

NINEVAH

Stewardship — the faithful management of that which belongs to another; entrusted oversight, not ownership.

Accountability — the state of being answerable for one's actions, words, and stewardship to a rightful authority.

WEEK 9: ACCOUNTABILITY — THE RECKONING IS COMING

Taught by Pastor Cole Jones

PRELIMINARY QUESTIONS

Before We Study — Talk It Out

- ☐ Have you ever run from accountability?
- ☐ When you hear the word "accountability," what comes to mind?
- ☐ What's the difference between accountability and criticism?
- ☐ Have you ever wanted someone to hold you accountable but didn't ask for it? Why didn't you ask?
- ☐ Is there a relationship in your life right now with zero accountability in it?
- ☐ When was the last time someone corrected you and you actually thanked them for it?
- ☐ Do you trust people more or less once you find out they answer to someone else?
- ☐ Growing up, who was allowed to hold you accountable? Who wasn't?
- ☐ What's easier for you to accept — being held accountable for what you did, or for what you meant?

STUDY

Section One — Why We Hate Accountability

When the cool evening breezes were blowing, the man and his wife heard the LORD God walking about in the garden. So they hid from the LORD God among the trees. Then the LORD God called to the man, "Where are you?" He replied, "I heard you walking in the garden, so I hid. I was afraid because I was naked." (Genesis 3:8-10 (NLT))

It threatens autonomy.

Accountability assumes someone else has rightful say over you. In a culture (and honestly a sin nature) oriented around self-sovereignty — "my life, my rules, my business" — being answerable to anyone, even God, registers as a violation before it registers as good.

It exposes self-deception we've grown comfortable with.

The human heart is the most deceitful of all things, and desperately wicked. Who really knows how bad it is? (Jeremiah 17:9 (NLT))

We build private narratives that let us live with ourselves. Accountability threatens the narrative, not just the behavior.

KEY POINT

Accountability only works when Trust is fortified.

STUDY

Section Two — Why We Need Accountability

Self-deception is real.

But don't just listen to God's word. You must do what it says. Otherwise, you are only fooling yourselves. For if you listen to the word and don't obey, it is like glancing at your face in a mirror. You see yourself, walk away, and forget what you look like. But if you look carefully into the perfect law that sets you free, and if you do what it says and don't forget what you heard, then God will bless you for doing it. (James 1:22-25 (NLT))

And the judgment is based on this fact: God's light came into the world, but people loved the darkness more than the light, for their actions were evil. All who do evil hate the light and refuse to go near it, fearing their sins will be exposed. (John 3:19-20 (NLT))

STUDY

Section Three — Case Studies

Case Study 1: John 3:19-20

(See above.)

Case Study 2: 2 Samuel 12

So the LORD sent Nathan the prophet to tell David this story: "There were two men in a certain town. One was rich, and one was poor. The rich man owned a great many sheep and cattle. The poor man owned nothing but one little lamb he had bought. He raised that little lamb, and it grew up with his children. It ate from the man's own plate and drank from his cup, and he cuddled it like a baby daughter. One day a guest arrived at the home of the rich man. But instead of killing an animal from his own flock or herd, he took the poor man's lamb and killed it and prepared it for his guest." David was furious. "As surely as the LORD lives," he vowed, "any man who would do such a thing deserves to die! He must repay four lambs to the poor man for the one he stole and for having no pity." Then Nathan said to David, "You are that man!" (2 Samuel 12:1-7 (NLT, selected))

What Accountability Leads To

I had only heard about you before, but now I have seen you with my own eyes. I take back everything I said, and I sit in dust and ashes to show my repentance. (Job 42:5-6 (NLT))

DISCUSSION

For Group Conversation

- ☐ Is your fear of accountability more about consequences, or about being seen as someone other than who you've presented yourself to be?

- ☐ What would have to be true about God's character for accountability to feel safe instead of threatening?
- ☐ If nobody ever finds out, does that change whether something is actually wrong? Why does it feel like it does?

NOTES

Write It Down