

H.A.B.I.T.S. – Accountability: The Key to Spiritual Progress, 6/4/17

Do you ever experience the gap between what you know and what you do? Have you ever found that new knowledge and information don't seem to translate into a new way of life?

Isn't this true is? We live in an age where we have access to and know more about healthy eating and exercise than ever. Is it possible to know all the right foods to eat, all the wrong foods to avoid, all the right exercises to stay healthy and fit...and yet continue to drink soda and eat at McDonalds? To drive by the gym every day? Of course it is. Why? Because we can't merely think our way into healthy living? As anyone who has ever attended a meeting of AA well knows, "Your best thinking got you here."

What about spiritually? Ever had the experience of hearing an incredibly illuminating and informative sermon and waking up Monday morning with new resolve and conviction to be different, and already fail by Tuesday afternoon? It seems that we can't think our way to spiritual transformation either.

Maybe it's because we wrongly believe that knowledge alone changes and ignore the overwhelming power of HABIT. If we want to be physically healthy we will need more than a subscription to men's health...we must change our habits, our life patterns. What isles in the grocery store we walk down, what is in the house, stop eating out, throw stuff out in the pantry. Get to the Y...

And the same of course it true for our spiritual lives. We can't merely think our way into a new way of living. If we have an undisciplined spiritual life, bad habits, we will always struggle to ever feel like we are growing in our faith, overcoming sin, experiencing the abundant life. The good news is that we have the Holy Spirit residing in us and one of His key roles is to empower us, and here's the key- As we yield to Him THROUGH the SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINES that God has established. Think of the Holy Spirit like a freight train and the Spiritual Disciplines, the HABITS, like the train tracks for Him to run on.

H.A.B.I.T.S.

H- Having a Prayer Life

A- Accountability

B- Bible Study

I- Investing in Your Community

T- Tithing

S- Sharing Christ

Accountability for the next three weeks. The question to be asking yourself throughout this series is "How am I doing at living out the Spiritual Habit of Accountability?"

What is it? Why we need it? Where do we get it?

What is it?

Mt. Elbrus story (Insert Pic)

This is a picture of accountability in the Christian life. Brothers and sisters in your life you care about you enough not to leave you where you are.

Definition

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

Christ's Household- While we may have accountability in various areas of our life, maybe a form of accountability in your company... but Christian accountability is unique because it is formed by Christ himself.

Ephesians 2:14-22

Jesus' work created a new household, he is the head.

v.19 Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and strangers, but fellow citizens with God's people and also members of his household.

v.22 And in him you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit.

And because we are a new household, a new family, we have a responsibility for one another's spiritual progress.

Hebrews 10:24-25

And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching.

We can't follow Jesus without community in a household of faith. When God brings you into a relationship with Him, he also brings you into a relationship with others. This is the normal, regular way that Christians ought to live and have for 2000 years. If you say you are a follower of Christ but you don't have biblical community I just don't know what you mean. And that's not just showing up to church...that's not being in community, that's being in a crowd.

Why do we need it?

We all tend to drift.

Hebrews 3:12

See to it, brothers and sisters, that none of you has a sinful, unbelieving heart that turns away from the living God.

“See to it brothers and sisters”- This is the Hebrew way of addressing accountability. You are responsible for one another’s spiritual health. That the Christian walk isn’t a private, individual endeavor between just me and Jesus...this is a community project! So yes, you are your brother’s (and sister’s) keeper!

“That none of you has a sinful, unbelieving heart that turns away from the living God.”

Let me ask you a question. How does that happen? Do people go from on fire for Jesus, seeing Jesus loves me... to dropping out of church and renouncing their faith over night?

Of course not...how does it happen? How do friends you know walk away from the faith? How do people who claim to be Christians shipwreck their lives? How Christian husbands or wives end up walking away from their families?

Slow drift that begins in the heart. And guess what? We are all vulnerable to drift. It was true in the 1st century and it’s true today.

Isn’t this a law in the fallen universe- things move from order to disorder? We don’t drift into healthy eating habits, we don’t drift into an organized house of office space. We don’t drift into a healthy relationship...anything healthy happens through intentionality against drift. Healthy HABITS.

So this is true spiritually... and drift starts in the heart... “I’m getting tired of this marriage”, “I’m not sure if I believe this doctrine”, “I’d love to get to know that co-worker more”... and nobody else can see the heart...unless...someone has access to you. And can do what Hebrews 3:13 says...

Hebrews 3:13

But encourage one another daily, as long as it is called “Today,” so that none of you may be hardened by sin’s deceitfulness.

Encourage- To strengthen, to comfort, to exhort, admonish, plead with.

“Daily”- Habitually, a regular part of the pattern of your life to have community, because everyday until the Lord returns you will struggle with sin.

So you don’t have the struggle alone with something no one else knows about. What if you had a deadly disease and you were the only one who knew. No doctors, no family members... that’s dangerous!

If you have a problem in your marriage and you and your husband are the only one’s who know about it, you are in danger. If you are dealing with an addiction and you

are the only one who knows about it, you are in danger. If you are questioning your faith and you are the only one who knows it, you are in danger.

“So that” - what is the purpose?

“Not hardened by sin’s deceitfulness”

Sin here is personified as if it were a voice speaking to us...because it kind of is. It’s from our own flesh, influenced by the current of the world and the spiritual enemy, Satan. Think of all the self-talk- “I would be happier if”, “Everyone would agree with me”, “I deserve...”, “Dabbling in this isn’t a big deal...”, “I’ll get serious about my faith when...”

What are you telling yourself these days that if you were to tell another Christian they would tell you it’s a lie?

Where do we get it?

Accountability is not going to happen in the service. The Rows don’t Know. We have built some intentional structures- Membership, Small Groups, Adult Christian Education, Serving... but it’s possible to be in one of these and have no accountability, not be known...it takes intentional habit, probably outside of the structures...

Example. Our former couples small group. List of questions...

Next week- How do we do accountability well? Speaking truth in love.

Communion- Eph. 2 reading