

# Discipleship Pathway 1

## Session 11: Accountability

“Only the truly faithful friend cares enough about you or me to undertake the often thankless task of pointing out where we are wrong. None of us enjoys being confronted with our faults or sins or mistakes, so we often make it difficult for our friends to do so. As a result, most of us are more concerned about speaking agreeableness to each other than about speaking the truth. This is not loyalty. Loyalty speaks the truth in faithfulness, but it also speaks it in love. Loyalty says, “I care enough about you that I will not allow you to continue unchecked in your wrong action or sinful attitude that will ultimately be harmful to you”<sup>1</sup> -Jerry Bridges

Accountability doesn't seem like a significant spiritual discipline in comparison to prayer, worship and Bible Study. However, accountability is an expression of \_\_\_\_\_ towards God. Accountability takes seriously our tendency towards error and our capacity to drift from God by willfully putting in place trusted believers to act as \_\_\_\_\_ keeping us track and guiding us back when we've made wrong turns.

**Discuss together:** What is accountability?

Accountability is defined by Merriam-Webster as: an \_\_\_\_\_ or willingness to accept \_\_\_\_\_ or to account for one's actions.<sup>2</sup>

All of us will one day have to stand before God and give an account for our actions.

**Read:** Romans 14:12

It is to God and God alone that we are ultimately accountable, however we are not \_\_\_\_\_ in our in our accountability. Growing in \_\_\_\_\_ is a pursuit to be embraced by every believer; each one learning to practice righteousness in our daily lives. Unfortunately, most people are not very good at \_\_\_\_\_ holiness. God in His wisdom determined that it would be better for us to do this together. There is tremendous power in \_\_\_\_\_.

**Read:** Ecclesiastes 4:9-12

**Discuss together:** What are some of the benefits of partnering with others? How can a friend help keep us accountable?

**Read:** Proverbs 27:17

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<sup>1</sup> Jerry Bridges, *The Practice of Godliness* (NavPress, 1996), 153.

<sup>2</sup> “Accountability”, Merriam-Webster, accessed February 24, 2023, <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/accountability>.

True accountability is about \_\_\_\_\_ one another. We are not simply concerned about our own spiritual growth, but growing \_\_\_\_\_ in righteousness.

“Iron can’t sharpen iron from a distance. Relationship precedes accountability.”-Chi Alpha Missionary Chris Atwood

**Discuss together:** What does spiritual accountability look like?

1. Spiritual accountability includes \_\_\_\_\_ and exhortation.

**Read:** Colossians 3:16

**Read:** Hebrews 10:25

2. Spiritual accountability includes empowering each other in \_\_\_\_\_.

**Read:** Matthew 18:19-20

**Read:** Acts 16:25

Acts 16 is a beautiful picture of how praying together can inspire us in times of struggle and difficulty. Paul and Silas were in bondage together and as they prayed and began to praise God, both men were set free from the shackles that held them. Praying through difficult circumstances binds our hearts with others facing similar trials.

**Discuss together:** What are some benefits of praying with others?

3. Spiritual accountability includes \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ sin.

**Read:** Galatians 6:1-2

**Read:** James 5:16

In no other area is accountability more significant than in the area of addressing and confessing sin. Through it we experience the presence of God.

“A man who confesses his sins in the presence of a brother knows that he is no longer alone with himself; he experiences the presence of God in the reality of the other person. As long as I am by myself in the confession of my sins, everything remains in the clear, but in the presence of a brother, the sin has to be brought into the light.”- Dietrich Bonhoeffer

**Discuss together:** Why is it so difficult for us to confess our sins to others? How can we best reflect God’s nature when other’s entrust us with their personal failures?

Spiritual accountability means that we must invite others into our walk with Christ. It means empowering others to ask the hard questions, giving them room to encourage, and permission to pray with and for you.

**Discuss together:** Do you have an accountability partner? If so, who? If not, why not?

**This week’s reading plan:** Leviticus 11-20, Proverbs Ch. 11