

The Accountable Life

In this session we will hear about the crucial element of transparency. We will consider how our identity in Christ allows us to be honest with our growth progress and struggles and to have enough trust to ask one another hard questions without shame.

Jim Cecy is a regular speaker at the European Leadership Forum. He serves as Senior Pastor-Teacher of Campus Bible Church in Fresno, California. Jim is also founder and President of JARON Ministries International, a training ministry for Christian leaders in the U.S. and abroad. He has a Masters of Divinity in Bible Exposition from Talbot Theological Seminary and a Doctorate of Ministry from Western Seminary. He is a conference and seminar speaker for hundreds of churches, schools, seminars, conference centers, Christian groups and denominations in the U.S. and abroad. In addition to other books and materials, he is the author of "The Purity War: A Biblical Guide to Living in an Immoral World" and "Anger: the Worm in My Apple." Jim has been married for forty-five years and has thirteen grandchildren. Information about his materials, books and seminars is available at www.jaron.org and www.puritywar.com and www.campusbiblechurch.com

We desire to become healthy followers of Christ working daily on growing:

- closer through fellowship
 - stronger through doctrine
 - more passionate through worship
 - broader through service
 - larger through evangelism
 - deeper through discipleship
 - more effective through prayer

What does "growing closer through fellowship" really mean?

fellowship = Greek: koinonia = meeting one another's needs

Key words: connection • accountability

The Three Arenas of Accountability

PART I. Accountability to Myself

"No man is fit to command another who cannot command himself." (U.S. First Lady, "Lady Bird" Johnson)

1 Timothy 4:7 "...discipline yourself for the purpose of godliness..."

1 Timothy 4:16 "Watch your life and doctrine closely. Persevere in them..."

1 Corinthians 11:28 "But let a man examine himself..."

Galatians 6:4 "But let each one examine his own work..."

Lamentations 3:40 "Let us examine and probe our ways..."

probe = Hebrew: chaqar = examine, search, investigate, ponder, taste

2 Cor. 2:14 "But thanks be to God, who always leads us in His triumph in Christ, and manifests through us the sweet aroma of the knowledge of Him in every place."

"When people are right with God, they are apt to be hard on themselves and not on other people. But when they are not right with God, they are easy on themselves and hard on others." (John Newton)

Group Discussion Questions:

1. In which area do you need the most growth? Fellowship? Doctrine? Worship? Acts of Service? Evangelism? Discipleship? Prayer? Other: _____
2. Where and when do you have the most intimate times with God?
3. How often do you spend time reflecting internally on how you are doing in your spiritual life? What motivates you to do this? What keeps this from happening?

PART II. Accountability to Others

Proverbs 27:17 "Iron sharpens iron, so one man sharpens another."

1 Corinthians 12:25 "...the members should have the same care for one another."

I need you. You need me. We need each other.

Eccl. 4:9-12 "Two are better than one because they have a good return for their labor. For if either of them falls, the one will lift up his companion. But woe to the one who falls when there is not another to lift him up. Furthermore, if two lie down together they keep warm, but how can one be warm alone? And if one can overpower him who is alone, two can resist him..."

The Three Facets of Accountability To Others

Facet #1. Defensive Accountability

"Before things get worse, I want to share my particular struggles with you."

James 5:16 "Therefore, confess your sins to one another, and pray for one another, so that you may be healed."

Facet #2. Consistent Accountability

"I need to meet with you regularly."

Heb 10:24-25 "...and let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds, not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another; and all the more, as you see the day drawing near."

stimulate = Greek: paroxusmos = provoke, stimulate, prod

Heb. 10:25 "...and all the more, as you see the day (of Christ's return) drawing near."

Facet #3. Offensive Accountability

"I am struggling right now. I need help immediately"

Heb. 3:13 But encourage one another day after day, as long as it is still called "Today," lest any one of you be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin.

The Spiritual Rescue Workers Creed

"And we urge you, brethren, admonish the unruly, encourage the fainthearted, help the weak, be patient with all men." (1 Thess. 5:14)

The Commandments for Caring for People

- Thou shalt continually admonish the unruly.
- Thou shalt continually encourage the fainthearted.
- Thou shalt continually help the weak.
- Thou shalt continually be patient with everyone.

Group Discussion Questions:

1. With whom (besides God) do you have an accountability relationship where you are free to share your struggles? How often does this occur?
2. What hinders you most from meeting with others for personal accountability?
3. What can you do next to build your own "testudo" accountability group (4-5 people of the same gender)?
4. What questions would you think should be asked in every accountability relationship?

PART III. Accountability to God

"My greatest thought is my accountability to God." (Daniel Webster)

Ecc. 4:12 "A cord of three strands is not quickly torn apart."

I need to be accountable to you. You need to be accountable to me. We need to be accountable to each other. We both need to be accountable to God.

Ps. 26:2 "Examine me, O Lord, and try me; test my mind and my heart."

Ps. 139:23-24 "Search me, O God, and know my heart; Try me and know my anxious thoughts, and see if there be any hurtful way in me, And lead me in the everlasting way."

1 Cor. 3:12-13 "Now if any man builds upon the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, each man's work will become evident; for the day will show it, because it is to be revealed with fire; and the fire itself will test the quality of each man's work."

If you and I were standing before Him today, what would we say? What do we think He would say?

"You were running well; who hindered you from obeying the truth?" (Galatians 5:7)

The Reasons for Relapse

Reason #1 Relapse happens when we get in a hurry.

Reason #2 Relapse happens when we ignore the whole process.

Reason #3 Relapse happens when we let pride get in the way.

Reason #4 Relapse happens when we revert back to self-help and willpower.

Reason #5 Relapse happens when we forget how much of a problem the old pattern really was.

Ephesians 4:11-16 "And He gave some *as* apostles, and some *as* prophets, and some *as* evangelists, and some *as* pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ; until we all attain to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ. As a result, we are no longer to be children, tossed here and there by waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, by craftiness in deceitful scheming; but speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in all *aspects* into Him who is the head, *even* Christ, from whom the whole body, being fitted and held together by what every joint supplies, according to the proper working of each individual part, causes the growth of the body for the building up of itself in love."

Group Discussion Questions:

1. Share about your personal process of keeping accountable to God.
2. Which of the five reasons for relapse is your greatest challenge?
3. Of the three arenas of accountability (self, others & God), which do you struggle with the most? In which area do you have the most victory?

© For Further Study: "The Purity War: A Biblical Guide to Living in an Immoral World" by Dr. James M. Cecy available at www.puritywar.com