"Six Tips for Maintaining Accountability"

by Jim Burns, Ph.D.

Accountability is the foundation for living a life of integrity. If you are interested in building integrity into the life of your kids, then your own personal accountability matters. The strength of personal accountability in your own life will leave a legacy of integrity in the lives of your kids. If you need a place to start in order to build and maintain integrity in your life, let me offer you the following tips…

1. Seek out other like-minded people who are interested in developing an accountability relationship.
As a rule, same-sex relationships work best in accountability settings. Potential participants may include someone you admire and desire as a mentor, peers, or someone you might want to mentor. Don't be surprised if you experience some rejection here. Keep trying.

2. Enter into an accountability relationship with a person or people you trust.
Once you've identified interested people, get started. Grant this person (or these people) permission access to your life for the purpose of holding you (and each other) accountable.

3. Be vulnerable.
Be willing to share your victories and defeats; your struggles and your strengths. Without vulnerability, meeting for the purpose of accountability is worthless. Many people who have crashed and burned morally, have been in accountability groups, but were not vulnerable.

4. Be honest.
An accountability relationship is only as helpful as the amount of honesty participants bring to the table. Like vulnerability, without honesty, an accountability relationship is worthless.

5. Meet Regularly.
An accountability relationship offers great motivation for living with integrity when the meetings happen on a regular basis. It's much easier to get off track (the accountability loses its influence) when long periods of time elapse between meetings.

6. Ask and answer the right kinds of questions.
Accountability is enhanced when specific, life-related questions are asked and answered on a regular basis. Dr. Jon Wallace, President of Azusa Pacific University has shared the following six questions that he must answer whenever he meets with his Board of Trustees:

1. Do you practice confession of sin? What is the evidence?
2. What acts of personal spiritual renewal are you practicing, such as Bible study, prayer, reflection and solitude?
3. What is the evidence that you are maintaining your family as a priority in your life?
4. What are the evidences of personal, spiritual and professional growth in your life?
5. Are you maintaining life-giving relationship? What is the evidence?
6. What is the evidence that you are living a balanced life?

Additional questions that work well in accountability group settings are as follows:

• Have you spent time daily in the Scriptures and in prayer?
  - What is the compass bearing of your life? Has it come from your quiet time?
  - Are you listening to God through prayer?

• Have you shared the Gospel with an unbeliever this week?

• Is there a sense of urgency in your walk with God?
  - Is it such that other people are attracted to the conversation about who Jesus Christ is?

• Have you been completely above reproach in your financial dealings?

• Have you spent quality relationship time with your family and friends?

• Have you done your best in your job (or school, etc.)?

• Have you told any half-truths or outright lies, putting yourself in a better light to those around you?

• Have you had any flirtations, lustful attitudes, tempting thoughts or exposed yourself to explicit materials that would not glorify God?

• Have you taken care of your body through daily physical exercise and proper eating and sleeping habits?

• Have you allowed any person or circumstance to rob you of your joy?
  - Where is your fearful place?
  - Are you letting fear creep into your life?

If you are interested in even more great accountability questions, be sure to download my free tip sheet entitled, ***"Good Parenting Begins with Accountability"*** from the HomeWord website. You can download it now by clicking ***here***.