

Di122 Essentials of Christianity

Lesson Di122-25 Church: Accountability

Most parents ask their children to help with the work of the family—whether it's to gather firewood, fetch water, feed the animals, or watch the baby. As a child grows older, the tasks grow too. Eventually the parent just trusts the older child to complete their assigned job. He has learned to be accountable and responsible. As believers in Christ, we are each accountable to obey his commands to the best of our abilities. We must be found faithful.

This lesson is the first of four lessons on the church, the body of Christ. The lessons will consider accountability, fellowship, mentoring, and expectation connected with the Body. The Bible clearly teaches that believers should gather together. The writer to the Hebrews says, “Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful. And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, not giving up meeting together, ... but encouraging one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching” (Heb 10:23-25).

In his Gospel, the physician Luke related a parable Jesus had told. The people had a hard time accepting a Messiah that would eat with sinners. Jesus had just gone to the home of Zacchaeus, the tax collector in Jericho. Zacchaeus repented of his sins and became accountable for repaying those he had cheated. But those watching were expecting Jesus to set up a kingdom in power and glory, defeating the Jews' political enemies.

So Jesus told them a parable about a nobleman who made a journey to a distant land. The purpose of his journey was that he was going to be appointed king over his region. In a similar way, Jesus was soon going to depart from this earth and is to return as King.

In the parable, there was excitement everywhere in the nobleman's house. The master was taking a trip that would last for some time. Before leaving, he called ten of his servants and explained all that was expected of them while he was gone. He gave them ten minas, and told them, “Put this money to work until I come back.” A mina was an amount of money equal to about three months' wages. Each of the ten servants was given the same amount to invest (Luke 19:12-13).

But his subjects hated the nobleman and sent a delegation after him to say, “We don't want this man to be our king!” Such things did happen in these first century times. This aspect of the story may have been included to warn the Jews against rejecting Jesus as King.

Their master was made king, however, and returned home. Then he sent for the servants to whom he had given the money, in order to find out what they had gained with it. The first one came and said, “Sir, your mina has earned ten more.”

“Well done, my good servant!” his master replied. “Because you have been trustworthy in a very small matter, take charge of ten cities.”

The second came and said, “Sir, your mina has earned five more.”

His master answered, “You take charge of five cities.”

Then another servant came and said, “Sir, here is your mina; I have kept it laid away in a piece of cloth. I was afraid of you, because you are a hard man. You take out what you did not put in and reap what you did not sow.”

His master replied, “I will judge you by your own words, you wicked servant! You knew, did you, that I am a hard man, taking out what I did not put in, and reaping what I did not sow? Why then didn’t you put my money on deposit, so that when I came back, I could have collected it with interest?” The master did not admit to the truth of the statement of the servant, but repeated it in a question. If this was the opinion of the servant, he should have acted accordingly. Then he said to those standing by, “Take his mina away from him and give it to the one who has ten minas.”

“Sir,” they said, “he already has ten!”

He replied, “I tell you that to everyone who has, more will be given, but as for the one who has nothing, even what they have will be taken away” (Luke 19:14-26).

Jesus had explained to his disciples what he meant using this parable, saying, “The knowledge of the secrets of the kingdom of heaven has been given to you, but not to them. Whoever has will be given more, and he will have an abundance. Whoever does not have, even what he has will be taken from him. This is why I speak ... in parables” (Matt 13:11-13). Truth that is not put into practice will be lost, but truth that is used will be multiplied. Those who seek spiritual gain in the gospel, for themselves and others, will become richer spiritually. Those who neglect or waste what is given them will become poor spiritually, losing even what they have.

In another setting Jesus taught, “For everyone to whom much is given, of him shall be much required: and to whom men have committed much, of him they will ask the more” (Luke 12:48, KJV).

The apostle Paul also taught, “It is required that those who have been given a trust must prove faithful. ... It is the Lord who judges me. Therefore judge nothing before the appointed time; wait until the Lord comes. He will bring to light what is hidden in darkness and will expose the motives of the heart. At that time each will receive their praise from God” (1Cor 4:2-5).

Jesus intends his kingdom to be expanded. He wants his servants to use what they have been given to enlarge his kingdom, to win others as his followers. And he will hold each believer accountable for what he has been given, spiritually, as well as in other kinds of blessings. Material wealth is not always a sign of God’s blessing, however. Many a man and woman, who have been rich in faith and successful in winning souls, have not been rich in this world’s goods. But when they stand before God, he will say, “Well done, good and faithful servant! Come and share your master’s happiness.”

God has given leaders in the church, to help guide the younger Christians and workers. The writer to the Hebrews admonishes the new Christians, “Have confidence in your leaders and submit to their authority, because they keep watch over you as those who must give an account. Do this so that their work will be a joy, not a burden” (Heb 13:17). You will be blessed if you find a godly man or woman who is able to give you wise counsel as you follow Christ and seek to do his will.

This lesson is **important** because it teaches that God will hold each of his people accountable for what truth and resources he or she has been given. The purpose of these blessings is to help you expand the kingdom of God. Truth that is used will be multiplied.

The **main truth** of this lesson is that the master has given each of us gifts and abilities to use to expand his kingdom, which means reaching more souls for Christ. He also reveals spiritual truth and direction to you. He expects you to be obedient and put what you know into practice. He will then give you even more understanding as you follow him.

Your **review** questions are:

1. According to this parable, is one servant favored over another? [Pause]
A. If you answered, “According to this parable, each servant is given the same amount as the others,” you have answered correctly.
2. How did the master make each servant accountable for what he had been given? [Pause]
A. If you answered, “The master made each servant accountable by asking each servant to give an account of what he had done with what he was given,” you are correct.
3. When will our Lord Jesus hold us accountable for what he has given each of us? [Pause]
A. If you answered, “Jesus will hold us accountable at his final returning and judgment,” you are right.

Your **assignment** is to listen to the lesson several times until you understand the concept of accountability. Think about whom you can ask to hold you spiritually accountable. Go in prayer and ask that person whether they would be your accountability partner. Give them permission to ask you anything concerning spiritual truth or Holy Spirit direction. Memorize the following Bible verse:

“Have confidence in your leaders and submit to their authority, because they keep watch over you as those who must give an account. Do this so that their work will be a joy, not a burden” (Hebrews 13:17).

“For everyone to whom much is given, of him shall be much required: and to whom men have committed much, of him they will ask the more” (Luke 12:48, KJV).