

H.A.B.I.T.S. Accountability: Making Time for Life, 6/18/17

Accountability- The shared responsibility for one another's spiritual health within Christ's household that results in mutual spiritual progress.

Why we need it? The reason we need accountability is because we all tend to drift.

This only happens in relationships where you are building trust and getting to know one another enough to know how to speak truth with love, this is an investment...a spiritual discipline. So we talked about what that looks like and how to pursue that.

Today we are going to address one of the biggest challenges to developing the spiritual habit of accountability: **Making Room for Relationships in our Lives.**

Closet Illustration.

[Picture of Cluttered Closet]

It's OK for our closet to look like that but it's not OK for our lives to look like that. 15 minutes late for everything, running from one thing to the next... 10-15 hr. work days, not season of life anymore, this is a lifestyle, @work feel guilty and should be @home, @home and all you can think about is work, waiting until kids go to bed, spouse to go to bed so you can work some more... single saying yes to everything, chasing one thing after another...you feel the chaos and the stress. And this is you somewhere in there...**(insert picture)**.

Some of you are retired, not too active anymore, maybe this used to describe your life but your closet is a bit emptier now... is there anything in this message for me? 1) Possible to have lots of room but still missing out on what is most important. 2) Younger generations need help with this, learn from you, wisdom...

What if I told you there is a way forward where your lives can feel more like this? **(insert picture)** Not based on personality but on priority.

Illustration of closet...

How does a closet go from clutter to clean? At least three things have to happen.

- 1) Determine what is most important because there is limited space.
- 2) Reorganize based on your priorities.
- 3) Commit to maintaining breathing room

I would submit to you that these same three steps are critical if we are going to make room for accountability.

1) Determine what is most important because there is limited TIME.

Psalm 90

Written by Moses. Very likely that this was a Psalm that became part of Israel's liturgy...singing and reciting. Moses was old by now, he lived so much life- from a

prince in Egypt to an escaped convict, to a shepherd for 40 years, to a deliverer of God's people, to leading Israel in the desert. Moses writes this prayer. And this is a lament because God's hand of discipline is on Israel. They had been rebellious, self-seeking... they had been wasting their time because they didn't trust God and so they are wandering in the desert... Moses is looking back as an old man reflecting on the brevity of life...how short it is.

Psalm 90:2-6

*Before the mountains were born
or you brought forth the whole world,
from everlasting to everlasting you are God.*

³ *You turn people back to dust,
saying, "Return to dust, you mortals."*

⁴ *A thousand years in your sight
are like a day that has just gone by,
or like a watch in the night.*

⁵ *Yet you sweep people away in the sleep of death—
they are like the new grass of the morning:*

⁶ *In the morning it springs up new,
but by evening it is dry and withered.*

v. 10 *Our days may come to seventy years,
or eighty, if our strength endures;
yet the best of them are but trouble and sorrow,
for they quickly pass, and we fly away.*

Life is so quick... you don't feel that way when you are young, but you do when you are old...where has the time gone?

v. 12 *Teach us to number our days,
that we may gain a heart of wisdom.*

We have very limited time on this earth and God is the one who sets our time.

Job 14:5 *Man's days are determined; you have decreed the number of his months and have set limits he cannot exceed.*

Gain a heart of wisdom...There is a direct correlation to using your time wisely and remembering that God has numbered your days. Here it is- looking to the giver of your days to determine what is most important. He teaches us... not our work, not our boss, not our kids, education system, culture... God! When we look to God to speak into how to use our time we will gain a heart of wisdom!

What's most important to God? What are the most important things in life? If you are a Christian you don't have the guess at this. It's not up to interpretation. Jesus says very clearly in

Matthew 22:36-40. Lawyer asks Jesus this question:

³⁶ *"Teacher, which is the most important commandment in the law of Moses?"*

In other words, what should be at the top of our priorities in life? Of all the things we could be spending our time doing, following what is most important?

Jesus replied, [To achieve your career goals, to live a life of ease and comfort, to make six figures, making sure your kids are in every activity, no that's not what he says] "You must love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, and all your mind.' This is the first and greatest commandment.

A second is equally important: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' The entire law and all the demands of the prophets are based on these two commandments."

In other words the things that should be the greatest priority of our lives are **relational!** Our relationship with God, our relationship with those God has put into our lives (spouse, kids, parents, friends, relationship with those in your church family).

Bronnie Ware, The Top Five Regrets of the Dying, a hospice nurse and spent time with the dying, the last 12 weeks of their lives and interviewed people who were passing about their regrets. Most of these had to do with relationships. I want to read two of them and her comments to you.

Wish I hadn't worked so hard.

"This came from every male patient that I nursed. They missed their children's youth and their partners companion. Women also spoke of this regret, but as most were from an older generation, many of the female patients had not been breadwinners.

All of the men I nursed deeply regretted spending so much of their lives on the treadmill of a work existence."

I wish I had stayed in touch with my friends.

Often they would not truly realize the full benefits of old friends until their dying weeks...Many had become so caught up in their own lives that they had let golden friendships slip by over the years.

There were many deep regrets about not giving friendships the time and effort that they deserved. It is common for anyone in a busy lifestyle to let friendships slip. It all comes down to love and relationships in the end. That is all that remains in the final weeks, love and relationships.

God has wired us for to find the most meaning and value in relationships, with a relationship with him to be most important. GOSPEL.

2) Reorganize your life around your priorities.

Luke 12 Jesus tells a story about a man that was caught up in the wrong priorities. His priorities were on building his earthly kingdom...more money, more stuff, more comfort...living the American dream. He had the stuff that we are told is most important and that was his organizing principle around which he build his life. And God tells him... you fool, this very night your soul is being taken and you can't take this with you!

Jesus concludes this teaching this famous statement:

Luke 12:31 Seek first his kingdom and these things will be added to you.

Jesus lived this- **Mark 11:35 Rose early, desolate place to pray.** He often would seek his Father first even though there were many people who needed to be healed, a lot of work to be done. This was his priority. Spent unhurried time with his disciples. And so Jesus here in Luke is saying, "Prioritize your life around what is most important and trust God for what you need!"

Here's the rub... deep down, I think we know that our relationship with God is most important. That our relationship with family, friends, our church are most important... and yet we don't live that way.

Why do we live this way? Fear

-Fear missing out...kids not being in every activity, money, lifestyle

-Fear Falling behind...keep up with everyone,

-Not mattering...crave significance, power, influence.

If fear is the organizing principle of your life- you are enslaved and controlled by it. And it is impossible to trust God and be controlled by fear. This leads us to the third part...

3) Commit to maintaining breathing room

Breathing room is the space between full capacity and self-limitation.

Why is this so important? Some of us are so type A...so driven, that we think it is borderline sinful to not completely maximize and schedule every moment of time. On to the next thing, WSJ while eating breakfast, Writing emails while we are driving, checking Facebook on the toilet...

But here's the reality- the most important things in life- relationships happen in the breathing room. Not in the tyranny of the urgent, not in the grind of your job, the constant checking of your email, 60+ hour work... Go ahead and try to have an

intimate relationship with your spouse running it a meeting schedule. Not going to work. "I have 15 minutes...go!"

God has built us to have breathing room. Built us to have rest...biblical word is Sabbath. God built rest into the rhythm of our lives... daily, weekly, yearly...

History of Jewish people as slaves...no days off. Work society.

Sabbath- Top ten rules for you. This was staggering. They had to take a day off.

-God understands our wiring... trust God. But what if... trust me.

-The Sabbath was an expression of faith.

-People weren't created for the Sabbath, but the Sabbath was created for people.

Goes back to creative order.

Are you living by faith or by fear?

Some of you are a little frustrated with me right now, that sounds very ideal, you pastors don't live in the real world... my experience.

Do I need to quit my job?

What does it look like to live by faith as we build breathing room?

What will you stop doing?

Creighton... intentionally decided how they wanted to live

Set time in the morning aside

Set a day aside

Fast from technology

Teach us to number our days so we may gain a heart of wisdom...