

The Principle of Accountability

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[0 : 00] We continue in our study in Galatians. This week you'll notice on the back of your outline, Evelyn was able to put the different principles each week for the chapters.

I'll tell you what, if you'd like more information, you can email me. The easy one is [timgentry at aol.com](mailto:timgentry@aol.com). [Timgentry at aol.com](mailto:timgentry@aol.com).

Send me an email and I'll be happy to send you the outline. Maybe some of the blanks you didn't get filled in or whatever, I'll be able to send those to you. And I think I even have some extra stuff I could send you. But anything that would help you continue to study the word and move forward with the Lord.

Many times to move forward, we need to look backward. And that's what Memorial Day is all about. Throughout the Bible, you see a lot of repetition, especially in the Old Testament.

They are remembering. They are remembering the many, many faithful things the Lord has done. Because we have a tendency to forget.

[1 : 24] And we need to remember. Thankful for those that have served. Thankful for those that have sacrificed. Thankful for those that have died, that have suffered.

So that we can have our freedom. Each week we read in the paper. Maybe if you don't read the paper anymore, maybe you're watching the news or on the internet or wherever you're getting your information.

Hopefully you're getting the true news and not the fake news. But we are constantly reading in different situations, different nations where people don't have the freedom.

To worship the Lord as they see fit. And we've got a great gift of that. And are thankful for that. Also, a time of just remembering loved ones that have gone on.

My side of the family gathers at Flower Mound each Memorial Day. Anybody? Well, I guess there's probably a few Flower Mounds around. This is just east of Lawton. Anybody from Lawton in here?

[2 : 28] That's where I was born. And my great-grandfather and family homesteaded in that area of Lawton. You know, they talk about the land run.

And at Mary's School, is that part of the curriculum for the children? Talk about the land runs. And, you know, I always had this picture growing up that they lined up on the border of Kansas and just took off.

And obviously that wasn't it at all. It was, you know, more around Guthrie in the central part. And they did that a couple of times. It didn't work out so well. So then they went to a couple of lotteries.

And one of them was in the Lawton area. And my great-great-grandfather, get that right there, pulled up a lot there.

And so anyway, my parents are gathering today at Flower Mound. There's a, they have a Sunday school at Flower Mound. And so there will be a service. And they'll put flowers and flags on the graves.

[3 : 27] And they don't do all that they used to, but they still are doing something. And so it's always a time of remembering. But as we remember, we also need to move forward.

Those that have gone before us, just living their lives, those that did sacrifice and die for us, it was that we could be free to move forward, to live.

And though not all actually knew that, the freedom of worship, Christ has provided us the freedom of our souls.

And so because of that great gift that we've been given, we must embrace the Lord. We must embrace our freedom. And we must move forward.

And chapter 4 of Galatians is where we find ourselves today. And I, as I prayed through this and tried to identify a principle for each chapter, this one I saw as the principle of accountability.

[4 : 31] Paul is challenging the churches of Galatia. He's being very direct with them. And so let me read through the passage. And then I'll want to make a couple of notes that you'll find there in your outline.

Galatians 4, beginning in verse 1. I'm reading on the New International Version, the 84 version, that if you've got another one, I think you'll be able to follow along with me.

What I'm saying is that as long as the heir is a child, he is no different from a slave, although he owns the whole estate. Paul is continuing where we left off last week about the idea of adoption. Becoming a child. Becoming a son. Becoming a daughter. A son of God. And as I read the quotes out of the book Knowing God by Packard, that he just brought to light and freshness to me this idea of adoption.

Obviously, it's built upon justification, but it's such a special relationship, a growth and development of that relationship out of that justification.

[5 : 46] And so he continues with this idea of the parent and the child. Even though he is a child, even though he is an heir, he is a slave until the right time, until the timing is right when that estate becomes his, becomes hers.

And then verse 2, he's subject to guardians, trustees, until the time set by the father. So also, when we were children, we were in slavery under the basic principles of the world.

But when the time had fully come, God sent his son, born of a woman, born under law, to redeem those under law that they, that we might receive the full rights of sons.

Because you are sons, God sent the spirit of his son into our hearts, the spirit who calls out, Abba, Father.

So you are no longer a slave, but a son or daughter. And since you are a son, God has made you also an heir.

[7 : 12] This is a key point. He just keeps coming at this argument from a different side and a different perspective.

They're all talking about the same argument, but he'll bring out a different illustration to help us. He was, as he was trying to help the Galatians, the spirit wrote it to help us today to get a grip on this. And so here we can see this idea that God is our father. So you're no longer a slave, but a son. And since you are a son, God has made you also an heir.

Think about that. How many times have you read a book? History book, a biography, autobiography. Here in Bartlesville, I see Phillips everywhere.

I grew up, you know, knowing about gas stations. But then I went to Philmont and hiked around in the mountains there. And I got to know a little bit more.

[8 : 22] Well, it's not just a gas station. There was a person. There was a family. There's a corporation. And so now I, everywhere we go in town, I see Phillips this and Phillips that.

And so here you've got a legacy of, you know, wow. Now, it wouldn't have been neat to be a part of the Phillips family.

Wow. You know, one of the wealthiest, one of the most well-known and all this and that. Wow.

What would that have been like? We are heirs of God.

What would that be like if we really understood that? Verse 8. You're not observing special days and months and seasons and years.

You're not doing that, are you? That's really what he's saying there. I fear for you that somehow I've wasted my efforts on you. I plead with you, brothers.

[9 : 48] Become like me. You see where this accountability is coming in here? He's challenging them. Be like me, for I became like you.

You've done me no wrong, per se. As you know, it was because of an illness that I first preached the gospel to you. Even though my illness was a trial to you, you did not treat me with contempt or scorn.

Instead, you welcomed me as if I were an angel of God, as if I were Christ Jesus himself. What has happened to you?

I can testify that. If you could have done you, you would have torn out your eyes and given them to me.

Have I now become your enemy by telling you the truth? You know, Paul refers several times about the thorn in the flesh.

[10:49] He asked God to remove it. He prayed to God that it would be removed. I guess he didn't pray hard enough, huh?

Maybe he didn't fast along with praying. Maybe that's why it wasn't answered. Paul knew why it was answered.

He said, in my weakness, I can know strength.

And that's why it wasn't answered. Later on, here, chapter 6, he talks about, see, I write this in my own hand.

And it's assumed it was just that last little bit. He had a scribe to write. Well, today, we've got all kinds of helps. Mostly because we're lazy or it helps us do it faster or better or sharper or English better.

[11:59] Sarah, Sarah, well, he had a scribe, we assume, because he couldn't see well enough to write like he needed to.

And so we understand that that's what he meant here, that the people of Galatia, they understood his eye problem. And he said, you would have given me one of your own eyes if you could have.

That's how close we were. And now, what's happened to all of that? Verse 17. Those people.

Now, here it comes up again. Those people. Normally, when I'm talking in a, maybe I'm doing a workshop on communication or maybe some kind of marriage counseling.

And I would bring this up. You know, when you start talking about the other person, that person, those people, you know, you're separating things.

[13:08] And that's usually not going to lead to reconciliation. It's leading to further apart. But here, Paul is using this just to show exactly what should happen.

You should be separated from those people. Those people. Those people. They've come up before and lately. The Judaizers. The Jewish people that have embraced Jesus.

Have professed faith in Jesus. And yet, they are wanting to go back to the law. They're wanting to bring that law and all that the law means.

All the traditions. And primarily and really chiefly identified through the circumcision. And so, Paul says in verse 17, those people are zealous to win you over but for no good.

What they want is to alienate you from us so that you may be zealous for them. It's fine to be zealous provided the purpose is good.

[14:18] And to be so always and not just when I'm with you. But my dear children, for whom I again am in pains of childbirth until Christ is formed in you.

How I wish I could be with you now and change my tone. Because I am perplexed about you. Tell me, you who want to be under the law.

Are you not aware what the law says? For it is written that Abraham had two sons. One by the slave woman and the other by the free woman.

Now, we've seen Abraham before. We've seen several different references to the law. Here, he's taken another tack. Another illustration. And the illustration is the slave woman and the free woman.

The slave woman is Hagar. And she represents the law. That's what he's saying here. She represents the law. The free woman represents grace.

[15:36] Represents Jesus. The new covenant. The old covenant. The new covenant. So, let's go through here and see how this plays out. Verse 23.

His son by the slave woman was born in the ordinary way. Just read the law each step. But his son by the free woman was born as the result of a promise.

The promise. The covenant. Faith. Grace. A personal relationship with God.

God as your heavenly father. Verse 24. These things may be taken figuratively. For the women represent two covenants.

One covenant is from Mount Sinai. And bears children who are to be slaves. This is Hagar. Now, Hagar stands for Mount Sinai in Arabia.

[16:42] And corresponds to the present city of Jerusalem. Because she is in slavery with her children. Now, don't get confused.

Because there are. Maybe I should do this here. Been watching a bunch of girls softball games. So, this is what they do out. There are two Jerusalems. There's old Jerusalem.

And there's going to be a new Jerusalem. Now, I'm not talking about some kind of Middle East peace plan here. You know, there are two Jerusalems. And so, the present city of Jerusalem.

That's the old covenant. And that's the law. Because she's in slavery with her children. Verse 26. But the Jerusalem that is above is free.

And she is our mother. For it is written. Be glad, O barren woman, who bears no children. Break forth and cry loud, you who have no labor pains.

[17 : 41] Because more are the children of the desolate woman than of her who has a husband. Now, you brothers, like Isaac, are children of promise.

At that time, the son born in the ordinary way persecuted the son born by the power of the Spirit. It is the same now. But what does the scripture say?

Get rid of the slave woman and her son. For the slave woman's son will never share in the inheritance with the free woman's son. Therefore, brothers, we are not children of the slave woman, but of the free woman.

Galatians chapter 4. Really, this chapter has two halves.

The first half is where I'm going to make the applications of the accountability. Because that's where Paul's challenging him with that.

[18 : 43] The second half is just, again, another illustration of this problem they're having with the old covenant and the new covenant. So let me then share a couple of things here.

Three things about the principle of accountability. Number one, find a mature model.

If you're going to understand the principle of accountability. Now, and I say understand it, and you need to embrace it. We don't always like to embrace accountability, do we? Accountability.

Accountability is a biblical principle. Accountability is something that helps us grow. Something that helps us stay healthy. Discipline.

Pruning. All of that is built into accountability. And so if you're going to build accountability in your life individually, as a church, as you move forward, the first step is to find a mature Christian model.

[19 : 48] Look in verses 12 through 15. And then 19 through 20. In verse 12, he says, I plead with you, brothers, become like me.

For I became like you. Verse 19, my dear children, for whom I am again in the pains of childbirth, until Christ is formed in you. How I wish I could be with you now, and change my tone, because I'm perplexed by you.

Paul considered himself a model. He saw that as part of his calling. He saw that as what it was to be a spiritually mature Christian believer.

And so he is challenging the people to follow his example. Now sometimes, we might think, whoa, whoa, whoa, whoa, whoa, wait.

Wait a minute. We're not supposed to be following anyone but Jesus Christ here. We're not supposed to be calling anybody Father. We are brothers and sisters in Christ.

[20 : 53] We have what we call the priesthood of the believer. It's a good theological phrase. It's the priesthood of the believer that we all have access. We all have equal access to God through our personal mediator, Jesus Christ.

Christ. And yet, in Matthew 5, 16, Jesus said, we are to let our light shine. Why should we let our light shine?

So that other people can see what a Christian looks like. So that other people can see what patience and joy and love and grace and mercy, they can see it.

That they can follow it. And so really, we all should be models. But the principle of accountability is, we need to find a mature Christian model.

Paul mentions this elsewhere. In 1 Corinthians 4, verse 14, he said, I'm not writing this to shame you, but to warn you, as my dear children.

[22 : 06] Even though you have 10,000 guardians in Christ, you do not have many fathers. For in Christ Jesus, I became your father through the gospel. Therefore, I urge you, imitate me.

In 1 Corinthians 11, verse 1, he said it this way, follow my example, as I follow the example of Christ.

Then in Philippians, he challenged the church at Philippi, in verse 17 of chapter 3, join with others in following my example, brothers, and take note of those who live according to the pattern we gave you.

I bet some of you already have some Christian models. How'd you pick the last Bible you bought? You probably asked somebody what kind of Bible they use. Or maybe if you didn't ask them, you just knew you, you know, in their Sunday school class, or maybe the preacher preaching, or

whatever.

[23 : 13] Maybe your dad, your mother, you just, you saw it, you heard it, you knew, well that's the version they're using, or that's, you know, we're all looking for something, you know, whether we want a leather Bible, or we need a large print Bible, or we want one with wide margins so we can make notes, or we want a study Bible.

You probably asked somebody, what kind of Bible do you use? And we go on and on in that. Last Sunday, we went out to eat, and we're sitting there, and I'm across from Tom, and Mike pops up, and Mike comes down to the end of the table, and he's got a question that he's wanting to ask Tom about the Bible.

He wants to hear what Tom has to say, and I would say that that's be a model. So you've got models, you just need to make sure that you honor that model by saying thank you.

You need to stay close to that model. You don't put them on a pedestal. You don't worship that model, but you are, as you're praying, and as you're discerning, and others are doing the same, you are following Christ in a way by following the model as they are following Christ.

In the healthiest way possible, we need models. That's why the church was created to gather together and encourage one another.

[24 : 52] We'll talk some more about the church next week or the week after. The second thing in building accountability in your life, you need to give permission for direct questions.

You know what the person does that doesn't give permission for direct questions? And there are many ways to do this. Some of the ways, one way tonight allows somebody to give you a direct question, when you see them coming in that door, you go out that door.

You're hiding because you know they might ask me. They might check with me. It could be anything, but you see them coming that way and you're going that way.

Other times, you just change the subject. You deflect. There are many, many ways to keep somebody from asking you direct questions.

But I'm telling you, to be a growing, mature Christian, you need to give permission. Not just that you allow it. You need to give permission for people to challenge you and to ask you and to stir you.

[26 : 11] Not stir the pot, but just, you know, we see this in verses 8-11, verses 16-18.

I know I read this. Let me just read a little bit. Verse 8. Formally, when you did not know God, you were slaves to those who by nature are not gods. But now that you know God or rather known by God, how is it that you are turning back to those weak and miserable principles?

There's a question right there. Continuing, do you wish to be enslaved by them all over again?

There's another question. Verse 10. You are observing special days and months and seasons and years.

There's, we'll put that in the statement category. I fear for you that somehow I've wasted my efforts on you. How, have I now become your enemy by telling you the truth?

There's another question. It's fine to be zealous provided the purpose is good and to be so always and not just when I'm with you. Two statements and three questions right there.

[27 : 20] And they're pretty direct questions. Paul is challenging them and we need to allow people to challenge us. How's our quiet time going?

When's the last time we've shared with someone else about Jesus? Are, are we good steward with our money? Are we tithing?

I mean, there's all kinds of questions. You could get into, you know, if you know somebody's struggle with a particular area, particular issue, you could ask them about that.

It's about the principle of accountability. it leads to spiritual growth. Proverbs 27, 17 says, as iron sharpens iron, so one man sharpens another.

Hebrews 4, 12, I shared this last week, for the word of God is quick and powerful and sharper than a two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder soul and spirit and the joints and marrow and as a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

[28 : 29] Getting into the word of God just cuts to the quick of who we really are and what God is really up to in our lives.

Number three, avoid isolation from God and from your model, from your mentor, from the one that's discipling you, the one that's encouraging you.

Avoid isolation. Verse 17, it's right there. Those people are zealous to win you over but for no good. What they want is to alienate. that's what they want.

You know why they want to alienate you? Because the devil wants to alienate you from God.

[29 : 46] what happens when we isolate ourselves. That's right.

That's right. We start getting weird thoughts. Now we have the, we usually have the weird thoughts. We hear the voices but we're, when we're in the word of God, it chases those voices away.

It, what's the word, it combats those voices. When we're around other people, when we're singing like we, when we're singing the truth, when we're lifting up, when we're praising God, when we're praying, when we're laughing together, when we're serving together, when we're crying together, God uses the spirit to bond us and strengthen us.

I mentioned, you know, sometimes I'm down and Mary's up. Sometimes I'm up and Mary's down and it works the same way in the church. But if God can isolate us, we stop attending.

Now, you know, I don't want to say we have to be up here four times a week. I think we get a little misdirected when we think anything that happens for the kingdom of God happens within the walls of this church.

[31 : 21] But still, we need to be gathering and worshiping and studying so that we can then go out and serve and minister and penetrate and be the light and be the salt and impact this community and this state and this nation and world.

But Satan tries to isolate us because when we get isolated, he can attack us and we don't have as many tools to attack back.

Ecclesiastes 4 that Dan read this morning. Beautiful passage on that. Two are better than one because they have a good reward for their labor.

The one fall, his fellow can lift him up, but woe to him who is alone when he falleth, for he is not another to help him up.

Again, if two lie together, they have heat, but how can one be warm alone? And if one prevail against him, two shall withstand him.

[32 : 35] The threefold cord is not easily broken. You've tried that before. Man, that thing's tough. That's God saying we need to stick together.

We need to hang together. We need to fellowship together together because this principle of accountability is we need a spiritual mentor. We need to be transparent and say, ask me those difficult questions because I know that you love me.

I know that you will encourage your praying for me and you want the best for me. And we need to stick together because that's how God has designed us to be strong in going out and serving and to be strong in defeating the temptations of Satan.

Moving forward with God. You need to move forward individually and move forward together as a congregation. Remember, remember the good days.

Sometimes you'll remember the bad days. But remember the promise. Remember the covenant.

That's the key to moving forward.

[34 : 12] .