

Heading For Home

Note: This is the third in a three-part series entitled "Accountability: Pursuing Vital Relationships" from

At this point, I will assume that you have one or more guys interested in some level of accountability, and hopefully you are getting comfortable with each other. As I mentioned in Part Two, the best thing you can do in the beginning is just get together and "hang out." Spend some time together. Talk.

While that may seem simplistic, my experience has been that even just talking doesn't necessarily come naturally to us men. Get to know each other's backgrounds. Share some "history" with each other. I think you'll be surprised at the similarities in many areas, and you will begin to see that you are not alone in many areas of your life.

Going to Third-Brothers

As you develop your relationship with each other, you begin to experience the closeness of true friendship. Having weathered the "storms" on your way to second, you now establish a new "norm" on your way to third. "Its foundation is the mutual respect and complementary perspectives that have emerged during the storm. At this point, the men can begin to learn from each other's strengths and can begin the processes leading to covenants and accountability to one another. They're brothers."

Now is the time to get serious about accountability. At this point you need to commit to regular meetings (if you haven't already), and there needs to be a "covenant of confidentiality" between the men in the group. That means nothing discussed in the group leaves the group.

You don't discuss anything with your wife (if your married) or anyone else. For the group to be effective, each man needs to

commit to both of these important points. That clears the way for more open and frank discussions.

You might want to use a study of some kind to facilitate discussions. I really like the Promise Keepers "Promise Builders" studies that are designed to be stand-alone topical studies that require no homework and are designed to create practical discussion.

Jim Dornan, in the book he co-wrote with John Maxwell, *Becoming a Person of Influence*, writes:

"Back when we were growing up, we heard a lot of stories about the (Niagara) falls and the daredevil stunts people used to pull—like Annie Edson Taylor's going over the falls in a barrel and things like that. One of the great legends of the town was French acrobat named Charles Blondin, who lived from 1824 to 1897. He crossed over the entire width of the falls on a tightrope back in 1859.

That must have taken nerves of steel since a fall certainly would have killed him. In fact he crossed the falls several times. He did it once with a wheelbarrow, another time blindfolded, and yet another time on stilts. They say he was quite remarkable. He continued performing even into his seventies.

One of the most incredible feats he performed was crossing the falls on a tightrope while carrying a man on his back. Can you imagine that? I guess just crossing over by himself wasn't tough enough for him! But as difficult as that feat must have been on Blondin, I can't help wondering how he got someone to go with him. That's what you call trust: to climb onto the back of a man who is going to walk more than half a mile on a rope suspended over one of the most powerful waterfalls in the world."

I used to think about that as a kid. What would it be like to see the falls from up on a rope above them? And more

important, what person would trust me to carry him across the falls the way that man trusted Blondin?"

Ask yourself that question. What guy would trust you that much? What guy do you trust that much? Can you think of anybody? Most of us cannot. But that's our goal here. To develop a relationship with one or more men with whom we can build that kind of trust.

Here is a story right out of God's Word:

"Moses said to Joshua, 'Choose some of our men and go out to fight the Amalekites. Tomorrow I will stand on top of the hill with the staff of God in my hands.' So Joshua fought the Amalekites as Moses had ordered, and Moses, Aaron and Hur went to the top of the hill. As long as Moses held up his hands, the Israelites were winning, but whenever he lowered his hands, the Amalekites were winning. When Moses' hands grew tired, they took a stone and put it under him and he sat on it. Aaron and Hur held his hands up—one on one side, one on the other—so that his hands remained steady till sunset. So Joshua overcame the Amalekite army with the sword." (Exodus 17:9-13)

What a great story! When Moses got tired, Aaron and Hur stood by and held his hands up. What an awesome picture of brotherhood. That's what we need, guys. We need brothers who will stand by us and hold our hands up when we're too tired.

Don't try, or even expect, to immediately delve into the deepest, darkest corners of your lives. You can begin by having your brother(s) hold you accountable for things like praying regularly and integrity issues. As you see the benefit and results of this, you will also be building up trust, which is necessary for accountability in more personal and private areas.

But if you really want to be all that God wants you to be, I believe you eventually have to be held accountable for the

areas of your life that are destroying your relationship with God. Those “secret sins” you’d rather not talk about. Some of us struggle with pornography. Some of us are having affairs, either sexual or emotional. Some of us are liars, cheats and thieves.

But none of us are without something that diminishes our relationship with God. If you believe otherwise, than I’d guess that pride is one of the things you need to deal with. I’m being blunt here, but I can’t sugarcoat this issue. My brothers, we need each other to deal with these things that are tearing us apart. We can’t do it alone!

“Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective.” (James 5:15-16)

James is encouraging his brothers to hold each other accountable, and to pray for each other. I sincerely believe that this is the only way we can reach our full potential for God.

You know why geese fly in a “V” formation? Because the aerodynamics of the “V” formation enable the geese to fly over 70 percent further than if they fly alone. As each bird flaps its wings, it creates an updraft for the bird behind it. When the bird in front gets tired (he’s working the hardest), he moves back and another one takes the point.

Do you see the analogy here? They can go a lot further if they work together and help each other. In the same way, We can go a lot further spiritually, if we work together and help each other.

Read what these four men did for their friend:

“Some men came, bringing to him a paralytic, carried by four of them. Since they could not get him to Jesus because of the crowd, they made an opening in the roof above Jesus and, after

digging through it, lowered the mat the paralyzed man was lying on.” (Mark 2:3-4)

Do you have four friends who would do something like that for you? How about three? Maybe two? One? Sadly, most men do not even have one truly close friend.

Heading for Home – Christlikeness

As you build the relationship with your brother(s), and share your struggles and make yourself accountable to each other, you will experience a bonding and friendship like no other. It may not be easy, but it is worth it. Listen to what David says as he mourns the death of his brother Jonathan:

“I grieve for you, Jonathan my brother; you were very dear to me. Your love for me was wonderful, more wonderful than that of women.” (2 Samuel 1:26)

There is no magic formula or technique for developing the kind of relationships that we are seeking here. The best advice is to just get out there and do it. You’ll learn what works and what doesn’t. You might find that you don’t click with a certain person. Don’t worry about it. Try again.

Never forget that Christlikeness is a journey, not a destination. As long as we are human, we can never be totally like Christ. But, over time, we can become more like Christ than we used to be. We can move in the right direction. We can let go of that stuff that messes with our minds and hurts our relationship with God. As “iron sharpens iron,” we can be by the Master into the man He wants us to be.

For a list of sample Christian accountability questions, [click here](#).

All scripture quotations are taken from the New International Version (NIV) except as noted.