

Standing Together

Lesson 1—Accountability 101

OVERVIEW

Background Bible Passage: Galatians 2:11-15

Key Verse: Ecclesiastes 4:9-12—“Two are better than one, because they have a good return for their work: If one falls down, his friend can help him up. But pity the man who falls and has no one to help him up! Also, if two lie down together, they will keep warm. But how can one keep warm alone? Though one may be overpowered, two can defend themselves. A cord of three strands is not quickly broken.”

Items Needed: *A phone book and 3 to 4 sticks or dial rods for each class.*

BEFORE CLASS

Preparation: *Your preparation will determine the direction your class will go.*

- Who keeps you accountable to living for Christ?
- How do you help others stay accountable to their faith?
- Study and prepare your lesson so that you are familiar with the teaching outline.
- Use the Contact 1-2-3 system to the right to follow up on students who have recently missed Sunday School.
- Pray for each student by name.
- Challenge students who have made recent decisions to continue following and growing in Christ.

CONTACT 1-2-3 SYSTEM

The first time a student is absent, give them a call. Following the second absence, send them a postcard. The third week they are absent, pay them a visit.

Think about it: What does it say to a student when they miss multiple weeks in a row and are never contacted? It says, “It really doesn’t matter if you’re here or not.”

Small things communicate great messages. Let the three “small” things above communicate that you care and miss your students when they are absent.

OPENING ACTIVITY

Discussion

- *What does it mean to keep someone accountable to Christ? (It means that you support and encourage them to continue following Christ and help them when they don't.)*
- *In what ways has another believer helped you stay accountable to Christ?*

BIBLE LESSON

Turn to Galatians 2.

SAY: In the beginning of the New Testament church there was a controversy as to whether or not Gentiles (who were non-Jews) had to become Jews and follow the Jewish laws in order to accept Christ and be saved. There were certain among the Jews who had taught that to become a Christian, a person would have to be circumcised and follow a Jewish way of life. The Christian leaders met together and agreed that God had approved the mission to the Gentiles, had appointed Paul as an apostle to them, and that they didn't have to convert to a Jewish way of living. But listened to what happened when Peter (also called Cephas) visited a Gentile church at Antioch.

Choose volunteers to read—Read Galatians 2:11-15

SAY: When Peter arrived at the church at Antioch he found Jewish and Gentile Christians fellowshiping together at mealtimes without regard to Jewish dietary laws. In the book of Acts we find that God had given Peter a vision that had taught him that this was all right (Acts 10). This was a great testimony to the unity of Jews and Gentiles in Christ. But a breach occurred when some Jews arrived from Jerusalem who were shocked at Peter's conduct.

- *How did Peter change his actions when the other Jews arrived? (He gradually stopped eating with the Gentiles.)*
- *Why did he act this way? (Because of fear.)*
- *Has fear about what others would think or say ever changed how you acted or stopped you from doing something you knew was right?*

Consider the following story:

One day Bob saw another student who was known as a “nerd” eating by himself in the cafeteria. Although Bob could see the good in sitting with him and knew it was the right thing to do, he was afraid of what others might think or say. As a result, he left him alone and sat somewhere else.

- *Is it wrong when you know to do something good, but don't do it? (The Bible says in James 4:17, “Therefore, to one who knows the right thing to do, and does not do it, to him it is sin.”)*

- *How did Peter's actions lead others astray?* (The Bible says that “the rest of the Jews joined him in hypocrisy” and that even other strong Christian leaders such as Barnabas were caught up in it.)
- *In what way did Paul keep Peter accountable?* (Paul “opposed him to his face.” He confronted his sin and since what Peter had initiated had caused a public scandal, it therefore deserved a public response.)
- *What are other ways you can keep someone accountable?*

The ten keys to help keep someone accountable*

- (1) Pray for the other person.
 - (2) Look for ways to encourage them in their walk with Christ.
 - (3) Be there for them when they need a friend.
 - (4) Share Scripture passages with them.
 - (5) Share with them what God is doing in your life (But never by way of bragging on yourself—All your boasting should always be in Christ.)
 - (6) Ask if they're spending one-on-one time with Christ every day.
 - (7) Ask what Bible verses they're memorizing and where they've been reading in the Bible.
 - (8) Ask how their prayer time is going each day and what they are praying for.
 - (9) Ask about what God has been doing in their lives and what He has been teaching them.
 - (10) Be willing to ask them if there is sin in their life and to confront them if you see them begin to fall away from the Lord.*
- *What are some ways you can help someone keep you accountable? There are three keys to letting someone keep you accountable to your faith in Christ—What do you think they are?*

The three keys to letting others keep you accountable*

- (1) Be Open—Be open about what you are struggling with and where you are in your walk with Christ.
- (2) Be Honest—Don't try to hide or cover up what is going on in your life. Be honest about how you feel and with what you are struggling.
- (3) Be Willing—Be willing to confront your own short-comings and to remove or deal with any sin in your life.

KEY VERSE

Choose a volunteer to read—Ecclesiastes 4:9-12

- *How do these verses fit into today's lesson on accountability?* (The whole idea behind being accountable and keeping others accountable is that two together are

stronger than one alone. God has called us to help each other live the Christian life.)

ILLUSTRATION #1—Many together are stronger than one alone.

Take a phone book and give each of your students one page. Ask them to tear it. Not a problem. Anyone can tear one page, but then let each of them try to tear the entire book. When many are together it is stronger than one by itself.

ILLUSTRATION #2—Two are stronger than one.

Take a dial rod or a stick and let a student break it. Then take two or three of the same stick and see if anyone can break them together. Emphasize the point of the verses above, that two or three together are stronger than one.

KEY: We want to encourage you to be thinking about someone in our youth group who can keep you accountable and with whom you can be accountable. Next week we will talk some about the characteristics of a good accountability partner, but for now, just start giving it some thought.

WRAP IT UP

SAY: Don't blow off the importance of accountability. There's a reason that Jesus sent His disciples out two by two, that Paul always traveled with at least one partner, that God sent the prophet Nathan to David to keep him accountable, that God used the prophet Samuel to keep King Saul accountable, etc. There is more strength in two or three than one alone.

Prayer Time

Pray specifically that God will build relationships in our youth group even beyond age and grade so that they can effectively keep each other accountable to living for Christ.

List prayer requests below and on the back of this page and pray for your students throughout the week. *Ask if any of your students want to pray today.*

*Taken from an old Lifeway Resources youth curriculum—Issue and number not known.