



PERSONAL GROWTH THROUGH PERSONAL ACCOUNTABILITY

JESSE DILLINGER

(Jeremiah 3:11)

People need someone with whom they can be totally honest, someone with whom they can share their deep feelings and thoughts, someone with whom they can discuss their walk with God. People who have such a friend have learned a powerful secret to success in Christian growth—personal accountability.

Accountability means accounting for personal thoughts and behaviors, which are held up to a standard and evaluated. Another person or a group will hold someone accountable and offer encouragement and support as he or she tries to meet that standard. With voluntary accountability, people choose to place themselves in a relationship where someone else will ask them to account for their thoughts and behaviors.

Everyone, Christian and non-Christian, is accountable to one ultimate standard: the Word of God (Phil. 2:9–11). For Christians, the Bible remains the standard for daily decisions. Personal accountability builds a bridge between the Bible and the practice of its principles. While Christians remain on the earth, their objective is to grow spiritually into Christ's image (Phil. 3:13, 14). Accountability helps one to progress in the spiritual process of maturing.

PARTNERS IN ACCOUNTABILITY

Accountability requires self-evaluation, pure motives, and the absence of hypocritical judgment. People must not hold someone else accountable to a standard they are not willing to meet themselves. Accountability partners should be maturing Christians who have the desire and the time to invest in relationships with others. They must be able to keep reasonable confidences and be concerned enough with

others' personal growth that they can be tough when it is needed.

TYPES OF ACCOUNTABILITY

Virtually any area of life can be placed in an accountability arrangement. A person may seek accountability to assist in following through with a specific task, like developing a regular pattern of family time. Someone may ask another to help in dealing honestly at work or remaining financially sound. A married couple may wish to meet with another married couple concerning healthy communication and loving treatment of each other. Changing one's attitude at work, developing a pattern of reading the Bible, telling the truth instead of "white lies," or maintaining purity in one's thought life may also represent areas in need of accountability.

Personal accountability is every Christian's privilege and responsibility (2 Cor. 5:10). People may ask God in prayer to show them what needs to be addressed in their lives. Not only will God reveal what they can't see, but He will also use others to reveal their personal weaknesses. At that point, they may desire to take advantage of other types of accountability with an individual or a group. In the individual arrangement, another person enters in to help a person. In a group setting, two or more individuals hold each other accountable. With a group devoted to living accord-

ing to
ing.
ment

CATE

Restor
ers to
after:
stanti
(Gal.
counta
tance
forgive
(2 Cor.
Pre

guard
James
thought
phy), si
tony), s
slander
show co
type of a
the situat
ing on t
account
they are
against n

Cons
encourag
believers
These gro
more and
study.

Task
being hel
tivities su
or meeting
ity ends w

ENEMIES

Enemies o
(2 Sam. 12
person is n
failures, th
though one

To Learn More
also the perso

ng to Scripture, there will be more praying, more encouraging, and more investment among more people.

CATEGORIES OF ACCOUNTABILITY

Restorative accountability can restore others to a relationship or church membership after they have been involved in sin substantial enough to sever the original tie (Gal. 6:1). Prior to an agreement to accountability, there must be genuine repentance on the part of the offender. Thorough forgiveness must precede accountability (2 Cor. 2:7).

Preventative accountability is sought to guard against weakness or sin (Mark 14:38; James 5:16). Examples include sexual thoughts and actions (lust and pornography), sins of indulgence (greed and gluttony), sins of the tongue (lying, gossip, slander) and sins of omission (failure to show compassion, etc.). The length of this type of accountability varies depending on the situation. For example, people traveling on business may set up a system of accountability specifically for the times they are away from their family to guard against temptation.

Constructive accountability aims at encouragement and the development of believers' spiritual growth (Heb. 10:23). These groups may meet for six months or more and may be guided by a specific Bible study.

Task-oriented accountability includes being held accountable for important activities such as keeping specific promises or meeting specific goals. This accountability ends with the completion of the task.

ENEMIES OF ACCOUNTABILITY

Enemies of accountability include denial (2 Sam. 12:1-7) and lies (Col. 3:9). If a person is not willing to admit mistakes or failures, there can be no accountability. Although one may be tempted to stretch the

truth when meeting with an accountability partner, lying about one's success does not help the process.

Other obstacles to accountability include blame (Gen. 3:11-13) and pride (Rom. 12:16). Humility is a cornerstone of accountability. It is not easy to make oneself vulnerable to another person's scrutiny. However, a partner who reacts with a prideful, haughty attitude toward one's admission of disobedience is not a suitable partner for accountability. Encouragement should be used instead of insult.

However, no accountability relationship can tolerate continued sin on the part of one or both parties (Matt. 5:29, 30). There is no purpose in a group that makes a continuous litany of excuses for undisciplined behavior.

RESULTS OF ACCOUNTABILITY

When a group meets for accountability, questions are asked that encourage honesty and revelation. "Have you lied to anyone since we last met?" is an example of the type of questions that can provide structure for the meeting. Participants should also request information to monitor the development of desired thoughts and behaviors. "What specific truths have you told while being tempted to lie?"

Accountability brings the body of Christ together in a supportive way to encourage us to grow in Christ. It allows the development and use of our gifts and promotes unity within the body. We grow by doing what is right. Through accountability, our faith is strengthened by the example of others' obedience.

FURTHER MEDITATION:

Other passages to study about the issue of accountability include:

- Proverbs 12:15; 13:20; 27:6
- Galatians 6:1-5

To Learn More: Turn to the key passage note on accountability at Romans 14:12 on page 1487. See also the personality profile of David and Nathan on page 401.

You shall not murder,
not bear false witness,
and if there is summing
love your no harm to fulfillment of

that now it
 is now our
 first be-
 day is at
 works of
 of light.
 not in
 ness and
 on the
 sion for

the faith,
 doubtful
 things,
 es. ³Let
 es not
 judge
 him.
 rent? To
 need, he
 make

ive an-

rs not

other; another esteems every day *alike*. Let each be fully convinced in his own mind. ⁶He who observes the day, observes *it* to the Lord; ⁷and he who does not observe the day, to the Lord he does not observe *it*. He who eats, eats to the Lord, for he gives God thanks; and he who does not eat, to the Lord he does not eat, and gives God thanks. ⁸For none of us lives to himself, and no one dies to himself. ⁹For if we live, we live to the Lord; and if we die, we die to the Lord. Therefore, whether we live or die, we are the Lord's. ¹⁰For to this end Christ died and rose ^a and lived again, that He might be Lord of both the dead and the living. ¹¹But why do you judge your brother? Or why do you show contempt for your brother? For we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ. ^a ¹²For it is written:

*"As I live, says the LORD,
 Every knee shall bow to Me,
 And every tongue shall confess to God."* ^a

¹²So then each of us shall give account of himself to God. ¹³Therefore let us not judge one another anymore, but rather resolve this, not to put a stumbling block or a cause to fall in our brother's way.

THE LAW OF LOVE

¹⁴I know and am convinced by the Lord Jesus that *there is nothing unclean of itself;*

but to him who considers anything to be unclean, to him *it is unclean*. ¹⁵Yet if your brother is grieved because of *your food*, you are no longer walking in love. Do not destroy with your food the one for whom Christ died. ¹⁶Therefore do not let your good be spoken of as evil; ¹⁷for the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit. ¹⁸For he who serves Christ in these things *is acceptable to God and approved by men.*

¹⁹Therefore let us pursue the things which make for peace and the things by which one may edify another. ²⁰Do not destroy the work of God for the sake of food. All things indeed are pure, but *it is evil* for the man who eats with offense. ²¹*It is good neither to eat meat nor drink wine nor do anything* by which your brother stumbles or is offended or is made weak. ^a ²²Do you have faith? Have ^a it to yourself before God. Happy is he who does not condemn himself in what he approves. ²³But he who doubts is condemned if he eats, because *he does not eat* from faith; for whatever *is not from faith* is sin. ^a

^{14:6} ^aNU-Text omits the rest of this sentence.
^{14:9} ^aNU-Text omits *and rose*. ^{14:10} ^aNU-Text reads of God. ^{14:11} ^aIsaiah 45:23 ^{14:18} ^aNU-Text reads *this*. ^{14:21} ^aNU-Text omits *or is offended or is made weak*. ^{14:22} ^aNU-Text reads *The faith which you have—have*. ^{14:23} ^aM-Text puts Romans 16:25–27 here.

KEY PASSAGE

BEFORE THE THRONE

(14:12)



Accountability

The sobering words of this verse describe a day when each individual will stand alone before God Almighty to "give account." At that moment, there will be no excuses, no hidden agendas, no chance to lie and get away with it.

Each person is ultimately accountable to Christ, not to others. The context of this verse speaks of the diversity in the Christian fellowship, encouraging believers to allow for differences of opinion in matters that do not conflict with God's Word. Elsewhere Paul encourages believers in this diversity, saying, "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling" (Phil. 2:12).

We must each seek to grow in our faith, on our own before God. Accountability to others can help this process, but ultimately we will be accountable to God for how we have lived. Follow God's Word—it is a sure guide.

To Learn More: Turn to the article about accountability on pages 966, 967. See also the personality profile of David and Nathan on page 401.

the thing that David had done displeased the LORD.

NATHAN'S PARABLE AND DAVID'S CONFESSION

12 Then the LORD sent Nathan to David. And he came to him, and said to him: "There were two men in one city, one rich and the other poor. ²The rich man had exceedingly many flocks and herds. ³But the poor man had nothing, except one little ewe lamb which he had bought and nourished; and it grew up together with him and with his children. It ate of his own food and drank from his own cup and lay in his bosom; and it was like a daughter to him. ⁴And a traveler came to the rich man, who refused to take from his own flock and from his own herd to prepare one for the wayfaring man who had come to him; but he took the poor man's lamb and prepared it for the man who had come to him."

⁵So David's anger was greatly aroused against the man, and he said to Nathan, "As the LORD lives, the man who has done this

shall surely die! ⁶And he shall restore fourfold for the lamb, because he did this thing and because he had no pity."

⁷Then Nathan said to David, "You are the man! Thus says the LORD God of Israel: 'I anointed you king over Israel, and I delivered you from the hand of Saul. ⁸I gave you your master's house and your master's wives into your keeping, and gave you the house of Israel and Judah. And if *that had been* too little, I also would have given you much more! ⁹Why have you despised the commandment of the LORD, to do evil in His sight? You have killed Uriah the Hittite with the sword; you have taken his wife *to be* your wife, and have killed him with the sword of the people of Ammon. ¹⁰Now therefore, the sword shall never depart from your house, because you have despised Me, and have taken the wife of Uriah the Hittite to be your wife.' ¹¹Thus says the LORD: 'Behold, I will raise up adversity against you from your own house; and I will take your wives before your eyes and give *them* to your

PERSONALITY PROFILE



Accountability

NATHAN—AN HONEST FRIEND

(2 SAMUEL 12)

Everyone can use a friend like Nathan. Such a friend shows up not only when wanted, but especially when needed. In Nathan, David had the added benefit of a friend who brought God's perspective into their relationship.

Shortly after David succeeded in covering up a shocking episode of sexual sin followed by conspiracy and murder, his friend Nathan showed up one day with a story (2 Sam. 12:1–12). Nathan's vivid parable became a tool God used to shatter David's denial of sin. Nathan confronted David about his sin and called him into accountability before God. Sometimes such accountability can be done privately and personally. Other times, sins of a public nature must be dealt with in a public manner.

In David's case, the sin may have seemed private, but the cover-up and the consequences were public. Not only did the child conceived with Bathsheba die, but God also announced that the sword of violence would never depart from David's house (2 Sam. 12:10). His own family would try to betray and kill him.

Nathan remained a friend to David and Bathsheba. His confrontation of their sin was not intended to destroy them, but to help them clear their consciences and deal with their behavior properly. Although he couldn't change the consequences that followed, Nathan's faithful friendship allowed David and Bathsheba to make the best before God of a shameful event. They may not have wanted everything he offered them as a friend, but he gave it to them anyway. God showed him what they really needed.

Do you have any friends like Nathan? Could you be a friend like Nathan?

To Learn More: Turn to the article about accountability on pages 966, 967. See also the key passage note at Romans 14:12 on page 1487.

the forces with Ephraim according to their armies, and the leader of the children of Ephraim *shall be* Elishama the son of Ammihud.¹⁸ And his army was numbered at forty thousand five hundred.

¹⁹ Next to him *comes* the tribe of Manasseh, and the leader of the children of Manasseh *shall be* Gamaliel the son of Pedahzur.²⁰ And his army was numbered at thirty-two thousand two hundred.

²¹ Then *comes* the tribe of Benjamin, and the leader of the children of Benjamin *shall be* Abidan the son of Gideoni.²² And his army was numbered at thirty-five thousand four hundred.²³ All who were numbered according to their armies of the forces with Ephraim, one hundred and eight thousand one hundred—they shall be the third to break camp.

²⁴ The standard of the forces with Dan *shall be* on the north side according to their armies, and the leader of the children of Dan *shall be* Ahiezer the son of Ammishaddai.²⁵ And his army was numbered at sixty-two thousand seven hundred.

²⁶ Those who camp next to him *shall be* the tribe of Asher, and the leader of the children of Asher *shall be* Pagiel the son of Ocran.²⁷ And his army was numbered at forty-one thousand five hundred.

²⁸ Then *comes* the tribe of Naphtali, and the leader of the children of Naphtali *shall be* Ahira the son of Enan.²⁹ And his army was numbered at fifty-three thousand four hundred.³⁰ All who were numbered of the forces with Dan, one hundred and fifty-seven thousand six hundred—they shall break camp last, with their standards.

³¹ These *are* the ones who were numbered of the children of Israel by their fathers' houses. All who were numbered according to their armies of the forces were six hundred and three

thousand five hundred and fifty.³² But the Levites were not numbered among the children of Israel, just as the LORD commanded Moses.

³³ Thus the children of Israel did according to all that the LORD commanded Moses; so they camped by their standards and so they broke camp, each one by his family, according to their fathers' houses.

THE SONS OF AARON

3 Now these *are* the records of Aaron and Moses when the LORD spoke with Moses on Mount Sinai.¹ And these *are* the names of the sons of Aaron: Nadab, the firstborn, and Abihu, Eleazar, and Ithamar.² These *are* the names of the sons of Aaron, the anointed priests, whom he consecrated to minister as priests.³ Nadab and Abihu had died before the LORD when they offered profane fire before the LORD in the Wilderness of Sinai; and they had no children. So Eleazar and Ithamar ministered as priests in the presence of Aaron their father.

THE LEVITES SERVE IN THE TABERNACLE

⁴ And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying:⁵ Bring the tribe of Levi near, and present them before Aaron the priest, that they may serve him.⁶ And they shall attend to his needs and the needs of the whole congregation before the tabernacle of meeting, to do the work of the tabernacle.⁷ Also they shall attend to all the furnishings of the tabernacle of meeting, and to the needs of the children of Israel, to do the work of the tabernacle.⁸ And you shall give the Levites to Aaron and his sons; they *are* given entirely to him^a from among the children of Israel.⁹ So you shall appoint

^{3:9} ^aSamaritan Pentateuch and Septuagint read Me.

SOUL NOTE



Who's Calling? (3:1-13) When God gives us a calling, it's accompanied by responsibility and accountability. God chose Aaron and his descendants to be the priests of Israel, and He chose the tribe of Levi to serve under Aaron "to do the work of the tabernacle" (3:7). God greatly honored the Levites when He separated them for special service and said, "They shall be Mine" (3:13). With this honor came the responsibility of performing their duties as God commanded. When God calls us to serve Him, He both honors us and gives us great responsibility. As we serve, we must remember that we are accountable to Him (Eph. 6:7). Topic: Accountability

ties all around, so that they could no longer stand before their enemies.¹⁵ Wherever they went out, the hand of the LORD was against them for calamity, as the LORD had said, and as the LORD had sworn to them. And they were greatly distressed.

¹⁶ Nevertheless, the LORD raised up judges who delivered them out of the hand of those who plundered them. ¹⁷ Yet they would not listen to their judges, but they played the harlot with other gods, and bowed down to them. They turned quickly from the way in which their fathers walked, in obeying the commandments of the LORD; they did not do so. ¹⁸ And when the LORD raised up judges for them, the LORD was with the judge and delivered them out of the hand of their enemies all the days of the judge; for the LORD was moved to pity by their groaning because of those who oppressed them and harassed them. ¹⁹ And it came to pass, when the judge was dead, that they reverted and behaved more corruptly than their fathers, by following other gods, to serve them and bow down to them. They did not cease from their own doings nor from their stubborn way.

²⁰ Then the anger of the LORD was hot against Israel; and He said, "Because this nation has transgressed My covenant which I commanded their fathers, and has not heeded My voice, ²¹ I also will no longer drive out before them any of the nations which Joshua left when he died,²² so that through them I may test Israel, whether they will keep the ways of the LORD, to walk in them as their fathers kept them, or not." ²³ Therefore the LORD left those nations, without driving them out immedi-

ately; nor did He deliver them into the hand of Joshua.

THE NATIONS REMAINING IN THE LAND

3 Now these are the nations which the LORD left, that He might test Israel by them, that is, all who had not known any of the wars in Canaan² (this was only so that the generations of the children of Israel might be taught to know war, at least those who had not formerly known it), ³ namely, five lords of the Philistines, all the Canaanites, the Sidonians, and the Hivites who dwelt in Mount Lebanon, from Mount Baal Hermon to the entrance of Hamath. ⁴ And they were left, that He might test Israel by them, to know whether they would obey the commandments of the LORD, which He had commanded their fathers by the hand of Moses.

When the children of Israel cried out to the LORD, the LORD raised up a deliverer.

JUDGES 3:9

5 Thus the children of Israel dwelt among the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Amorites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites. ⁶ And they took their daughters to be their wives, and gave their daughters to their sons; and

they served their gods.

OTHNIEL

⁷ So the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the LORD. They forgot the LORD their God, and served the Baals and Asherahs.^a ⁸ Therefore the anger of the LORD was hot against Israel, and He sold them into the hand of Cushan-Rishathaim king of Mesopotamia; and the children of Israel served Cushan-Rishathaim eight years. ⁹ When the children of Israel

3:7 ^aName or symbol for Canaanite goddesses

SOUL NOTE

Cycles (3:7, 8) The Book of Judges describes cycles of sin and judgment in Israel. When everything was going great, the nation would forget God and turn to idols. God would punish them for it, then they would cry out to Him in repentence, and He would send a deliverer (judge) to help them against their oppressors (3:7, 12; 4:1; 6:1; 8:33; 10:6; 13:1). When the people sinned, they were held accountable and were punished for breaking their covenant with God. While God is rich in mercy, He still holds people accountable for their sins and allows them to face the consequences of their behavior in their lives. **Topic: Accountability**

SOLOMON DEDICATES THE TEMPLE

⁶²Then the king and all Israel with him offered sacrifices before the LORD. ⁶³And Solomon offered a sacrifice of peace offerings, which he offered to the LORD, twenty-two thousand bulls and one hundred and twenty thousand sheep. So the king and all the children of Israel dedicated the house of the LORD. ⁶⁴On the same day the king consecrated the middle of the court that was in front of the house of the LORD; for there he offered burnt offerings, grain offerings, and the fat of the peace offerings, because the bronze altar that was before the LORD was too small to receive the burnt offerings, the grain offerings, and the fat of the peace offerings.

⁶⁵At that time Solomon held a feast, and all Israel with him, a great assembly from the entrance of Hamath to the Brook of Egypt, before the LORD our God, seven days and seven more days—fourteen days. ⁶⁶On the eighth day he sent the people away; and they blessed the king, and went to their tents joyful and glad of heart for all the good that the LORD had done for His servant David, and for Israel His people.

GOD'S SECOND APPEARANCE TO SOLOMON

9 And it came to pass, when Solomon had finished building the house of the LORD and the king's house, and all Solomon's desire which he wanted to do, ²that the LORD appeared to Solomon the second time, as He had appeared to him at Gibeon. ³And the LORD said to him: "I have heard your prayer and your supplication that you have made before Me; I have consecrated this house which you have built to put My name there forever, and My eyes and My heart will be there perpetu-

ally. ⁴Now if you walk before Me as your father David walked, in integrity of heart and in uprightness, to do according to all that I have commanded you, and if you keep My statutes and My judgments, ⁵then I will establish the throne of your kingdom over Israel forever, as I promised David your father, saying, 'You shall not fail to have a man on the throne of Israel.' ⁶But if you or your sons at all turn from following Me, and do not keep My commandments and My statutes which I have set before you, but go and serve other gods and worship them, ⁷then I will cut off Israel from the land which I have given them; and this house which I have consecrated for My name I will cast out of My sight. Israel will be a proverb and a byword among all peoples. ⁸And as for this house, which is exalted, everyone who passes by it will be astonished and will hiss, and say, 'Why has the LORD done thus to this land and to this house?' ⁹Then they will answer, 'Because they forsook the LORD their God, who brought their fathers out of the land of Egypt, and have embraced other gods, and worshiped them and served them; therefore the LORD has brought all this calamity on them.'

SOLomon AND HIRAM EXCHANGE GIFTS

¹⁰Now it happened at the end of twenty years, when Solomon had built the two houses, the house of the LORD and the king's house ¹¹(Hiram the king of Tyre had supplied Solomon with cedar and cypress and gold, as much as he desired), that King Solomon then gave Hiram twenty cities in the land of Galilee. ¹²Then Hiram went from Tyre to see the cities which Solomon had given him, but they did not please him. ¹³So he said, "What kind of cities are these which you have given me, my brother?" And he called them the land of

SOUL NOTE

Seriously (9:5) God told Solomon that He would establish his kingdom forever. At the same time, God warned Solomon that if he turned away from Him, He would deal severely with both Solomon and Israel. This passage contains both potential blessings and curses, based on people's responses. Believers are accountable to God. Their choices will not only affect them, but others as well, such as family and friends. The king's choices affected the entire nation. God is serious about His relationship with us; we should be just as serious in our responses to Him.

Topic: Accountability

PSALM 74

A PLEA FOR RELIEF FROM OPPRESSORS

A Contemplation^a of Asaph.

- 1 O God, why have You cast us off forever?
Why does Your anger smoke against the sheep of Your pasture?
 Remember Your congregation, which You have purchased of old,
 The tribe of Your inheritance, which You have redeemed—
 This Mount Zion where You have dwelt.
 3 Lift up Your feet to the perpetual desolations.
 The enemy has damaged everything in the sanctuary.
 Your enemies roar in the midst of Your meeting place;
 They set up their banners for signs.
 They seem like men who lift up Axes among the thick trees.
 And now they break down its carved work, all at once,
 With axes and hammers.
 7 They have set fire to Your sanctuary;
 They have defiled the dwelling place of Your name to the ground.
 They said in their hearts,
 "Let us destroy them altogether."
 They have burned up all the meeting places of God in the land.

 We do not see our signs;
 There is no longer any prophet;
 Nor is there any among us who knows how long.
 10 O God, how long will the adversary reproach?
 Will the enemy blaspheme Your name forever?

- 11 Why do You withdraw Your hand, even Your right hand?
Take it out of Your bosom and destroy them.
 For God is my King from of old,
 Working salvation in the midst of the earth.
 13 You divided the sea by Your strength;
 You broke the heads of the sea serpents in the waters.
 14 You broke the heads of Leviathan in pieces,
And gave him as food to the people inhabiting the wilderness.
 You broke open the fountain and the flood;
 You dried up mighty rivers.
 16 The day is Yours, the night also is Yours;
 You have prepared the light and the sun.
 17 You have set all the borders of the earth;
 You have made summer and winter.

 Remember this, that the enemy has reproached, O LORD,
 And that a foolish people has blasphemed Your name.
 19 Oh, do not deliver the life of Your turtledove to the wild beast!
 Do not forget the life of Your poor forever.
 Have respect to the covenant;
 For the dark places of the earth are full of the haunts of cruelty.
 Oh, do not let the oppressed return ashamed!
 Let the poor and needy praise Your name.

74:title ^aHebrew *Maschil*

SOUL NOTE

The Best Counselor (73:23–26) God is the ultimate counselor who is constantly with His people. The psalmist declared, “You will guide me with Your counsel, and afterward receive me to glory” (73:24). Though friends, counselors, and advisors can be helpful, we ultimately must depend on and be accountable to God. We have no one in heaven but God, no one upon earth whom we should desire more than Him. We can take comfort in knowing that God hears our deepest cries, counsels us, and promises eternity with Him. **Topic: Accountability**

- 5 Open rebuke is better
Than love carefully concealed.
- 6 Faithful are the wounds of a friend,
But the kisses of an enemy are deceitful.
- 7 A satisfied soul loathes the honeycomb,
But to a hungry soul every bitter thing is sweet.
- 8 Like a bird that wanders from its nest
Is a man who wanders from his place.
- 9 Ointment and perfume delight the heart,
And the sweetness of a man's friend
gives delight by hearty counsel.
- 10 Do not forsake your own friend or your father's friend,
Nor go to your brother's house in the day of your calamity;
Better is a neighbor nearby than a brother far away.
- 11 My son, be wise, and make my heart glad,
That I may answer him who reproaches me.
- 12 A prudent man foresees evil and hides himself;
The simple pass on and are punished.
- 13 Take the garment of him who is surely for a stranger,
And hold it in pledge when he is surely for a seductress.
- 14 He who blesses his friend with a loud voice, rising early in the morning,
It will be counted a curse to him.
- 15 A continual dripping on a very rainy day
And a contentious woman are alike;
16 Whoever restrains her restrains the wind,
And grasps oil with his right hand.
- 17 As iron sharpens iron,
So a man sharpens the countenance of his friend.
- 18 Whoever keeps the fig tree will eat its fruit;
So he who waits on his master will be honored.
- 19 As in water face reflects face,
So a man's heart reveals the man
- 20 Hell^a and Destruction^b are never full;
So the eyes of man are never satisfied.
- 21 The refining pot is for silver and the furnace for gold,
And a man is valued by what others say of him.
- 22 Though you grind a fool in a mortar with a pestle along with crushed grain,
Yet his foolishness will not depart from him.
- 23 Be diligent to know the state of your flocks,
And attend to your herds;
- 24 For riches are not forever,
Nor does a crown endure to all generations.

27:20 ^aOr Sheol ^bHebrew Abaddon

SOUL NOTE

Sharpener (27:17) Believers' interaction with other believers is one of the most important aspects of Christian friendship and fellowship. Because they love us, Christian friends can hold us accountable, help us see our blind spots, and show us better ways to live. "As iron sharpens iron," one Christian can sharpen the other Christian's character by holding them accountable for words and actions. When we allow Christian friends to sharpen us, we can learn and grow in areas that we might never have noticed on our own. God can work through our believing friends to teach us and guide us. **Topic: Accountability**

And I will cause you to serve your enemies
In the land which you do not know;
For you have kindled a fire in My anger
which shall burn forever."

⁵Thus says the LORD:

"Cursed is the man who trusts in man
And makes flesh his strength,
Whose heart departs from the LORD.
For he shall be like a shrub in the desert,
And shall not see when good comes,
But shall inhabit the parched places in
the wilderness,
In a salt land which is not inhabited.

⁷ "Blessed is the man
who trusts in
the LORD,
And whose hope is
the LORD.
For he shall be like a tree planted by the
waters,
Which spreads out its roots by the river,
And will not fear^a when heat comes;
But its leaf will be green,
And will not be anxious in the year of
drought,
Nor will cease from yielding fruit.

⁹ "The heart is deceitful above all things,
And desperately wicked;
Who can know it?
¹⁰ I, the LORD, search the heart,
I test the mind,
Even to give every man according to his
ways,

According to the fruit of his doings.

¹¹ "As a partridge that broods but does not hatch,
So is he who gets riches, but not by right;
It will leave him in the midst of his days
And at his end he will be a fool."

¹² A glorious high throne from the beginning

Is the place of our sanctuary.

¹³ O LORD, the hope of Israel,
All who forsake You shall be ashamed.

"Those who depart from Me
Shall be written in the earth,

Because they have
forsaken the
LORD,
The fountain of living waters."

JEREMIAH PRAYS FOR DELIVERANCE

¹⁴ Heal me, O LORD, and I shall be healed;
Save me, and I shall be saved,
For You are my praise.
¹⁵ Indeed they say to me,
"Where is the word of the LORD?
Let it come now!"
¹⁶ As for me, I have not hurried away from
being a shepherd who follows You,
Nor have I desired the woeful day;
You know what came out of my lips;
It was right there before You.
¹⁷ Do not be a terror to me;
You are my hope in the day of doom.
Let them be ashamed who persecute me,

^{17:8} ^aQere and Targum read see.

SOUL NOTE



Heart Condition (17:9, 10) The masks and false fronts people wear to disguise their real feelings, intentions, or selves may fool the people around them but are useless against God. With a gaze more powerful than any X ray, the Lord peers beyond all facades, straight into the heart, the core of our being. What is there cannot be masked. All of our jealousies, deceitfulness, rage, and ugliness are on display for Him and subject to His judgment. The Lord does more than just look at the heart, however; He can transform hearts and renew people from the inside out. **Topic: Accountability**

3
1-2
3-4
5-6
7-8
9-10
11-12
13-14
15-16
17-18
19-20
21-22
23-24
25-26
27-28
29-30
31-32
33-34
35-36
37-38
39-40
41-42
43-44
45-46
47-48
49-50
51-52
53-54
55-56
57-58
59-60
61-62
63-64
65-66
67-68
69-70
71-72
73-74
75-76
77-78
79-80
81-82
83-84
85-86
87-88
89-90
91-92
93-94
95-96
97-98
99-100
101-102
103-104
105-106
107-108
109-110
111-112
113-114
115-116
117-118
119-120
121-122
123-124
125-126
127-128
129-130
131-132
133-134
135-136
137-138
139-140
141-142
143-144
145-146
147-148
149-150
151-152
153-154
155-156
157-158
159-160
161-162
163-164
165-166
167-168
169-170
171-172
173-174
175-176
177-178
179-180
181-182
183-184
185-186
187-188
189-190
191-192
193-194
195-196
197-198
199-200
201-202
203-204
205-206
207-208
209-210
211-212
213-214
215-216
217-218
219-220
221-222
223-224
225-226
227-228
229-230
231-232
233-234
235-236
237-238
239-240
241-242
243-244
245-246
247-248
249-250
251-252
253-254
255-256
257-258
259-260
261-262
263-264
265-266
267-268
269-270
271-272
273-274
275-276
277-278
279-280
281-282
283-284
285-286
287-288
289-290
291-292
293-294
295-296
297-298
299-300
301-302
303-304
305-306
307-308
309-310
311-312
313-314
315-316
317-318
319-320
321-322
323-324
325-326
327-328
329-330
331-332
333-334
335-336
337-338
339-340
341-342
343-344
345-346
347-348
349-350
351-352
353-354
355-356
357-358
359-360
361-362
363-364
365-366
367-368
369-370
371-372
373-374
375-376
377-378
379-380
381-382
383-384
385-386
387-388
389-390
391-392
393-394
395-396
397-398
399-400
401-402
403-404
405-406
407-408
409-410
411-412
413-414
415-416
417-418
419-420
421-422
423-424
425-426
427-428
429-430
431-432
433-434
435-436
437-438
439-440
441-442
443-444
445-446
447-448
449-450
451-452
453-454
455-456
457-458
459-460
461-462
463-464
465-466
467-468
469-470
471-472
473-474
475-476
477-478
479-480
481-482
483-484
485-486
487-488
489-490
491-492
493-494
495-496
497-498
499-500
501-502
503-504
505-506
507-508
509-510
511-512
513-514
515-516
517-518
519-520
521-522
523-524
525-526
527-528
529-530
531-532
533-534
535-536
537-538
539-540
541-542
543-544
545-546
547-548
549-550
551-552
553-554
555-556
557-558
559-560
561-562
563-564
565-566
567-568
569-570
571-572
573-574
575-576
577-578
579-580
581-582
583-584
585-586
587-588
589-590
591-592
593-594
595-596
597-598
599-600
601-602
603-604
605-606
607-608
609-610
611-612
613-614
615-616
617-618
619-620
621-622
623-624
625-626
627-628
629-630
631-632
633-634
635-636
637-638
639-640
641-642
643-644
645-646
647-648
649-650
651-652
653-654
655-656
657-658
659-660
661-662
663-664
665-666
667-668
669-670
671-672
673-674
675-676
677-678
679-680
681-682
683-684
685-686
687-688
689-690
691-692
693-694
695-696
697-698
699-700
701-702
703-704
705-706
707-708
709-710
711-712
713-714
715-716
717-718
719-720
721-722
723-724
725-726
727-728
729-729
731-732
733-734
735-736
737-738
739-739
741-742
743-744
745-746
747-748
749-749
751-752
753-754
755-756
757-758
759-759
761-762
763-764
765-766
767-768
769-769
771-772
773-774
775-776
777-778
779-779
781-782
783-784
785-786
787-787
789-790
791-792
793-794
795-796
797-798
799-799
801-802
803-804
805-806
807-808
809-809
811-812
813-814
815-816
817-818
819-819
821-822
823-824
825-826
827-828
829-829
831-832
833-834
835-836
837-838
839-839
841-842
843-844
845-846
847-848
849-849
851-852
853-854
855-856
857-858
859-859
861-862
863-864
865-866
867-868
869-869
871-872
873-874
875-876
877-878
879-879
881-882
883-884
885-886
887-887
889-889
891-892
893-894
895-896
897-897
899-900
901-902
903-904
905-906
907-907
909-910
911-912
913-914
915-916
917-917
919-920
921-922
923-924
925-925
927-928
929-929
931-932
933-934
935-936
937-938
939-939
941-942
943-944
945-946
947-948
949-949
951-952
953-954
955-956
957-958
959-959
961-962
963-964
965-966
967-968
969-969
971-972
973-974
975-976
977-978
979-979
981-982
983-984
985-986
987-987
989-989
991-992
993-994
995-996
997-997
999-999
1001-1002
1003-1004
1005-1006
1007-1007
1009-1010
1011-1012
1013-1014
1015-1015
1017-1018
1019-1019
1021-1022
1023-1024
1025-1025
1027-1028
1029-1029
1031-1032
1033-1034
1035-1036
1037-1038
1039-1039
1041-1042
1043-1044
1045-1046
1047-1048
1049-1049
1051-1052
1053-1054
1055-1056
1057-1058
1059-1059
1061-1062
1063-1064
1065-1066
1067-1068
1069-1069
1071-1072
1073-1074
1075-1076
1077-1078
1079-1079
1081-1082
1083-1084
1085-1086
1087-1087
1089-1089
1091-1092
1093-1094
1095-1095
1097-1098
1099-1099
1101-1102
1103-1104
1105-1106
1107-1107
1109-1110
1111-1112
1113-1114
1115-1115
1117-1118
1119-1119
1121-1122
1123-1124
1125-1125
1127-1128
1129-1129
1131-1132
1133-1134
1135-1136
1137-1138
1139-1139
1141-1142
1143-1144
1145-1146
1147-1148
1149-1149
1151-1152
1153-1154
1155-1156
1157-1158
1159-1159
1161-1162
1163-1164
1165-1166
1167-1168
1169-1169
1171-1172
1173-1174
1175-1176
1177-1178
1179-1179
1181-1182
1183-1184
1185-1186
1187-1187
1189-1189
1191-1192
1193-1194
1195-1195
1197-1198
1199-1199
1201-1202
1203-1204
1205-1206
1207-1207
1209-1210
1211-1212
1213-1214
1215-1215
1217-1218
1219-1219
1221-1222
1223-1224
1225-1225
1227-1228
1229-1229
1231-1232
1233-1234
1235-1236
1237-1238
1239-1239
1241-1242
1243-1244
1245-1246
1247-1248
1249-1249
1251-1252
1253-1254
1255-1256
1257-1258
1259-1259
1261-1262
1263-1264
1265-1266
1267-1268
1269-1269
1271-1272
1273-1274
1275-1276
1277-1278
1279-1279
1281-1282
1283-1284
1285-1286
1287-1287
1289-1289
1291-1292
1293-1294
1295-1295
1297-1298
1299-1299
1301-1302
1303-1304
1305-1306
1307-1307
1309-1310
1311-1312
1313-1314
1315-1315
1317-1318
1319-1319
1321-1322
1323-1324
1325-1325
1327-1328
1329-1329
1331-1332
1333-1334
1335-1336
1337-1338
1339-1339
1341-1342
1343-1344
1345-1346
1347-1348
1349-1349
1351-1352
1353-1354
1355-1356
1357-1358
1359-1359
1361-1362
1363-1364
1365-1366
1367-1368
1369-1369
1371-1372
1373-1374
1375-1376
1377-1378
1379-1379
1381-1382
1383-1384
1385-1386
1387-1387
1389-1389
1391-1392
1393-1394
1395-1395
1397-1398
1399-1399
1401-1402
1403-1404
1405-1406
1407-1407
1409-1410
1411-1412
1413-1414
1415-1415
1417-1418
1419-1419
1421-1422
1423-1424
1425-1425
1427-1428
1429-1429
1431-1432
1433-1434
1435-1436
1437-1438
1439-1439
1441-1442
1443-1444
1445-1446
1447-1448
1449-1449
1451-1452
1453-1454
1455-1456
1457-1458
1459-1459
1461-1462
1463-1464
1465-1466
1467-1468
1469-1469
1471-1472
1473-1474
1475-1476
1477-1478
1479-1479
1481-1482
1483-1484
1485-1486
1487-1487
1489-1489
1491-1492
1493-1494
1495-1495
1497-1498
1499-1499
1501-1502
1503-1504
1505-1506
1507-1507
1509-1510
1511-1512
1513-1514
1515-1515
1517-1518
1519-1519
1521-1522
1523-1524
1525-1525
1527-1528
1529-1529
1531-1532
1533-1534
1535-1536
1537-1538
1539-1539
1541-1542
1543-1544
1545-1546
1547-1548
1549-1549
1551-1552
1553-1554
1555-1556
1557-1558
1559-1559
1561-1562
1563-1564
1565-1566
1567-1568
1569-1569
1571-1572
1573-1574
1575-1576
1577-1578
1579-1579
1581-1582
1583-1584
1585-1586
1587-1587
1589-1589
1591-1592
1593-1594
1595-1595
1597-1598
1599-1599
1601-1602
1603-1604
1605-1606
1607-1607
1609-1610
1611-1612
1613-1614
1615-1615
1617-1618
1619-1619
1621-1622
1623-1624
1625-1625
1627-1628
1629-1629
1631-1632
1633-1634
1635-1636
1637-1638
1639-1639
1641-1642
1643-1644
1645-1646
1647-1648
1649-1649
1651-1652
1653-1654
1655-1656
1657-1658
1659-1659
1661-1662
1663-1664
1665-1666
1667-1668
1669-1669
1671-1672
1673-1674
1675-1676
1677-1678
1679-1679
1681-1682
1683-1684
1685-1686
1687-1687
1689-1689
1691-1692
1693-1694
1695-1695
1697-1698
1699-1699
1701-1702
1703-1704
1705-1706
1707-1707
1709-1710
1711-1712
1713-1714
1715-1715
1717-1718
1719-1719
1721-1722
1723-1724
1725-1725
1727-1728
1729-1729
1731-1732
1733-1734
1735-1736
1737-1738
1739-1739
1741-1742
1743-1744
1745-1746
1747-1748
1749-1749
1751-1752
1753-1754
1755-1756
1757-1758
1759-1759
1761-1762
1763-1764
1765-1766
1767-1768
1769-1769
1771-1772
1773-1774
1775-1776
1777-1778
1779-1779
1781-1782
1783-1784
1785-1786
1787-1787
1789-1789
1791-1792
1793-1794
1795-1795
1797-1798
1799-1799
1801-1802
1803-1804
1805-1806
1807-1807
1809-1810
1811-1812
1813-1814
1815-1815
1817-1818
1819-1819
1821-1822
1823-1824
1825-1825
1827-1828
1829-1829
1831-1832
1833-1834
1835-1836
1837-1838
1839-1839
1841-1842
1843-1844
1845-1846
1847-1848
1849-1849
1851-1852
1853-1854
1855-1856
1857-1858
1859-1859
1861-1862
1863-1864
1865-1866
1867-1868
1869-1869
1871-1872
1873-1874
1875-1876
1877-1878
1879-1879
1881-1882
1883-1884
1885-1886
1887-1887
1889-1889
1891-1892
1893-1894
1895-1895
1897-1898
1899-1899
1901-1902
1903-1904
1905-1906
1907-1907
1909-1910
1911-1912
1913-1914
1915-1915
1917-1918
1919-1919
1921-1922
1923-1924
1925-1925
1927-1928
1929-1929
1931-1932
1933-1934
1935-1936
1937-1938
1939-1939
1941-1942
1943-1944
1945-1946
1947-1948
1949-1949
1951-1952
1953-1954
1955-1956
1957-1958
1959-1959
1961-1962
1963-1964
1965-1966
1967-1968
1969-1969
1971-1972
1973-1974
1975-1976
1977-1978
1979-1979
1981-1982
1983-1984
1985-1986
1987-1987
1989-1989
1991-1992<br

- 12 If he has oppressed the poor and needy,
Robbed by violence,
Not restored the pledge,
Lifted his eyes to the idols,
Or committed abomination;
- 13 If he has exacted usury
Or taken increase—
Shall he then live?
He shall not live!
If he has done any of these abominations,
He shall surely die;
His blood shall be upon him.
- 14 “*If, however, he begets a son
Who sees all the sins which his father
has done,
And considers but does not do likewise;*
- 15 *Who has not eaten on the mountains,
Nor lifted his eyes to the idols of the
house of Israel,
Nor defiled his neighbor's wife;*
- 16 Has not oppressed anyone,
Nor withheld a pledge,
Nor robbed by violence,
*But has given his bread to the hungry
And covered the naked with clothing;*
- 17 *Who has withdrawn his hand from the
poor^a
And not received usury or increase,
But has executed My judgments
And walked in My statutes—
He shall not die for the iniquity of his
father;
He shall surely live!*
- 18 “*As for his father,
Because he cruelly oppressed,
Robbed his brother by violence,
And did what is not good among his
people,
Behold, he shall die for his iniquity.*

TURN AND LIVE

¹⁹“Yet you say, ‘Why should the son not bear the guilt of the father?’ Because the son has done what is lawful and right, and has kept all My statutes and observed them, he shall surely live. ²⁰The soul who sins shall die. The son shall not bear the guilt of the father, nor the father bear the guilt of the son. The righteousness of the righteous shall be upon himself, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon himself.

²¹“But if a wicked man turns from all his sins which he has committed, keeps all My statutes, and does what is lawful and right, he shall surely live; he shall not die. ²²None of the transgressions which he has committed shall be remembered against him; because of the righteousness which he has done, he shall live. ²³Do I have any pleasure at all that the wicked should die?” says the Lord God, “and not that he should turn from his ways and live?

²⁴“But when a righteous man turns away from his righteousness and commits iniquity, and does according to all the abominations that the wicked *man* does, shall he live? All the righteousness which he has done shall not be remembered; because of the unfaithfulness of which he is guilty and the sin which he has committed, because of them he shall die.

²⁵“Yet you say, ‘The way of the Lord is not fair.’ Hear now, O house of Israel, is it not My way which is fair, and your ways which are not fair? ²⁶When a righteous *man* turns away from his righteousness, commits iniquity, and dies in it, it is because of the iniquity which he has done that he dies. ²⁷Again, when a wicked *man* turns away from the wickedness which

18:17 ^aFollowing Masoretic Text, Targum, and Vulgate; Septuagint reads *iniquity* (compare verse 8).

SOUL NOTE



The Verdict (18:1–22) This passage describes how God would not punish children for their parents' sins, but instead would hold individuals responsible for their own sins. He promised to punish the wicked, but those who turn away from all their sins and obey God will be forgiven. In fact, “none of the transgressions which he has committed shall be remembered against him,” says God (18:22). God does not judge according to the extenuating circumstances of our lives. He asks but one question: “Did you turn from sin and obey Me?” Being able to answer “Yes” is the life’s work of every believer. **Topic: Accountability**

- 2 But I will send a fire upon Moab,
And it shall devour the palaces of
Kerieth;
Moab shall die with tumult,
With shouting and trumpet sound.
3 And I will cut off the judge from its
midst,
And slay all its princes with him,"
Says the LORD.

JUDGMENT ON JUDAH

4 Thus says the LORD:

- "For three transgressions of Judah, and
for four,
I will not turn away its *punishment*,
Because they have despised the law of
the LORD,
And have not kept His commandments.
Their lies lead them astray,
Lies which their fathers followed.
5 But I will send a fire upon Judah,
And it shall devour the palaces of
Jerusalem."

JUDGMENT ON ISRAEL

6 Thus says the LORD:

- "For three transgressions of Israel, and for
four,
I will not turn away its *punishment*,
Because they sell the righteous for
silver,
And the poor for a pair of sandals.
7 They pant after^a the dust of the earth
which is on the head of the poor,
And pervert the way of the humble.
A man and his father go in to the same
girl,
To defile My holy name.
They lie down by every altar on clothes
taken in pledge,

And drink the wine of the condemned in
the house of their god.

- 9 "Yet it was I who destroyed the Amorite
before them,
Whose height was like the height of the
cedars,
And he was as strong as the oaks;
Yet I destroyed his fruit above
And his roots beneath.
10 Also it was I who brought you up from
the land of Egypt,
And led you forty years through the
wilderness,
To possess the land of the Amorite.
11 I raised up some of your sons as
prophets,
And some of your young men as
Nazirites.
Is it not so, O you children of Israel?"
Says the LORD.
12 "But you gave the Nazirites wine to drink,
And commanded the prophets saying,
'Do not prophesy!'
13 "Behold, I am weighed down by you,
As a cart full of sheaves is weighed
down.
14 Therefore flight shall perish from the
swift,
The strong shall not strengthen his
power,
Nor shall the mighty deliver himself;
15 He shall not stand who handles the bow.
The swift of foot shall not escape,
Nor shall he who rides a horse deliver
himself.
16 The most courageous men of might
Shall flee naked in that day,"
Says the LORD.

2:7 ^aOr trample on



SOUL NOTE

Justice for All (2:6) Amos pronounced judgment on the surrounding nations, and even on Judah, Israel's brothers and sisters to the south. Perhaps the people in Israel enjoyed hearing that these nations faced God's judgment—until Amos added Israel to his list. They, too, had sinned greatly against God, and they would be punished. There is no getting around it: God punishes sin. Just as God provided the opportunity for repentance and restoration to ancient Israel, He also offers it today through His Son, Jesus Christ. **Topic: Accountability**

BE RECONCILED TO GOD

¹²For we do not command ourselves again to you, but give you opportunity to boast on our behalf, that you may have *an answer* for those who boast in appearance and not in heart. ¹³For if we are beside ourselves, it is for God; or if we are of sound mind, it is for you. ¹⁴For the love of Christ compels us, because we judge thus: that if One died for all, then all died; ¹⁵and He died for all, that those who live should live no longer for themselves, but for Him who died for them and rose again.

¹⁶Therefore, from now on, we regard no one according to the flesh. Even though we have known Christ according to the flesh, yet now we know *Him* thus no longer. ¹⁷Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new. ¹⁸Now all things are of God, who has reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation, ¹⁹that is, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses to them, and has committed to us the word of reconciliation.

²⁰Now then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were pleading through us: we implore you on Christ's behalf, be reconciled

to God. ²¹For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

MARKS OF THE MINISTRY

6 We then, as workers together with Him also plead with you not to receive the grace of God in vain. ²For He says:

*"In an acceptable time I have heard you,
And in the day of salvation I have
helped you."*^a

Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.

³We give no offense in anything, that our ministry may not be blamed. ⁴But in all things we commend ourselves as ministers of God: in much patience, in tribulations, in needs, in distresses, ⁵in stripes, in imprisonments, in tumults, in labors, in sleeplessness, in fastings; ⁶by purity, by knowledge, by longsuffering, by kindness, by the Holy Spirit, by sincere love, ⁷by the word of truth, by the power of God, by the armor of righteousness on the right hand and on the left, ⁸by honor and dishonor, by

6:2 ^aIsaiah 49:8

SOUL NOTE



Present with the Lord (5:6–8) Exactly what happens after someone dies? The Bible doesn't go into much detail, but it does say that believers who die—that is, are "absent from the body"—will be "present with the Lord" (see also Phil. 1:23). They will experience a state of blessedness with God. When Christ returns, the believers who have died will be raised and the living believers will be changed, and all will receive glorified, eternal bodies (1 Cor. 15:51–54; 1 Thess. 4:16–18). God has promised that His people will be with Him forever. Death is a defeated enemy. Christ has bought eternal life. We can take hope in God's sure promise. **Topic: Death**



SOUL NOTE

A Rewarding Wait (5:10) A future judgment will finalize the destiny of all who have not known Christ (Rev. 20:11–15). Believers will not need to fear this judgment, for they will have been guaranteed salvation and eternal life in heaven. However, the saved do have a judgment awaiting them that will determine their rewards. At this judgment, Christians will account for how they have lived and served, and how well they have used their gifts for the sake of the gospel. If you had to stand before the Lord this very day, what would you say? God holds us accountable. **Topic: Accountability**

evil rep
yet true
dying, .
yet not
joicing;
ing not

BE HOL

¹¹O C
you, ou
stricted
own aff
(I speak
¹⁴Do
unbelie
teousne
munion
accord
has a b
agreeme
For you
God ha

^{I w}
An
I w
An:

¹⁷There

^{Co}
Ana



Bounda

sphe
unbe
"yok
anim
anyt
such
goals
toget

To le
ity pr

sand years.⁵ But the rest of the dead did not live again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection. ⁶Blessed and holy is he who has part in the first resurrection. Over such the second death has no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years.

SATANIC REBELLION CRUSHED

⁷Now when the thousand years have expired, Satan will be released from his prison ⁸and will go out to deceive the nations which are in the four corners of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle, whose number is as the sand of the sea. ⁹They went up on the breadth of the earth and surrounded the camp of the saints and the beloved city. And fire came down from God out of heaven and devoured them. ¹⁰The devil, who deceived them, was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone where^a the beast and the false prophet are. And they will be tormented day and night forever and ever.

THE GREAT WHITE THRONE JUDGMENT

¹¹Then I saw a great white throne and Him who sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away. And there was found no place for them. ¹²And I saw the dead, small

and great, standing before God,^a and books were opened. And another book was opened, which is the Book of Life. And the dead were judged according to their works, by the things which were written in the books. ¹³The sea gave up the dead who were in it, and Death and Hades delivered up the dead who were in them. And they were judged, each one according to his works. ¹⁴Then Death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death.^a ¹⁵And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire.

ALL THINGS MADE NEW

21 Now I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away. Also there was no more sea. ²Then I, John,^a saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. ³And I heard a loud voice from heaven saying, "Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be

20:10 ^aNU-Text and M-Text add also. **20:12** ^aNU-Text and M-Text read the throne. **20:14** ^aNU-Text and M-Text add the lake of fire. **21:2** ^aNU-Text and M-Text omit John.

SOUL NOTE



Before the Judge (20:11–15) In this heavenly courtroom, God Himself is the Judge. Everyone—small and great, poor and rich, the notorious and the reputable—will stand without any excuse before their Maker. The only thing that will matter is whether one's name has been written in the Book of Life. That book

has no misprints, no omissions, no mistakes. No person can blame anyone else if their name is missing; and they can take no credit if their name is included. Each person can be sure that their name is written in the book by trusting Christ today. **Topic: Accountability**

SOUL NOTE



No More Pain (21:4) No sorrow, no pain, no death! Such a place is hard to imagine, because this world is filled with loss and sorrow. Revelation describes a better time and a better place, however, where grief and loss will not exist: heaven. God promises to "wipe away every tear" and that "there shall be no more pain." No matter what we experience here, God promises a perfect future with Him. Through the hard times of today, we can trust this hope for the future. **Topic: Grief/Loss**