

STUDY TWO: ACCOUNTABILITY

Introduction:

Accountability strictly defined is: the state of being held responsible for carrying out one's obligations and responsibilities. When we began the practice of addiction to a substance or behavior we wanted to believe that we were not hurting others and that we do not have a problem, others have the problem. This is denying reality. As we plunge deeper into our addiction we become more and more protective of our practices, that is; we will go to any lengths to cover them up. We become good at providing the means of sustaining them and, as a result of this, we begin to suffer worse consequences. We may steal from loved ones as well as others; we may begin to borrow money even though we know there is little chance we will ever pay it back. We might even become homeless and alienated from those who love us. Little by little jobs begin to suffer and after awhile we are incapable of holding a job. Some of us have been in jail or psychiatric institutions. Debts begin to pile up and the temporary "highs" that we experience seem to offer the only relief we can get. As we go more deeply into hopelessness even that little bit of escape becomes futile. Thinking we have been exercising our freedom to do as we please, we discover that we are not free. Rather, we are slaves and in bondage. Or, perhaps none of these things are true of you...yet.

We at America's Keswick want you to know that no matter what your situation, we have witnessed the deliverance of great numbers of men from the despair we have been describing and you can be delivered, too! God has a special plan just for your life. Read his promise to His people from **Jeremiah 29:11**: "For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you **hope** and a **future.**"

Isn't it time to decide what you want from life? Do you desire to be free? Have you done the best you can on lesson one? Then let us begin our second study:

Biblical accountability begins with taking responsibility for your actions and behaviors and making a decision to allow others to help you do what is right. You do this by consistently and honestly sharing what is going on in your life. Often, others can see the things in your life that you do not see yourself. Ultimately, no matter what pain and heartbreak you may have had in your life, you are the one who is responsible for the choices you have made. It is no longer appropriate or helpful to blame anyone or anything else for your mistakes. This is an important step in getting help. As long as you blame other people or events in your life for the dilemma you are in, you will postpone getting the help you need.

- 1) Your answers will be read only by a counselor who desires to help you. If you wish, you may share your studies with a Pastor, trusted family member or friend. Blame shifting is nothing new, it started in the Garden of Eden when Adam said to God: "the woman You put here with me, she gave me some fruit from the tree

and I ate it.” When God questioned Eve about what she had done she said: “the Serpent deceived me and I ate.” **(Genesis 3:13.)** First Adam blamed God, then he blamed Eve and then Eve blamed the serpent. Sound familiar? Use the space provided to write down the ways in which you have shifted the blame for your actions to events, people or perhaps even God in your life.

- 2) Next we will examine three areas in which you need to be accountable and the way the Bible supports each one. (a) You are accountable to God. (b) You must be accountable to others and (c) You must be accountable to and honest with yourself.

ACCOUNTABILITY TO GOD

Read each Scripture *carefully* and *prayerfully*. Then use the space provided to write down what each one means to you. There are no stupid answers. Ask God to help you understand.

- 1) **(Romans 14:11,12)** It is written: “As surely as I live says, the Lord, every knee will bow before me; every tongue will confess to God. So then, each of us will give an **account** of himself to God.”

- 2) **(Hebrews 4:13)** “Nothing in all creation is hidden from God’s sight. Everything is uncovered and laid bare before the eyes of Him to whom we must give **account.**”

3) **(Matthew 12:35, 36)** “The good man brings good things out of the good stored up in him, and the evil man brings evil out of the evil stored up in him. But I tell you that men will have to give **account**for every careless word they have spoken.”

4.) **(2 Corinthians 5:10)** “For we must all appear before.....Christ, that each one may receive what is due him for the things done while in the body, whether good or bad.”

Why does God want us to be accountable to Him? God is not a taskmaster who sits ready to lower the hammer when you mess up. Rather, He created you, He knows that you are prone to sin and that sin separates you from Him. God’s desire is to have a personal relationship with you. That is precisely why He sent His Son, Jesus, as a sacrifice to pay a debt you could never pay. When you receive Christ as Lord and Savior you are placing your trust in what He did on the cross of Calvary for you and for me. It was there and then that He paid for your sins and bought your forgiveness with His own body and blood. More than that, His resurrection assures you that you can be raised to newness of life. He wants you to be accountable to Him so that when you do sin, (sin is simply doing anything that is in violation of His character and His Word) He wants you to confess it to Him, immediately, so that you can be cleansed and forgiven. We call that keeping “short accounts on sin.”

We know that much of this may be difficult to understand and overwhelming to some of you. *You can receive help at a Bible honoring Church.* If you are having difficulty finding one, or are not certain what that means, let us know. We want to help.

Please read the following verses that support what we have been saying in this paragraph.

Take the time to meditate on what they are saying to you. Even if some of these verses are well known to you, you will do well to study and examine them again. For example: **(John 3:16)** “For God loved the world (you) so much that He gave His one and only Son that whoever believes in Him (you) shall not perish but have eternal life.” **(Ephesians 1:7)** “In Christ we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins in accordance with the richness of God’s grace.” “Redemption” is being redeemed

or bought back from our former way of life and “grace” is God’s favor to us and love for us even though we do not deserve it. **(1 John 1:9)** has been studied in Bible Study 1 and tells us that when we confess to God, He forgives.

ACCOUNTABILITY TO OTHERS

Read the following Scriptures and note in the space provided what they are saying about the need to be accountable to others:

- 1) **(1 Corinthians 12:28)** “And in the Church God has appointed.....those able to help others.....”

- 2) Other portions from **(1 Corinthians chapter 12)** “Now you are the body of Christ and each one of you is a part of it. The body is a unit, though it is made up of many parts; and though all its parts are many, they form one body.The eye can not say to the hand, ‘I don’t need you!’ And the hand can not say to the feet, ‘I don’t need you!’If one part suffers, every part suffers with it; if one part is honored, every part rejoices with it...”

- 3) **(James 5:16)** “Therefore confess your faults to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective.”

- 4) Look at each of the following verses from the Bible, God’s love letter to you, and write in the space following it what you hear it saying about the need for accountability to others:

- a. **(Proverbs 27:17)** “As iron sharpens iron, so one man sharpens another.”

- b. **(Proverbs 15:22)** “Plans fail for lack of counsel, but with many advisors they succeed.”

- c. **(Ecclesiastes 4:9,10)** “Two are better than one, because they have a good return for their work: If one falls down, his friend can help him up. But pity the man who falls and has no one to help him up!”

We know that this can be difficult. It becomes a question of; do you really want help or are you too proud to ask? Consider these verses:

“Pride goes before destruction, a haughty spirit before a fall.” **(Proverbs 16:18)** and
“Pride only breeds quarrels but wisdom is found in those who take advice.” **(13:10)**

ACCOUNTABILITY TO AND HONESTY WITH SELF

You may as well face it. You are a master of denial and deceiving yourself. Consider the following verses and write in the space provided how they can help you begin to take an honest look at yourself and be accountable for what you see.

- 1) **(Psalm 139:23, 24)** “Search me O God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. See if there is any offensive way in me; and lead me in the way everlasting.”

- 2) **(Hebrews 4:12)** “For the Word of God is living and active. Sharper than any two-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart.”

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- 3) **(Proverbs 20:9)** “Who can say ‘I have kept my heart pure; I am clean and without sin?’ ”

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- 4) Take a moment now to pray Psalm 139:23, 24 (#1 at the bottom of page 5.) Ask God to begin to reveal to you things that you have not been willing to admit even to yourself. **It is time to take responsibility for yourself in thought, word and action.**

CONCLUSION:

How long has it been since you have been able to walk with your head held high among family and friends? As you build on the things you learned about repentance in lesson one and begin to practice accountability to God, others and yourself from this lesson, you will see that you can begin to hold your head up high.....with integrity. Integrity is the topic of lesson three. Take the time to go over this study and lesson one and keep working at it! Be sure to call upon the power of God for strength. The Scripture promises: “I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.” **(Philippians 4:13)** Next, Study 3, ***Integrity.***

Note: (Bible verses have been taken from the New International Version and the New Living Translation. Punctuation has been added to some of the verses in an effort to clarify or emphasize a main point.)

Once finished with this study please mail for review to our mailing address:

**America’s Keswick
601 Route 530
Whiting New Jersey, 08759-3599**

