

MONDAY MANNA
JULY 10, 2023

STRENGTH THROUGH ACCOUNTABILITY

By Robert J. Tamasy

More often than we would like, we hear sad, sometimes scandalous stories of prominent leaders found guilty of moral or ethical wrongdoing. Someone who built a strong reputation and earned the respect and admiration within their profession seeing it all suddenly destroyed when misdeeds came to light.

How could this happen? We wonder and shake our heads, perhaps thinking about the mournful words of Israel's future king David, "How the mighty have fallen" (2 Samuel 1:19), upon learning of King Saul and his son, Jonathan, dying on the field of battle. Other questions might arise in our minds when we hear about a leader's epic fail: Could it have been avoided? Were there any early signs that this individual's career was taking a devastating turn?

The Scriptures give many warnings that such things can happen. For instance, 1 Corinthians 10:12 cautions, "So, if you think you are standing firm, be careful that you don't fall!" Proverbs 4:23 warns, "Above all else, guard your heart, for everything you do flows from it."

Pages of the Bible cite many people who started well walking with God but somewhere along the way got caught up in areas of sin, with terrible consequences. Ironically, one of them was King David, whom 2 Samuel 11 tells us not only committed adultery but also directed that a loyal officer, Uriah, be killed to cover up his wrongdoing. Since all of us are imperfect, does that mean such failures are inevitable?

One preventative measure would be to establish an accountability relationship with one or more people you trust and know would be honest with you. For it to work effectively you need to be willing to tell them, 'You can ask me any question – about any area of my life.' The purpose of this is not for them to catch you in failure, but to enable you to succeed in doing the things you want to do and warn you if they sense you are heading in a wrong direction. Here are some helpful principles from the Bible:

We can keep one another sharp. We benefit from "constructive friction" in rubbing up against one another in the process of caring accountability relationships, seeking the best for each other. "As iron sharpens iron, so one man sharpens another" (Proverbs 27:17).

We can find strength in numbers. In isolation we can rationalize or even deceive ourselves into doing things we know are wrong or unwise. "Two are better than one because they have a good return for their work; if one falls down, his friend can help him up..." (Ecclesiastes 4:9-12).

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We all need encouragement. It is in times of discouragement that we can become most vulnerable to temptation. People who encourage us can remind us of the hope we have in the Lord. “And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds. Let us not give up meeting together, as is the habit of some, but let us encourage one another...” (Hebrews 10:24-25).

We can confide in trusted people when we fail. Rather than concealing sin, letting guilt consume us, we confide in trusted accountability partners who can offer invaluable counsel on how to get back on course. “Therefore, confess your sins to each other and pray for each other, so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective” (James 5:16).

© 2023. Robert J. Tamasy has written *Marketplace Ambassadors: CBMC's Continuing Legacy of Evangelism and Discipleship*; *Business at Its Best: Timeless Wisdom from Proverbs for Today's Workplace*; *Pursuing Life With a Shepherd's Heart*, coauthored with Ken Johnson; and *The Heart of Mentoring*, coauthored with David A.

Reflection/Discussion Questions

1. How do you respond when you learn of a once-highly admired, prominent individual who becomes ensnared in moral or ethical wrongdoing? Do you ever wonder why or how such a thing could have occurred? Explain your answer.
2. When you hear the word ‘accountability,’ what is your reaction? Positive or negative? Before reading this Monday Manna, how would you have defined accountability?
3. Why do you think it is difficult for some people to agree to enter into accountability relationships?
4. Do you have an accountability relationship with anyone? If so, what has that experience been for you – what benefits has it provided for you? Can you think of any downsides to being accountable to one or more other people?

NOTE:

If you have a Bible and would like to read more, consider the following passages:
Proverbs 12:15, 18:2,4,12,24, 19:3,8,16,20,27; James 3:13-1

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