

War Room

Week Two - Real Accountability



Real Accountability

Introduction

(Please read and complete this section prior to our first class together and our open discussion)

This week is all about accountability. Accountability is all about the righteous demand of responsibility and the requirement of giving an account or justification for actions or decisions. Most of us have gaps or blindspots in our ability to hold ourselves truly accountable. Most of us need men and women...friends of the highest integrity and pure heart, to help us in this arena.

"The wounds of a friend are trustworthy, but the kisses of an enemy are excessive" - Proverbs 27:6

Begin this week by sharing your insights learned from your experience from the first week. You can use one of these questions as a catalyst:

What stood out most to you during last week's group discussion or devotional studies?

What spiritual evaluations or commitments did God lead you to make this past week?

One of the lesser acknowledged benefits and blessings of living in a community of Christians (the church) is the ability of each and all to seek and hold one another accountable; to hold one another responsible for growth in all areas of our faith. All too often, however, this is not seen as a blessing and is not embraced, but shunned. Think for a moment about your fellowship and family of believers. Within that fellowship can you identify the "critic," the "complainer," the "judge," and the "spiritual bully?" Do certain names come to mind? Now, ask yourself, has anyone ever...have YOU ever talked to them about these serious problems? For some reason

we think that such a thing is reserved for the elders or preacher or deacons. Certainly they must be accountable. Yet, it is no more or less true for every child of God.

"Better is open rebuke, than love concealed." - Proverbs 27:5-6

We realize that this is a topic that can be quite alarming, especially in a group setting. Thus, let us make clear that accountability is not equivalent to public humiliation or attempts to embarrass someone publicly with unrighteous intention. No one will be put on the spot publicly and such is not encouraged. Instead, we are encouraging you to create, as the psalmist said, a "guard" for your mouth, thoughts and actions. These help keep us on the right road.

Begin by asking yourself these honest questions:

- 1. Do I have someone in my life that holds me accountable?**
- 2. If you do not is it because you fear the notion of being responsible for your words and actions?**
- 3. What are those words and actions (or lack thereof) that you are avoiding?**
- 4. How do you think you might go about finding someone who will fill this much needed role in your spiritual life?**
- 5. What do you think are the benefits of having what some have called an accountability partner?**
- 6. In the past when others have sought to correct you, how did you receive it?**

Open discussion

The clip - Tony Jordan is a man who has grown in a direction that has taken him far from God. He is currently playing with fire in the relationship with his wife and his thoughts, actions and words have gone off the spiritual rails. Fortunately for him he has a friend that is willing to speak the difficult truth even if it is not received well. Michael is a genuine friend who understands much about the role of accountability. This scene depicts the importance of accountability in godly relationships.

Discussion

1. Explain a moment when you have been in Michael's sneakers. How was it easy or difficult for you to speak challenging words to someone you care about?
2. Consider a moment when you found yourself in Tony's place. Did you have someone in your life that stepped up and confronted your sin or movement toward sin? If so, how did you receive it?
3. What did the encounter do for your relationship with that person?
4. How important is accountability in the context of Christian relationships? Why do you think that?
5. What are some ways we commonly dismiss the need to hold each other accountable? What excuses do we often make?
6. Can this idea be abused and how?

Engage

Read Proverbs 27:6 again

In Psalm 141 David writes favorably about accountability. His desire is for God to steer his heart away from evil by means of righteous men and women who will be bold enough to rebuke a man of His stature.

Read the following verses and record the key ideas about accountability

Hebrews 3:13

Hebrews 10:24-27

Proverbs 27:17

James 5:19-20

Galatians 6:1-2

Ecclesiastes 4:9-12

In your opinion, which of the verses above describes the Christian accountability in your life?

Read Ephesians 4:15. What does it mean to "speak truth in love?" How have you seen that in action?

Do you struggle more with speaking truth or speaking in love? What are some ways you might come to balance on these? Give an example of how Christ was balanced on these.

Let us take just a moment to pray that God helps us with these issues. Think about the things that you have trouble with in this area and right now take them to God and ask for His help. It may be helpful to consider these questions before you pray:

1. Am I open to being held accountable for my words and actions?
2. What are the personal hurdles that get in the way of this happening?
3. have I been a friend to others in this regard?

Day One - Homework

"We have been friends for a long time, but some things are just none of your business." - **Tony Jordan, War Room**

It may be hard, but this week in your study you will be evaluating yourself and your Christian community concerning the value of accountability. While there is no one section of scripture that details all we need to know about Christian accountability, the scripture is seasoned throughout with it.

Read Ephesians 5:-14

Take a moment here to be vulnerable. This is just between you and your God.

What in your past or present reveals a "fruitless work of darkness" described by Paul in Eph. 5:11? In an attitude of confession, compose a list below of things you need to get out of your life.

Read 1 John 1:8, 9 and note specifically what it states as a benefit of confession before God.

Now, be honest. Is there another trusted believer who could have composed your list? Someone who knows where your weakness and blind spots really are?

Read James 5:16. What benefit is there to sharing struggles with another believer? The word for healing here means "made whole." What does that imply?

Compare Eph. 5:11, 12 with Psalm 66:18. How has unconfessed sin affected your prayer life?

Closing the day's study

Read Isa. 29:15

What is the main point of this verse?

How can we hide our deeds and is it really to our benefit?

What comes from hiding them?

How does that affect those around us?

Prayer time

Open yourself to praying that God will take these things you have learned about His word and yourself and give you opportunity to overcome them and improve.

Day Two - Homework

"Since we have been friends for a long time, I'm not just gonna watch your marriage die. So if its bleeding, I'm not just gonna keep eating my salad." - **Michael, War Room**

There is a great responsibility in relationships. Look up and read each of the following verses. Note the aspect of responsibility present in each passage.

Ephesians 4:29-32

John 15:13

Job 6:14

proverbs 18:24

We are never more vulnerable to sin than when we are alone. Part of having a Christian community is having friends that will give honest and loving feedback about our actions, lack of action or words with regard to spiritual things. (Proverbs 18:1; 11:13)

Read 1 Corinthians 12:12-26

These verses speak of the diversity of gifts among believers. Instead of holding one gift above another, we are to work together to help one another grow toward Christlikeness.

Think about the diversity of talents and gifts in your spiritual family. List some gifts that you see in others that you do not have.

In what ways have you seen your community use their gifts and talents to help someone when they were "bleeding?"

In what ways have you worked together to spur one another toward Christlikeness?

The passage also talks about having the “same concern for each other” (v. 25). Paul goes on to say that this means we suffer with those in our community who suffer. We are also to rejoice when those in our community are honored. This is more often easier said than done. What we see more often than not is the imposition of unspoken, but often upheld, rules and limits to our rejoicing or weeping, based upon the judgements we make about those in our family. Some are deemed worthy, while others are readily dismissed. Some are given great attention and showered with bless, while others are isolated and held to a standard of our own design, not God’s. The church can act more like kids in a gym class when the coach calls, “Pair up.” We rush to the familiar, leaving human leftovers to feel isolated and unworthy for we have deemed them such.

Have you seen the church suffer with one another or rejoice with one another?

Have you seen the diversity of gifts and blessings create positive and working relationships or cause division and distinction in the Body, where some are perceived as “less worthy?”

What are some steps we can take to personally use our gifts to help others rejoice and weep with one another?

How can you help your fellowship do better with this?

Without one another, the body of believers would be incomplete. God has given us each other so that we may grow to be more like Christ. Close today’s lesson with prayer for the closeness of your Christian community.

Day Three - Homework

"See you in church." - **Tony Jordan, War Room**

"I need to see the church in you, bro." = **Michael, War Room**

What do you suppose it means to "see the church" in someone? Perhaps it means to see Christ in someone? Perhaps it means that we see someone who needs and seeks accountability? What do you think?

The Bible does not use the word accountability directly, but it does demonstrate it very often, describing accountable relationships.

Read Lev. 26:13

The word "erect" in Hebrew means "freely" or "freedom." it can also be translated as "uprightly." God has made it possible for us to have freedom from sin so we may walk unburdened by its great weight. We can and do often sin and are enslaved (John 8:34), but helping one another we can avoid sin and have greater freedom. Being in accountable relationships will not only help us let go of sin, but avoid it and the consequences of it.

"The highway of the upright is to depart from evil; He who watches his way preserves his life."
- Proverbs 16:17

Being accountable to God because of the great gift of freedom he has afforded us in Christ prompts us toward obedience. Our accountability to one another is a reflection of that freedom lived responsibly.

Look up the verses below. Next to each one note what they say about freedom. Then write what is implied about responsibility.

Psalm 119:45

2 Corinthians 3:17

Galatians 5:1

Romans 6:22

The core mark of a believer in Jesus Christ is freedom. The great joy of any church should be the freedom that we have from the consequences of sin. Yet, this does not mean that we are free from responsibility. In fact, our freedom in Christ creates a responsibility for our actions.

Even when someone is not as close to us as others, who we may consider in our accountability circle, we have a responsibility to communicate with them, and they us, to hold one another accountable for wrongs (Mt. 18:15-18; Luke 17:3). While never the epitome of what we would consider fun, it is a necessary part of helping each other stay right with the Lord.

Close today's session in prayer asking Him to continue to strengthen your relationships or to bring news ones where accountability can be held forth as a core value. Pray that they church may flourish with this idea.