process. As with

metal, sometimes you have to hammer things out.

2. These verses provide some of Solomon's wisest words of advice for men. I am particularly fond of the last line because accountability groups of three men make great sense and can work well.

*"Two are better than one...For if either of them falls, the one will lift up his companion. But woe to the one who falls when there is not another to lift him up...if two lie down together they keep warm, but how can one be warm alone? And if one can overpower him who is alone, two can resist him. **A cord of three strands is not quickly torn apart.** (Ecclesiastes 4: 9-12 NASB)*

3. On numerous occasions in Scripture, Jesus and the Apostle Paul tell us we will give an account for our actions on the day of judgement. Here is one example from Jesus (Matthew 12: 46 ESV):

"I tell you, on the day of judgment people will give account for every careless word they speak."

This side of Heaven, why not get in the habit of being accountable to one another so we help each other become "sharper" images of Jesus—encouraging, exhorting, and speaking hard truth when necessary?

Let's close this lesson and 'Secret Sins' series offering three reasons men avoid accountability and ask three questions that just might save your life, marriage, relationship with kids, and job.

Three reasons men avoid accountability:

- Too many men do not want to admit we have issues—especially "those" issues. Prideful men always think they can work themselves out of any situation or problem. Just ask the men in my Desperate Men small

groups at the mission and prison! “Pride goes before a fall.”

- While fear of failure may top the list of men’s fears, this one comes in second: *fear of getting caught* AND suffering the consequences. We prefer to hide our secret sins from men, hoping God is not paying attention or we slipped something past Him. Little boys and immature young men do that—not men of God.
- Perhaps the opposite of pride or a subset, shame keeps men from owning and confessing sin. We are embarrassed to admit we struggle with things “real” Christian men should not. The truth is all men of God in the Bible also did. The Holy Spirit wrote their stories so we could learn from them.

Three questions that could save your life, marriage, relationship with your kids, and your job.

1. Who is holding you accountable? If the answer is “no one”, keep reading, but you might want to insert a cup in your boxer briefs before you do. This is serious business. Jesus did not mince words so neither will I in such an area of great need for men of His church. What is your excuse (and do not suggest *time*)? Pick one or more of the reasons above, and tell God you are doing fine on your own and working through your issues. You do not need other men in the process who may have more issues than you. Bad answer. Trust me, you should not walk alone.

2. What areas of your life are you allowing yourself to be held accountable? It is easy to allow ourselves to be held accountable for things we do not do or areas in which we do not struggle. Man up and allow the Holy Spirit to bring to mind those things that you do struggle with and open those doors. Here are three blank spaces for you to write down just a few to start the process.

3. Are you willing to commit to the process? Be mindful that accountability groups can default to bull sessions and your own sports talk shows. Early in the process, there is nothing wrong with that. It takes time to build trust and convince other men you love them in the Lord—no matter what. But do not stop there.

As I said before, I have been in an AG with a pastor steeped in adultery and known several others who had similar issues. Drill down even if you occasionally hit rock. Remember it is a process, and we are not professional counselors, so these are not counseling sessions. The sooner you start, the sooner you will be able to find peace in the process, more joy in your journey, and help another brother as well!

Committed to the Holy Spirit's sharpening process—even when friction increases the heat or sparks fly,

Here are the links to the first two parts of this series. I hope you read and print all of them and pass along to men in your accountability group. And if you do not have one, start one!

Secret Sins – Things We (Think We) Hide From God

Finding Forgiveness

Your desperate brother in Christ,

Walter