



Eternal PERSPECTIVE Proverbs

BIBLE TEXT | PROVERBS 27:13-27

13 Take a man's garment when he has put up security for a stranger, and hold it in pledge when he puts up security for an adulteress.

14 Whoever blesses his neighbor with a loud voice, rising early in the morning, will be counted as cursing.

15 A continual dripping on a rainy day and a quarrelsome wife are alike;

16 to restrain her is to restrain the wind or to grasp oil in one's right hand.

17 Iron sharpens iron, and one man sharpens another.

18 Whoever tends a fig tree will eat its fruit, and he who guards his master will be honored.

19 As in water face reflects face, so the heart of man reflects the man.

20 Sheol and Abaddon are never satisfied, and never satisfied are the eyes of man.

21 The crucible is for silver, and the furnace is for gold, and a man is tested by his praise.

22 Crush a fool in a mortar with a pestle along with crushed grain, yet his folly will not depart from him.


23 Know well the condition of your flocks, and give attention to your herds,

24 for riches do not last forever; and does a crown endure to all generations?

25 When the grass is gone and the new growth appears and the vegetation of the mountains is gathered,

26 the lambs will provide your clothing, and the goats the price of a field.

27 There will be enough goats' milk for your food, for the food of your household and maintenance for your girls.



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DEVOTIONAL FOR PROVERBS 27:13-27

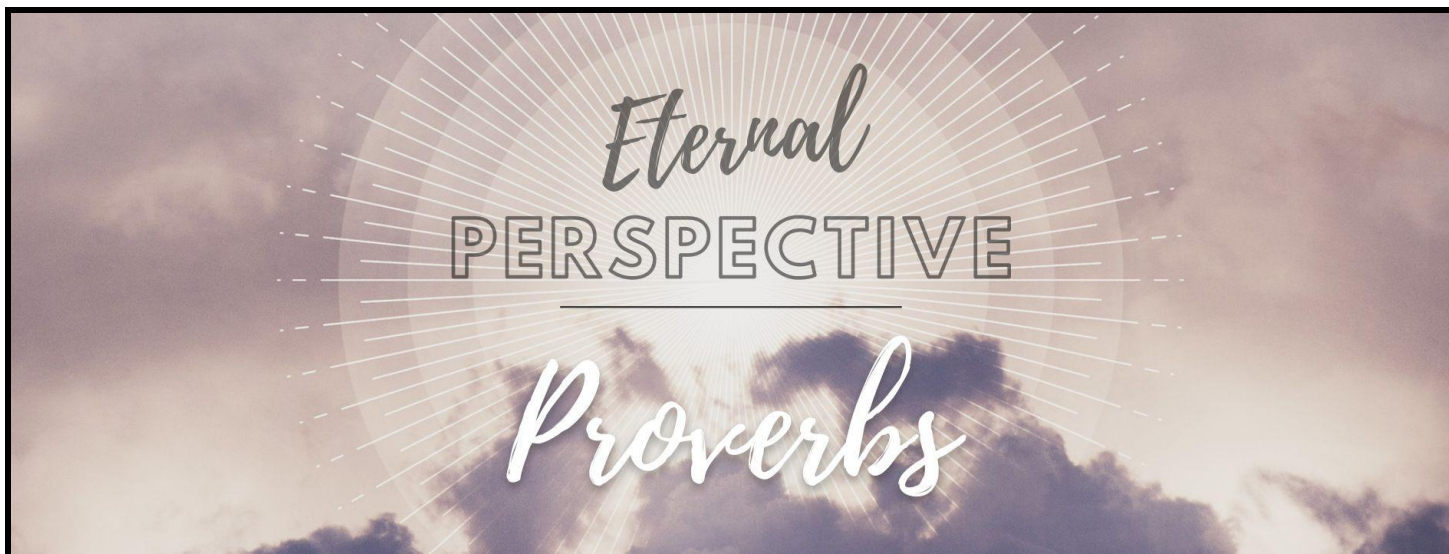
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Accountability is a term often spoken within the Church, but is just as often misunderstood, at least in its truest meaning. It is thrown around as something to be desired because it is perceived as something that's needed according to the small bit of understanding of it we can have. However, when it is truly experienced, our perception of it can often shift from it being a desirable thing to a loathsome thing. If we correctly understood its purpose in our lives, it would never become "loathsome", nor would it fall into the category of just something "desirable", but instead it would be *understood* as absolutely necessary regardless of our affinity for it, or aversion to it.

So what does it mean to be accountable? In a word it means to be "answerable." It means that we are to give an account for, or answer for, the things that we say and do or actions that we take.

On a football team, every member of that team understands the ultimate goal, that is to win the game. But within the course of the game, there are a multitude of plays. Within those plays, are a multitude of actions taken simultaneously that when properly executed move the team closer to accomplishing their goal. Those actions come in the form of roles specific to positions on the team. Not all roles are the same. Knowledge of all roles is not required. The wide receiver does not need to know what the linemen are doing anymore than the linemen need to know the route that the wide receiver is running. What is understood between them is that they each know their overall goal, and there is the expectation that each will strive for the proper execution of their role to achieve that goal. With that understanding they have become "accountable" to one another for their role. So, practically, if a lineman is consistently unprepared and misses his block and the quarterback is sacked, it doesn't matter how well the wide receiver runs his route because the ball is never thrown. He, along with every other team member, has the opportunity to hold that lineman accountable, answerable, for his unpreparedness. Not only that, there is the responsibility to continue with that accountability until the lineman's unpreparedness is corrected. Why? Because the game depends upon it!

So it is within the Church. We have an ultimate goal, to make disciples (Matthew 28:19-20). We have a multitude of "plays" that provide opportunities to be His witnesses (Acts 1:8). We have clear definition in His Word of the expectation placed upon us as witnesses. With that understanding, we have become "accountable" to one another for our witness. When we say we are a witness, but our lives display something contrary to what the Word says our witness should be, every other "team member" has the opportunity to hold us accountable, answerable, for our



improper witness. Not only that, there is the responsibility to continue with that accountability until our witness is corrected. Why? Because the "game" depends upon it!

Verse 17 of Proverbs 27 says, "Iron sharpens iron, and one man sharpens another." This is a wonderful illustration of the accountability that should exist among believers. One, it is something of the same kind that does the sharpening. There are different roles within the Church, yes, but we are all a part of the same team with the same goal. Two, where there is a sharpening means that something has become dull that is meant to be sharp; a tool meant to be sharp but yet remains dull is useless, if not dangerous. This sharpening that we do for one another is a service that we do for one another, and it will always bear a benefit, even to the one doing the sharpening (verse 18).

May the Church sharpen one another well—because the gospel depends on it!

Questions:

1. What do you think of accountability? Is it welcomed or unwelcomed?
2. How have you experienced accountability before? Did it bring about genuine correction in your life? Why or why not?
3. How have you sought to hold others accountable? If you haven't, why haven't you?