

How to Have an Accountable Relationship

by Patrick Morley

Adapted from The Man in the Mirror and The Seven Seasons of a Man's Life (Thomas Nelson Publishers)

The Purpose and Definition of Accountability

The purpose of accountability is nothing less than to each day become more Christ-like in all our ways and be ever more intimate with Him. Here's a useful working definition of accountability for Christians:

Suggested Guidelines for A Weekly One-Hour Accountability Check-Up

1. Try to ensure each person gets equal "air time". However, if one of you has a particularly hard struggle one week, be flexible enough to focus on that issue.
2. Let each person work through a section at a time, then let the other(s) answer. This will keep things moving.
3. Don't neglect the prayer time.
4. Try this in a small group of 3 to 5 men. This will work well if everyone speaks succinctly (one hour will go by very quickly!) You may want to try one-on-one.
5. Reread the chapter, "Accountability: The Missing Link", from *The Man in the Mirror*, at least once every year and discuss the questions at the end of the chapter. You will be surprised how your understanding of accountability changes over the years.
6. Stick it out. You will want to quit, perhaps often. Ask God to strengthen you when you want to give up.
7. Hold each other accountable for the goals you each set for yourselves and to the standards of God's Word.
8. Never forget the purpose of accountability: To each day become more Christ-like in all of your ways. Remember it is Jesus who is the object of our search, our devotion, our sacrifice, and our affection. Anything less than intimacy with Christ will be a pallid achievement from your time together.
9. Finally, if you are uncomfortable with the format, feel free to alter these questions and type up your own accountability checklist. The substance is more important than the form. You may want to divide the key areas among more than one accountability partner.

Reference Scriptures:

Proverbs 27:6, 17; Ecclesiastes 4:9, 10; Philippians 2:4, 20; John 13: 34; Galatians 6:1, 2; James 5:16a.

The Weekly One-Hour Accountability Check-Up

Questions to Start

- How has God blessed you this week? (What went right?)
- What problem has consumed your thoughts this week? (What went wrong?)

Spiritual Life

- God's Word Have you read it consistently? (How many days? How long? Why not? Will you next week?) What has God been teaching you?
- Prayer Describe your prayers for yourself, for others, praise, confession, gratitude. How is your relationship with Christ evolving?
- Temptation How have you been tempted this week? How did you respond?
- Confession Do you have any unconfessed sin in your life?
- Worship Did you worship in church this week? (Was your faith in Jesus strengthened? Was He honored?)
- Witness Have you shared your faith? In what ways? How can you improve?

Home Life

- Wife: How is it going with your wife? (time, meaningful conversation, attitudes, intimacy, irritations, disappointments, her relationship with Christ)
- Children: How is it going with your children? (giving encouragement, quantity and quality time, values, education, spiritual welfare)
- Finances: How are your finances doing? (debts, sharing, saving, spending, stewardship)
- Time: How have you invested your time around the house?

Work Life

- Job How are things going? (career progress, relationships, temptations, work load, stress, problems, working too much?)

Critical Concerns

- God's Will Do you feel you are in the center of God's will? Do you sense His peace?
- Thought Life What are you wrestling with in secret?
- Service What have you done for someone else this week which can't be repaid? (the poor, encouragement, mercy, service to others)
- Priorities Are your priorities in the right order?
- Integrity Is your moral and ethical behavior as it should be?
- High-Risk How are you doing in your personal high-risk area?
- Transparency Is the "visible" you and the "real" you consistent in our relationship? (if not, in what ways?)

Prayer

- Close the one-hour accountability check-up with ten to fifteen minutes of prayer. Focus on concerns of the week.

Conclusion

I believe no man can stay on track with his God, his family, his friends, his morality, his money, and his vocation unless he has an accountable relationship with other men. The truth for the Biblical Christian is this: There is power in vulnerability, strength in numbers, and safety in visibility.