

Accountability

Standing in the Light before God and Man



Accountability is being responsible to someone else. This usually includes reporting in, receiving feedback, explaining and answering questions. Just as a child is accountable to his parent for his behavior and an employee is accountable to his employer to perform assigned work, Christians should be accountable to God for their thoughts, words and actions.

God placed overseers in the church, not only to do the work of the ministry but to teach and guide believers in their growth in Christ. Romans chapter 13 teaches that all believers are to be subject to the leadership in the church. "*Do what is good, and you will have praise from the same.*" But if a believer does evil, he is accountable to the leadership, who will 'execute wrath,' which means that he will confront the one doing misdeeds and correct the behavior. If the evil practices continue, further steps may be necessary. Yet, accountability is not always a negative experience.

Having preached and set up a church in Thessalonica, Paul journeyed to Athens but sent Timothy back to check on believers and encourage them. Timothy's report brought Paul great comfort. "*For this reason, when I could no longer endure it, I sent to know your faith, lest by some means the tempter had tempted you, and our labor might be in vain. But now that Timothy has come to us from you, and brought us good news of your faith and love, and that you always have good remembrance of us, greatly desiring to see us, as we also to see you -- therefore, brethren, in all our affliction and distress we were comforted concerning you by your faith.*" (1 Thessalonians 3:5-7) Timothy was accountable to carry out his assignment issued by Paul and to report back in detail, giving an honest and accurate account of the situation and conditions he had observed.

In Acts chapters 10 and 11, Peter and six believers went to the gentile household of Cornelius where Peter preached and witnessed the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on every member of that group. Peter knew he would have to account for his actions back in Jerusalem. Peter knew he would be called in question because Jews were forbidden to eat with Gentiles according to the law. Peter knew he was accountable, but he was prepared, and had the testimony of his six companions to back him up. Peter reported how the Gentiles had received the Holy Spirit, just as they had on the day of Pentecost. "*When they heard these things they became silent; and they glorified God, saying, 'Then God has*

also granted to the Gentiles repentance to life."(Acts 11:18)

The Bible teaches that all people will someday stand before God in judgment, either for rewards or for punishment. *"So then each of us shall give account of himself to God."/i>
(Romans 14:12). Even though Christian believers have been declared justified and righteous in Christ, they are still responsible for their actions as God's redeemed people. For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad. (2 Corinthians 5:10)*

Hebrews 4:13 teaches that nothing and no one is unseen by God "but all things are naked and open to the eyes of Him to whom we must give account." Accountability keeps people honest and reminded of their commitments, to God first, and to people.

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