

Grace Bible Fellowship
Distinctive – Every Member Accountable to the Body

Key verse – Hebrews 10:24-25

“let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds.....encouraging one another”

The Christian life can be difficult. It is likened to a race in 2 Timothy 4:

6For I am already being poured out like a drink offering, and the time has come for my departure. 7I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. 8Now there is in store for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day—and not only to me, but also to all who have longed for his appearing.

The bar is set very high in terms of what God expects from us. Here is one example from Colossians 3:

1Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. 2Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things. 3For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God. 4When Christ, who is your[a] life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.

5Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires and greed, which is idolatry. 6Because of these, the wrath of God is coming.[b] 7You used to walk in these ways, in the life you once lived. 8But now you must rid yourselves of all such things as these: anger, rage, malice, slander, and filthy language from your lips. 9Do not lie to each other, since you have taken off your old self with its practices 10and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator. 11Here

Purity of emotions, purity of thought, purity of behavior, purity of desires, purity of speech, purity of attitude.

This is the starting point for human beings:

Jeremiah 17:9

The heart is deceitful above all things and beyond cure. Who can understand it?

James 1:

22Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says. 23Anyone who listens to the word but does not do what it says is like a man who looks at his face in a mirror 24and, after looking at himself, goes away and

immediately forgets what he looks like. 25But the man who looks intently into the perfect law that gives freedom, and continues to do this, not forgetting what he has heard, but doing it—he will be blessed in what he does.

How do we get from our depraved nature to God's standard? It starts with what we spoke about last week: correct, rebuke, instruct, encourage. Biblical teaching, and examples. The broader topic is biblical accountability.

What exactly is accountability? In its most basic sense, it is being answerable to others for our lives. Sharing the details of our lives with others and asking that they compare us to God's standard.

It is scary. Our basic human nature doesn't like it and wants to flee from it. Part of us wants to call the shots and decide how we live. It can be frightening to open up to others. But you know what – we are all accountable to God for how we live. Listen to these passages:

Matt 12:33-

33"Make a tree good and its fruit will be good, or make a tree bad and its fruit will be bad, for a tree is recognized by its fruit. 34You brood of vipers, how can you who are evil say anything good? For out of the overflow of the heart the mouth speaks. 35The good man brings good things out of the good stored up in him, and the evil man brings evil things out of the evil stored up in him. **36But I tell you that men will have to give account on the day of judgment for every careless word they have spoken.** 37For by your deeds you will be acquitted, and by your words you will be condemned."

Hebrews 4:12-

12For the word of God is living and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; **it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart.** 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.**

Our distinctive at GBF isn't "Every member accountable to God", but rather "Everyone member accountable to the body". We want to start now with accountability rather than wait until we get to heaven! How does this work within a church? There are several elements that we'll look at today.

Identicaltion with the Body (a.k.a. "Membership")

First it requires membership. Membership is identifying with a congregation and asking to be accountable. That is why membership is important at GBF. When you become a member, you are asking us to hold you accountable.

Galations 6:1-10

1Brothers, if someone is caught in a sin, you who are spiritual should restore him gently. But watch yourself, or you also may be tempted. 2Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ. 3If anyone thinks he is something when he is nothing, he deceives himself. 4Each one should test his own actions. Then he can take pride in himself, without comparing himself to somebody else, 5for each one should carry his own load.

6Anyone who receives instruction in the word must share all good things with his instructor.

7Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows. 8The one who sows to please his sinful nature, from that nature[a]will reap destruction; the one who sows to please the Spirit, from the Spirit will reap eternal life. 9Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up. 10Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers.

An agreed upon standard.

This is implied in the passage. "Someone is caught in a sin." You have to agree on what you are being held to.

The courage to confront sin

Don't tip toe around it. Don't look the other way. Example of Nathan confronting David over Bathsheba.

The goal is restoration

The goal of confronting sin isn't to knock the other person down. It is to be able to restore them. To help them get through the sin.

An attitude of humility

"But watch yourself or you also may be tempted."

Help one another with our struggles

"Carry each other's burdens..." This is the key verse in the passage. The idea is to be able to help each other overcome sin. Not just the obvious blatant sin described in verse 1, but the nagging ones that we hide below the surface. This is what I shared about at Good Friday. This only works if there is an attitude of openness, an ongoing relationship, and the ability to share personal details. When was the last time you shared a personal struggle with someone else?

Remember that this is a two way street. Are we will to open up to others? Are we willing to listen to others? Today's hectic lifestyles make it difficult to spend time together for form deep relationships. Is there someone in your life that you feel comfortable sharing with? Will they hold you accountable to God's standard?

Self examination

"Each one should test his own actions."

Understand the outcome

We will reap what we sow.

It takes perseverance

Do not give up. If you fall, get up, find someone who can help you, and keep at it.

Close with Ecclesiastes 4:

9 Two are better than one,
because they have a good return for their work:

10 If one falls down,
his friend can help him up.
But pity the man who falls
and has no one to help him up!

11 Also, if two lie down together, they will keep warm.
But how can one keep warm alone?

12 Though one may be overpowered,
two can defend themselves.
A cord of three strands is not quickly broken.

1 Thes 2:6:

As apostles of Christ we could have been a burden to you, 7but we were gentle among you, like a mother caring for her little children. 8We loved you so much that we were delighted to share with you not only the gospel of God but our lives as well, because you had become so dear to us. 9Surely you remember, brothers, our toil and hardship; we worked night and day in order not to be a burden to anyone while we preached the gospel of God to you.

10You are witnesses, and so is God, of how holy, righteous and blameless we were among you who believed. 11For you know that we dealt with each of you as a father deals with his own children, 12encouraging, comforting and urging you to live lives worthy of God, who calls you into his kingdom and glory.