

Accountability

Zoe Christian Fellowship of Whittier

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God's Minute

I've only just a minute,

Only sixty seconds in it.

Forced upon me, can't refuse it,

Didn't seek it, didn't choose it,

But it's up to me to use it.

I must suffer if I lose it,

*Give an **account** if I abuse it,*

Just a tiny little minute,

But eternity is in it!

By Dr. Benjamin E. Mays

Objective: The focus of this lesson is a discussion about accountability. It comes in many different forms – accountability to oneself, others, and God. We'll take a glimpse at how our God makes a point to address it.

Definition of Accountability - Responsible for something or obligated to answer to someone, such as a person with authority

Key Scripture:

Romans 14:12

12 So then, each of us will give an account of ourselves to God.

Week 1:

Let's start at the beginning where accountability was exhibited in the most profound way.

Adam and Eve:

- ***Genesis 3:1-24 NIV***

1 Now the serpent was more crafty than any of the wild animals the Lord God had made. He said to the woman, "Did God really say, 'You must not eat from any tree in the garden'?"

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2 The woman said to the serpent, “We may eat fruit from the trees in the garden, 3 but God did say, ‘You must not eat fruit from the tree that is in the middle of the garden, and you must not touch it, or you will die.’”

4 “You will not certainly die,” the serpent said to the woman. 5 “For God knows that when you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.”

6 When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for gaining wisdom, she took some and ate it. She also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it. 7 Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they realized they were naked; so they sewed fig leaves together and made coverings for themselves.

8 Then the man and his wife heard the sound of the Lord God as he was walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and they hid from the Lord God among the trees of the garden. 9 But the Lord God called to the man, “Where are you?”

10 He answered, “I heard you in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; so I hid.”

11 And he said, “Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree that I commanded you not to eat from?”

12 The man said, “The woman you put here with me—she gave me some fruit from the tree, and I ate it.”

13 Then the Lord God said to the woman, “What is this you have done?”

The woman said, “The serpent deceived me, and I ate.”

Read 3:14-24 – How God addressed Adam and Eve’s sin

Note: Isn’t it interesting how God asked Adam and Eve, “Where are you”? He is an omniscient (all knowing) God. He knew where they were, so He was not referring to their physical position, but rather their spiritual positioning. This line of questioning caused Adam and Eve to partake in a time of reflection on what they’d done. However, as seen in Genesis 3:12, Adam’s level of accountability had not reached maturity, as he stated, “The woman **you** put here with me – **she gave me** some fruit from the tree, and I ate it”.

Group Discussion: Adam and Eve’s sin impacted all of mankind. Aren’t you grateful that Jesus intercepted and sacrificed His life, so we can be relieved from the accountability of eternal damnation?

Thoughts/Revelation:

Sarai and Abram (aka Sarah and Abraham):

Genesis 16:1-6 NIV

1 Now Sarai, Abram’s wife, had borne him no children. But she had an Egyptian slave named Hagar; 2 so she said to Abram, “The Lord has kept me from having children. Go, sleep with my slave; perhaps I can build a family through her.”

Abram agreed to what Sarai said. 3 So after Abram had been living in Canaan ten years, Sarai his wife took her Egyptian slave Hagar and gave her to her husband to be his wife. 4 He slept with Hagar, and she conceived.

When she knew she was pregnant, she began to despise her mistress. 5 Then Sarai said to Abram, “You are responsible for the wrong I am suffering. I put my slave in your arms, and now that she knows she is pregnant, she despises me. May the Lord judge between you and me.”

6 “Your slave is in your hands,” Abram said. “Do with her whatever you think best.” Then Sarai mistreated Hagar; so she fled from her.

Note: Sarai and Abram took it upon themselves to get ahead of God’s promise. As we reflect on Genesis 15:4, it states, “Then the word of the Lord came to him: ‘This man will not be your heir, but a son who is your own flesh and blood will be your heir.’ 5 He took him outside and said, ‘Look up at the sky and count the stars—if indeed you can count them.’ Then he said to him, ‘So shall your offspring be.’” Abram and Sarai’s faith wavered, which caused them to conjure up their own child-bearing plan. This plan led to strife between them and enmity between Sarai and Hagar. In fact, Sarai held Abraham accountable for a plan *she* initiated. It also appeared she had no accountability for her own actions.

Group Discussion: Have you experienced someone known for being accountable for their own actions, even when it’s uncomfortable? Have you experienced those who routinely choose to point a finger at someone else?

Thoughts/Revelation:

Week 2:

Nathan and David:

Read II Samuel 12:1-6 for context

II Samuel 12:7 NIV

7 Then Nathan said to David, “You are the man! This is what the Lord, the God of Israel, says: ‘I anointed you king over Israel, and I delivered you from the hand of Saul. 8 I gave your master’s house to you, and your master’s wives into your arms. I gave you all Israel and Judah. And if all this had been too little, I would have given you even more. 9 Why did you despise the word of the Lord by doing what is evil in his eyes? You struck down Uriah the Hittite with the sword and took his wife to be your own. You killed him with the sword of the Ammonites. 10 Now, therefore, the sword will never depart from your house, because you despised me and took the wife of Uriah the Hittite to be your own.’

11 “This is what the Lord says: ‘Out of your own household I am going to bring calamity on you. Before your very eyes I will take your wives and give them to one who is close to you, and he will sleep with your wives in broad daylight. 12 You did it in secret, but I will do this thing in broad daylight before all Israel.’”

13 Then David said to Nathan, “I have sinned against the Lord.” Nathan replied, “The Lord has taken away your sin. You are not going to die.

Note: David was immediately receptive to the word Nathan had given him, as he took accountability for his actions as seen in II Samuel 12:13. His level of accountability may have very well spared his life. However, there was a generational consequence of David’s actions. Take a moment to read II Samuel 12:14-23.

Group Discussion: What are your thoughts about the generational consequence of David’s actions? Does it cause you to think twice about the level of accountability of your actions?

Thoughts/Revelation:

Jesus and Temple Tax:

Matthew 17:24-27 NIV

24 After Jesus and his disciples arrived in Capernaum, the collectors of the two-drachma temple tax came to Peter and asked, “Doesn’t your teacher pay the temple tax?”

25 “Yes, he does,” he replied.

When Peter came into the house, Jesus was the first to speak. “What do you think, Simon?” he asked. “From whom do the kings of the earth collect duty and taxes—from their own children or from others?”

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26 *"From others," Peter answered.*

"Then the children are exempt," Jesus said to him. 27 "But so that we may not cause offense, go to the lake and throw out your line. Take the first fish you catch; open its mouth and you will find a four-drachma coin. Take it and give it to them for my tax and yours."

Note: When Jesus entered the temple, He was entering his father's house. Jesus, as the son of the King of kings, more than qualified Him, to be exempt from paying taxes. However, Jesus was very careful not to offend the tax collectors. He made a conscientious decision to be accountable to the established temple rules presented to Him.

Thoughts/Revelation:

Week 3:

Moses, Aaron and Miriam:

Numbers 12:1-10 NIV

Miriam and Aaron began to talk against Moses because of his Cushite wife, for he had married a Cushite. 2 "Has the Lord spoken only through Moses?" they asked. "Hasn't he also spoken through us?" And the Lord heard this.

3 (Now Moses was a very humble man, more humble than anyone else on the face of the earth.)

4 At once the Lord said to Moses, Aaron and Miriam, "Come out to the tent of meeting, all three of you." So the three of them went out. 5 Then the Lord came down in a pillar of cloud; he stood at the entrance to the tent and summoned Aaron and Miriam. When the two of them stepped forward, 6 he said, "Listen to my words:

*"When there is a prophet among you,
I, the Lord, reveal myself to them in visions,
I speak to them in dreams.*

*7 But this is not true of my servant Moses;
he is faithful in all my house.*

*8 With him I speak face to face,
clearly and not in riddles;
he sees the form of the Lord.*

*Why then were you not afraid
to speak against my servant Moses?"*

9 The anger of the Lord burned against them, and he left them.

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10 When the cloud lifted from above the tent, Miriam's skin was leprous—it became as white as snow. Aaron turned toward her and saw that she had a defiling skin disease.

Note: The Lord immediately held Aaron and Miriam accountable when he heard them speaking against Moses. In fact, scripture points out that the “Lord came down” to address them. He made it a point to expose them and brought about correction in Moses’ presence. If it were not for Moses’ forgiving heart, Miriam might have been afflicted with leprosy for the remainder of her days.

Group Discussion: ***Ecclesiastes 12:14 states, “For God will bring every deed into judgment, including every hidden thing, whether it is good or evil”.***

Can you imagine the Lord coming down to directly hold you accountable for something you’ve said or done that is not pleasing in His sight? He did it then...who’s to say, He will not do it now?

Thoughts/Revelation:

Joseph and Brothers:

Many of us are familiar with the story of Joseph and how his brothers plotted to kill him by throwing him into a pit, then later decided to trade him into slavery. They lied to their father about their actions and had no idea what had become of Joseph. As seen below, Joseph holds a strategic leadership position, as he is second in command in Egypt. They finally reunite after many years.

Genesis 42:6-8 NIV

6 Now Joseph was the governor of the land, the person who sold grain to all its people. So when Joseph's brothers arrived, they bowed down to him with their faces to the ground. 7 As soon as Joseph saw his brothers, he recognized them, but he pretended to be a stranger and spoke harshly to them. “Where do you come from?” he asked.

“From the land of Canaan,” they replied, “to buy food.”

8 Although Joseph recognized his brothers, they did not recognize him.

Note: At this very moment, Joseph had every opportunity to hold his brothers accountable for their actions. He was now more powerful. They were vulnerable and in his domain. However, although he pretended to be unkind and unaware of who they were, their accountability was met with grace.

Read Genesis 45:1-15 to see how grace unfolds!

Thoughts/Revelation:

Week 4:

Rich Man and Lazarus:

Luke 16:19-28

19 *“There was a rich man who was dressed in purple and fine linen and lived in luxury every day. 20 At his gate was laid a beggar named Lazarus, covered with sores 21 and longing to eat what fell from the rich man’s table. Even the dogs came and licked his sores.*

22 *“The time came when the beggar died and the angels carried him to Abraham’s side. The rich man also died and was buried. 23 In Hades, where he was in torment, he looked up and saw Abraham far away, with Lazarus by his side. 24 So he called to him, ‘Father Abraham, have pity on me and send Lazarus to dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue, because I am in agony in this fire.’*

25 *“But Abraham replied, ‘Son, remember that in your lifetime you received your good things, while Lazarus received bad things, but now he is comforted here and you are in agony. 26 And besides all this, between us and you a great chasm has been set in place, so that those who want to go from here to you cannot, nor can anyone cross over from there to us.’*

27 *“He answered, ‘Then I beg you, father, send Lazarus to my family, 28 for I have five brothers. Let him warn them, so that they will not also come to this place of torment.’*

Note: It is probable that the rich man, not only denied Lazarus, but God as well. The rich man possibly never imagined his actions and unwillingness to help Lazarus would contribute to the accountability of eternal death. The rich man’s riches could not save him. According to Matthew 25:40, “The King will reply, ‘Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.’ We are also accountable to one another according to Proverbs 27:17, “As iron sharpens iron, so one person sharpens another”.

Group Discussion: Do you have an accountability partner in your life?

Thoughts/Revelation:

Accountability Comes as a Result of Denying Jesus:

1 John 18-27 NIV

18 Dear children, this is the last hour; and as you have heard that the antichrist is coming, even now many antichrists have come. This is how we know it is the last hour. 19 They went out from us, but they did not really belong to us. For if they had belonged to us, they would have remained with us; but their going showed that none of them belonged to us.

20 But you have an anointing from the Holy One, and all of you know the truth. 21 I do not write to you because you do not know the truth, but because you do know it and because no lie comes from the truth. 22 Who is the liar? It is whoever denies that Jesus is the Christ. Such a person is the antichrist—denying the Father and the Son. 23 No one who denies the Son has the Father; whoever acknowledges the Son has the Father also.

24 As for you, see that what you have heard from the beginning remains in you. If it does, you also will remain in the Son and in the Father. 25 And this is what he promised us—eternal life.

26 I am writing these things to you about those who are trying to lead you astray. 27 As for you, the anointing you received from him remains in you, and you do not need anyone to teach you. But as his anointing teaches you about all things and as that anointing is real, not counterfeit—just as it has taught you, remain in him.

Note: Jesus is ready to welcome you into the family. Take a moment to minister salvation to members within your group.

John 3:16 For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.

Group Discussion: Is there anyone in the group who desires to accept Jesus as their personal Lord and Savior?

Thoughts/Revelation:
