

ACCOUNTABLE TO GOD

By Bob Young

In his second letter, Peter several times mentions the problem of forgetting and the need for reminders (1:9, 12-15; 2:20-21; 3:1, 5, 8). We humans are prone to forget; we need reminders. Over four decades of preaching and local ministry, I have observed that there is not enough “review” in the typical congregation. In the academic world, students review so they can pass a test. In many occupations, professional journals provide reviews and help one keep current with new developments. At the church, both in our Bible classes and sermons, we too seldom review.

This article is a review. These concepts I have taught and preached. A simple question: for what are we accountable to God? A preacher “worth his salt” continually reminds those who hear him that we are accountable before God. Unfortunately, many sermons begin and end with our accountability for baptism. Certainly, baptism is a necessary part of our initial obedience and imitation of Christ (thus we become disciples, followers of Christ). But baptism is the beginning, not the end. Baptism is not a cure-all or panacea. Baptism does not fix everything forever so that nothing more is ever required? God holds his children accountable. For what does God hold us accountable? What are the essentials? Here is my spiritual “bucket list”. For 2010, here are my “Ten Accountabilities”.

#1—God holds me accountable for getting the **focus** of life right. What is at the center of my life? What is my purpose on earth? If I misunderstand the purpose of life, all else will be messed up.

#2—God holds me accountable for **relationships**. Three are paramount.

- God holds me accountable for a heart of worship. I was made for intimacy with God. Do I live intimately with God? Do I seek his presence? Does my life honor, adore, magnify, and glorify him? How is my God-relationship?
- God holds me accountable to live out faithfully my family roles. Given that we have a primary responsibility to our families, we must ask: How is my family-relationship?
- God expects from me friendships. God’s plan for his creation includes my godly friends, shared intimacy, friendships that are more than fellowship. How are my friend-relationships?

#3—God holds me accountable for how I live my **life**.

- God holds me accountable for service. Jesus by example showed me how to pick up the towel and basin. He calls me to advance the cause where it does not exist. He calls me to live out the reality of God in this world wherever I go. I do this in many ways, but at the center of life is a life of sacrificial service.
- God holds me accountable for my work. God created me and I am responsible for learning how to work hard and enjoy work. This is not natural; this is an acquired aspect of my Christian accountability.

- God calls me to rest. We do not know and appreciate the process of sabbathing (resting). In our culture, we are driven. We never stop; we never rest. We do not work well because we do not rest well. These three are a package—serving, working, and resting.

#4—God holds me responsible as a **steward**.

- I am a steward of my physical body.
- I am a steward of God's stuff—possessions and opportunities.
- I am a steward of my mind, with the great God-given capacity for creativity.

I boldly suggest that virtually all of life is encompassed in these categories—ten items: getting the purpose of my life right; my relationships--to God, to family, to friends; my life--of service, work, and rest; my stewardship--of my body, my possessions, and my mind.

God holds us accountable! May He help us be what he plans, wants, and empowers us to be!