

## SESSION 2

### REAL ACCOUNTABILITY

This week is about accountability ... wounds from a trusted friend. Perhaps you have someone in your life who is willing to walk through difficulty with you. Maybe your life lacks that type of solid friendship. To have a friend like that, you should be a friend like that.

THE WOUNDS OF A FRIEND ARE TRUSTWORTHY, BUT THE KISSES OF AN ENEMY ARE EXCESSIVE. (PROV. 27:6)

Welcome to week two. Begin this week by sharing portions of your individual study experience from week one. Use the following questions as your cue:

*What stood out most to you during last week's group discussion or devotional studies?*

*What spiritual evaluations or commitments did God lead you to make this past week?*

**AS A GROUP, READ THE FOLLOWING PSALM ALOUD. IS THIS A PRAYER YOU WOULD WILLINGLY PRAY?**

*Psalm 141:3-5a*

LORD, SET UP A GUARD FOR MY MOUTH; KEEP WATCH AT THE DOOR OF MY LIPS.

DO NOT LET MY HEART TURN TO ANY EVIL THING OR PERFORM WICKED ACTS WITH MEN WHO COMMIT SIN.

DO NOT LET ME FEAST ON THEIR DELICACIES.

LET THE RIGHTEOUS ONE STRIKE ME—IT IS AN ACT OF FAITHFUL LOVE; LET HIM REBUKE ME—IT IS OIL FOR MY HEAD; LET ME NOT REFUSE IT.

*One of the priceless benefits of Christian community is accountability. Take time as a group to define the term. What does it look like? How is it best utilized? How have you seen it be abused?*

Proverbs 27:5-6 says, "Better is open rebuke, than love that is concealed. Faithful are the wounds of a friend, but deceitful are the kisses of an enemy" (NASB).

This week's video clip paints a clear picture of Christian accountability in action.

Comforting disclaimer: The topic of accountability can be alarming to some in a group setting. Don't worry. No one will be put on the spot. This study takes the work of spiritual evaluation you did on your own last week and establishes guardrails to keep you on track for the new commitment(s) you made.

### WATCH

### MOVIE CLIP



As a group, take time to view the ["Weight Room" clip](#) (2:37). Read the summary statement below before watching the clip. Then take a few moments to discuss the clip using the questions provided.

## SUMMARY

Tony Jordan is far from God and making decisions some might equate with playing with fire. Fortunately for him, he has a friend willing to speak difficult truth, even when it's ill received. Michael is a genuine friend who understands much about the role of accountability. This scene depicts the importance of that value in the context of godly relationships.

## OPEN DISCUSSION

1. Explain a moment when you have been in Michael's sneakers. How was it easy or difficult for you to speak challenging words to someone you care about?
2. Consider a moment when you have found yourself in Tony's place. Did you have someone in your life that stepped up and confronted your sin? If so, how did you receive it?
3. How important is accountability in the context of Christian relationships? Why do you think that?

## ENGAGE

READ [PROVERBS 27:6](#) AGAIN OUT LOUD.

*What does this passage communicate about the idea of accountability?*

*How is it that wounds, strikes, and rebukes from a friend can be better than kisses?*

In [Psalm 141](#), David writes favorably about accountability. His desire is for God to steer his heart away from evil, specifically by means of righteous friends who will be bold enough to rebuke a king.

*As a group, read the following verses and discuss what each says about accountability.*

[Hebrews 3:13](#)

[Proverbs 27:17](#)

[James 5:19-20](#)

[Galatians 6:1-2](#)

[Ecclesiastes 4:9-12](#)

*In your opinion, which one of the above verses best describes the value of Christian accountability in your life?*

*Read [Ephesians 4:15](#). What does it mean to "speak truth in love"? How have you seen that in action?*

*Do you struggle more with speaking truth or speaking in love? What are some ways someone might balance both truth and love in their communication? How did Jesus balance both?*

Begin the process today as a group by reading the following prayer out loud.

*Heavenly Father, you are so worthy of all our attention and affection. Each of us depends on the power of Your Holy Spirit speaking to us. Each of us needs connection to other believers who will speak hard truth in love. Will You help us balance truth and love in our relationships? Will You help us practice true Christian accountability? We love You. We believe that You hear us and know our heart's desire to follow You well. In unity of heart and spirit we pray in Jesus' name. Amen.*

## DAY ONE

**"WE'VE BEEN FRIENDS FOR A LONG TIME, BUT SOME THINGS ARE JUST NONE OF YOUR BUSINESS."**

**~TONY JORDAN, WAR ROOM**

In your individual study this week, you will continue to press in to the value of accountability within your Christian community. While the Bible doesn't offer us a simple recipe for accountability with other believers, ingredients can be found throughout the Old and New Testaments.

### **READ [EPHESIANS 5:1-14](#).**

Take a moment to be vulnerable. Although this portion of your **WAR ROOM** study centers on the need for accountability with other believers, this time is just between you and God.

*What in your past or present resembles a fruitless "work of darkness" described by Paul in [Ephesians 5:11](#)? In an attitude of confession, compose a list below of things you need to get out of your life.*

*Read [1 John 1:8-9](#) and note specifically what it states as a benefit of confession before God.*

Now be honest. Is there another trusted believer who could have also composed your list? Someone who knows where your weaknesses and blind spots really are?

### **NOW READ [JAMES 5:16](#).**

*What benefit is there to sharing struggles with another believer?*

The Greek word for *healing* in this verse is *iaomai*. Of course, it means exactly what you think it means ... *cured*. But there is a secondary meaning that might communicate more accurately what confession does. It means *to be made whole*.<sup>1</sup> That is certainly what happens at the moment of salvation. It's also what can happen in our hearts when we walk in accountable connection to other believers. Wholeness. Healing.

*Have you experienced or witnessed the healing power of an accountability relationship with another believer? If yes, describe it in your notes.*

It's in darkness that someone screams, "none of your business." Ultimately, we were made for connections. The best picture of Christianity is when we walk in healthy and honest relationships so that others can see Christ by our love for one another.

*Read [Isaiah 29:15](#).*

Confessing brings forgiveness and healing.

Concealing brings grief and pain.

*Compare and contrast [Ephesians 5:11-12](#) and [Psalm 66:18](#).*

*How has unconfessed sin affected your prayer life?*

Do you have someone who holds you accountable for sinful patterns in your life? Think about who you might approach to begin an accountability relationship. Make plans to talk with them about beginning this sort of relationship.

*Secret sins lead to shame and unheard prayers. In closing, pray to the God who hears you because He has forgiven you. Thank Him for that. Then ask Him to bring accountability to walk in healing, wholeness, and the confidence that your prayers are heard.*

1. Thayer and Smith. "Greek Lexicon entry for laomai," *The NAS New Testament Greek Lexicon* [online] 1999 (cited 2 March 2015). Available from the Internet: [www.biblestudytools.com](http://www.biblestudytools.com).

## DAY TWO

"SINCE WE'VE BEEN FRIENDS FOR A LONG TIME, I'M NOT JUST GONNA WATCH YOUR MARRIAGE DIE. SO IF IT'S BLEEDING, I'M NOT JUST GONNA KEEP EATING MY SALAD."

~ MICHAEL, WAR ROOM

*There is a great responsibility in relationships. Look up and read each of the following verses. Note the aspect of responsibility present in each passage.*

[Ephesians 4:29-32](#)

[John 15:13](#)

[Job 6:14](#)

## [Proverbs 18:24](#)

Part of having a Christian community is having friends who will walk through difficulty with you and also hold you accountable to your commitment to Christ. We are never so vulnerable to sin than when we are alone. We need community to remind us to remain strong.

ONE WHO ISOLATES HIMSELF PURSUES SELFISH DESIRES; HE REBELS AGAINST ALL SOUND JUDGMENT. ([PROV. 18:1](#))

A good accountability partner can be trusted to keep a confidence. Closeness in relationships is built upon trust (see [Prov. 11:13](#)).

## [READ 1 CORINTHIANS 12:12-26.](#)

These verses talk about the diversity of gifts and talents among the body of believers. Instead of holding one person or one talent above the others, we are to work together to help one another grow toward Christlikeness.

*Think about the diversity of gifts and talents in your church and in your small group. List some of the gifts members of your community have that you do not possess.*

*In what ways have you seen your community use their gifts and talents to help someone when they were "bleeding"?*

*In what ways have you worked together to spur one another toward Christlikeness?*

This passage also talks about having the "same concern for each other" (v. 25). Paul goes on to say this means we are to suffer with those in our community who suffer. We are also to rejoice when those in our community are honored. This is often much easier said than done.

*How have you seen the church suffer with one another? How have you seen them rejoice with one another?*

*What are some steps you can take as a group to better use your talents and abilities to suffer and to rejoice with one another?*

*How can you take steps personally to suffer and rejoice with your community of believers?*

Without one another, the body of believers would be incomplete. God has given us each other so that we may grow to be more like Him. We do that best in community and accountability with one another.

*As you close this session of individual study, compose a prayer, praying specifically for each of the items below:*

- Offer praise to God for Jesus Christ, the Messiah.
- Thank God for your network of brothers and sisters in Christ.
- Ask Him to strengthen your church family.
- If you have a specific brother or sister in Christ you would name as an accountability partner, thank God for that person.
- If you do not have an accountability partner, ask God to send you one.

• Ask God to strengthen your ability to speak truth in love to friends who depend on you for accountability.

• Ask God to continue to reveal areas of weakness in your life that need a greater focus on Him.

• Thank Him for hearing and providing.

### DAY THREE

"SEE YOU IN CHURCH."

~TONY JORDAN, WAR ROOM

"I NEED TO SEE THE CHURCH IN YOU, BRO."

~MICHAEL, WAR ROOM

*What do you suppose it means to "see the church" in someone? Perhaps the question can be made clearer this way: What does it mean to live in a way that reflects Christ, as His church? Journal your response.*

The Bible doesn't use the word "accountability" directly, but it repeatedly describes accountable relationships using other biblical virtues and admonitions.

I AM THE LORD YOUR GOD, WHO BROUGHT YOU OUT OF THE LAND OF EGYPT SO THAT YOU WOULD NOT BE THEIR SLAVES, AND I BROKE THE BARS OF YOUR YOKE AND MADE YOU WALK UPRIGHT. ([LEV. 26:13](#), NASB)

The word *erect* is the Hebrew word *komemeeyooth* and is written as *freely* or *freedom* in other biblical translations. Uprightness is another

word for integrity.<sup>1</sup> While sin can enslave us (see [John 8:34](#)), helping each other to avoid sin actually brings greater freedom. Being in accountable relationships with other believers helps us not only to walk in integrity, but to avoid the consequences of foolish decisions while enjoying the benefits and of doing the right thing.

THE HIGHWAY OF THE UPRIGHT IS TO DEPART FROM EVIL; HE WHO WATCHES HIS WAY PRESERVES HIS LIFE. ([PROV. 16:17](#))

Being accountable to God because of the great gift of freedom He has afforded us in Christ prompts us toward obedience. Our accountability to one another is a reflection of that freedom lived responsibly.

*Look up the verses below. Note what they say explicitly about freedom. Then record what is implied about responsibility.*

[Psalm 119:45](#)

[2 Corinthians 3:17](#)

[Galatians 5:1](#)

[Romans 6:22](#)

The root mark of a believer in Jesus Christ is freedom. The greatest joy of any church, the collective body of Christ, should be the freedom that we have from the consequences of sin.

Walking in freedom from sin doesn't indicate freedom from responsibility. In fact, our freedom in Christ creates responsibility for our actions. Fortunately for us, we have the power of the Holy Spirit working in our lives transforming us into living, breathing images of Jesus.

Even if someone is not in our accountability group, both in [Matthew 18:15-18](#) and [Luke 17:3](#), Jesus communicates that we should go to other believers privately when needed and hold them accountable when they are living in sin. While this is never fun, it is a necessary part of us helping each other stay right with the Lord.

*Finally, close in prayer continuing to ask God to strengthen existing relationships or to birth new ones for the purpose of holding you accountable to His Word. The goal? So that others may see the beauty and integrity of Christ and the glory of God in you and your church.*

1. Brown, Driver, Briggs, and Gesenius.. "Hebrew Lexicon entry for Qowmemyuwth," *The NAS Old Testament Hebrew Lexicon* [online] (cited 2 March 2015). Available from the Internet: [www.biblestudytools.com](http://www.biblestudytools.com).

### SESSION 3

#### LIVING THE GOSPEL

This week is about gospel power. The gospel doesn't just save us from hell. Christ's kingdom is one where the inhabitants' lives are transformed daily to look more like Him. Scripture calls this sanctification. So it's not only by God's grace that we are saved. It is by God's grace that we are changed.