

As iron sharpens iron, so one man sharpens another.

Proverbs 27:17 (NIV)

The Problem = Many start well, but few finish well.

The Answer = Biblical Accountability

- Definition: Enlisting the support of those who love me to help me keep my commitments to God.
- Its Power: Ecclesiastes 4:9-12 (NIV)

⁹Two are better than one, because they have a good return for their work: ¹⁰If one falls down, his friend can help him up. But pity the man who falls and has no one to help him up! ¹¹Also, if two lie down together, they will keep warm. But how can one keep warm alone? ¹²Though one may be overpowered, two can defend themselves. A cord of three strands is not quickly broken.

The Need = Why accountability is essential for spiritual success:

Five Reasons

1. Because we never outgrow the need for _____.

²⁴Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but only one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may win. ²⁵Everyone who competes in the games exercises self-control in all things. They then do it to receive a perishable wreath, but we an imperishable. ²⁶Therefore I run in such a way, as not without aim; I box in such a way, as not beating the air; ²⁷but I discipline my body and make it my slave, so that, after I have preached to others, I myself will not be disqualified.

1 Corinthians 9:24-27 (NASB)

2. Because past successes are no guarantee of _____.

¹For I do not want you to be unaware, brethren, that our fathers were all under the cloud and all passed through the sea; ²and all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea; ³and all ate the same spiritual food; ⁴and all drank the same spiritual drink, for they were drinking from a spiritual rock which followed them; and the rock was Christ. ⁵Nevertheless, with most of them God was not well-pleased; for they were laid low in the wilderness.

1 Corinthians 10:1-5 (NASB)

3. Because we constantly underestimate the power of our own _____.

⁶Now these things happened as examples for us, so that we would not crave evil things as they also craved. ⁷Do not be idolaters, as some of them were; as it is written, "The people sat to eat and drink and stood to play." ⁸Nor let us act immorally, as some of them did, and twenty-three thousand fell in one day. ⁹Nor let us try the Lord, as some of them did, and were destroyed by the serpents. ¹⁰Nor grumble, as some of them did, and were destroyed by the destroyer. ¹¹Now these things happened to them as an example, and they were written for our instruction, upon whom the ends of the ages have come.

1 Corinthians 10:6-11 (NASB)

4. Because we constantly overestimate our ability to handle _____.

¹²Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed that he does not fall.

1 Corinthians 10:12 (NASB)

5. Because we naively believe our struggles and temptations are _____.

¹³No temptation has overtaken you but such as is common to man; and God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will provide the way of escape also, so that you will be able to endure it.

1 Corinthians 10:13 (NASB)

Summary = "Therefore, my beloved, flee from _____!"

1 Corinthians 10:14 (NASB)

The Means = "How To" Develop Accountability in Relationships:

- It begins at _____ .
- In an atmosphere of _____ .
- It must be voluntary and by _____ .
- It must be _____, not generic.
- It must be _____, not sporadic.
- No more than _____ .

Discussion Questions

1. In what area of your life have you recently made a commitment to God?
2. From what you learned today, how could you get help in keeping this commitment?
3. Why is accountability so essential for all of us?
4. What specific steps will you take to become accountable so you can be a **finisher**?