YOU ARE ACCOUNTABLE

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2 Corinthians 5:10 For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may be recompensed for his deeds in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.

INTRODUCTION

Are you ready to stand before the Lord and give an account of your life? Many Christians believe that once they are saved, there is no accountability to God in any format. But scripture is very clear about the fact that both believers and unbelievers will stand in judgment. What is the difference between these judgments?

Believers' based on God's purpose for them Unbelievers' based on works and unbelief

Clearly, we are accountable to God for the way we live our lives.

Read 2 Corinthians 5:1-10 and observe the following:

1.	. To whom was Paul writing in this letter?			
2.	How did Paul view death?			
3.	Who was going to be judged according to Paul?			
to	owing that there is going to be a judgment based on our actions, the degree which we have fulfilled God's purpose for us, how do we determine that we actually doing this?			
	ad Ezekiel 33:1-9 and discuss what the role of a believer might be in light of d's warning:			

Because God didn't want His people to suffer judgment, He called Ezekiel to warn His people. God could have warned them Himself, but He asked Ezekiel to do it, and told Ezekiel that he would be accountable for delivering it.

God is clearly looking for people who:

- 1. Believe in Jesus as their savior
- 2. Are willing to do whatever He asks them to do

And, when God has revealed His purpose to a believer, he or she is responsible for doing what God has asked.

Read 2 Chronicles 16:9 and record what you learn about God:			
Sometimes God's purposes seem very strange or even impossible to us. Read Luke 1:28-38 and write your observations here. Particularly note Mary's response.			
Hebrews 11 has been called the "Hebrews Hall of Faith." As we look at the people named there, notice what they all had in common:			
Do you think that your name will be included on a list like this?			

WHEN GOD ASKS US TO DO SOMETHING, HE WILL HOLD US ACCOUNTABLE

LESSONS FROM JEREMIAH

One of my all time favorite Bible verses comes from the prophet Jeremiah. Read Jeremiah 29:11 and record the good news here:			
Sometimes I have been so excited about the future and hope that I completely miss the fact that God says he has plans for me. The results of the plans include "welfare and not calamity" and "a future and a hope." So, I must ask myself if I am actually plugged into all of this "welfare and future and hope" if I			
don't know God's plans for me. Today, we will be looking at the sorts of things that God plans to help us learn to recognize His revelations. In addition to His plans for our lives, God has revealed other important plans. Read some of them here and write your thoughts in the space provided:			
Exodus 26:30			
Jeremiah 36:3			
Jeremiah 50:45			
Ezekiel 43:10			
Acts 2:22-23			
Psalm 33:10-11			

Isaiah 25:1				
Summarize in a sentence or two what you have learned about God's plans:				
·				
God created man in His image. Do a word study on "image" in Genesis 2 and record the results here:				
When sin entered through Adam's willful sin, the image of God in man was skewed. God is sinless; man was no longer sinless. The plans that men devise show that sinfulness with great clarity. Read the following verses that discuss man's plans, and record what you learn here:				
Isaiah 30:1				
Proverbs 6:16-19				
Proverbs 15:26				
Isaiah 29:15				
As we conclude for today, ask yourself if your plans are in line with what God is doing and what His Word reveals. Answer honestly:				

Proverbs 16:9 The mind of man plans his way, but the Lord directs his steps.

ESTABLISHING PURPOSE

C. S.	Lewis was	an amazin	g writer.	At one t	ime, he	compared	d the c	church t	o a
boat.	He said t	hat there a	re three t	things th	at a boat	t on the o	cean i	needs t	0
know	' :								

- 1. Why it's in the ocean
- 2. How to keep itself afloat
- 3. How to avoid hitting other boats and obstacles

My favorite philosophical apologist, Ravi Zacharias, notes a major problem with the church. The focus is on the last two items when the answer to the first isn't known! Each church and each person within the church has a unique purpose established by God. That's why we're in the ocean! (aka the world)

Before a boat captain leaves port, he knows where his home port is located, he knows where he's going, he has a planned route, he knows what his cargo is, he knows how many crew members he will need, he knows how much food it will take to feed the crew, and other important details.

Jesus probably had something like that in mind when he spoke of purposeful planning in Luke 14:26-28. Read that passage and record what you learn:				
Even though we may not know all of the details in advance, God gives us enough advance information that we can be headed in the right direction. In the space below, write everything that you know God wants the church to do and you to do:				
CHURCH	ME			

In addition to those general purposes, God has a specific purpose for each believer. And, he promises to help us along the way when we have been called according to that purpose. Read Romans 8:28 and write your findings:			
Do a word study on "purpose" and write the result:			
Now do a word study on "call" and write what you learn:			
Continue reading in the following passage:			
2 Thessalonians 1:11			
Purposeful living requires discipline. Read the following verses and discuss various areas in which the believer needs to be disciplined:			
Colossians 3:1-17			
Hebrews 10:24			
1 Peter 3:15			
Hebrews 13:15			
Hebrews 12:1-2			

But what if you haven't discovered your unique purpose? What if you feel like you are just adrift on the waves? Next week, we will tackle this problem.

FINDING MY PURPOSE

Sometimes we call God's purpose for our lives our "call." The first call that God has on our lives is the call to relationship with Him through acceptance of Christ as savior.

This initial call is redemptive. When we come into relationship with God, we begin to understand His heart and mind and purposes. God begins to change our heart and desires into His heart and desires.

Psalm 37:4
Delight yourself in the Lord;
And He will give you the desires of your heart.

God can promise that He will give us the desires of our heart because He is in the business of changing our hearts so that they come into conformance with His heart desires. If we are delighting ourselves in the Lord, we will become more and more transformed into the image of His son. And with that transformation, we realize more and more that we are on a mission with the Lord.

Read Philippians 2:12-13 and discuss what is meant by this passage here:

Throughout the Bible, people who have been mightily used by God are those who have delighted themselves in Him, with full commitment, willing to do whatever they know that God is asking them to do.
Read Psalm 1:1-3 and record your thoughts here, being certain to describe what is meant by "in its season"
Throughout the Bible, we see God coming to His people and telling them what He was about to do.
Read Genesis 6:13 and record what God was going to do and who received the message:

Read Exodus 3:7-10 and record what God was going to do and who received the message:				
In the space below, discuss the discipline required of Noah and Moses to do what God had asked of them:				
Now, discuss what they had to give up to do what God asked of them:				
Sometimes God's purpose is revealed to us through the adjustments that He is making in our lives. As we make these adjustments, more and more of God's will becomes clear and we become more able to see the next step. Sometimes we call this process "walking worthy." Read Colossians 1:9-12 and discuss what it means to "walk worthy."				
Discuss what the following biblical characters had to give up in order to walk worthy: David				
Paul				
Not all calls require leaving a previous vocation. Sometimes God leaves believers in their same vocation; but it will never be "business as usual" when we are on a mission with God.				
Since God dwells fully within believers, every place they put their feet is holy ground, for God is present in them. Henry Blackaby				
Conclude your study for this week by reading John 12:24-26:				

A CALL TO OBEY

will, it has been the lack of personal discipline required to do it. This is why my computer has a screen saver that quotes 2 Corinthians 10:5. Read that verse, and write what you learn here:				
Abraham was greatly blessed by God. Read Genesis 22:18, and record why he was blessed:				
Obedience is the supreme test of faith in God and reverence for Him. The Old Testament conception of obedience was vital. It was the one important relationship which must not be broken. While sometimes this relation may have been formal and cold, it nevertheless was the one strong tie which held the people close to God. The significant spiritual relation is expressed by Samuel when he asks the question, "Has Yahweh as great delight in burnt-offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of Yahweh? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams" (1 Samuel 15:22).				
Continue reading in the following passages:				
Isaiah 1:19				
Zechariah 6:15				
The greatest example of obedience ever observed is recorded in Paul's letter to the church at Philippi:				
Philippians 2:1-11				

By obedience to Him we are through Him made partakers of His salvation. Read Hebrews 5:9				
Continue readir	ng in 1 Peter 1:14, and observe what Peter calls believers:			
Matthew 7:21.	t difficult verses hermeneutically in the New Testament is found These are the words of Jesus. Read them and journal the ere:			
Deuteronomy 8 God with	:1 tells us to obey God's commandments. We do this by obeying			
OUR HEART	By loving him more than any relationship, activity, achievement, or possession.			
OUR WILL	By committing ourselves completely to him.			
OUR MIND	By seeking to know him and his Word, so his principles and values form the foundation of all we think and do.			
OUR BODY By recognizing that our strengths, talents, and sexuality a given to us by God to be used for pleasure and fulfillment according to his rules, not ours.				
OUR By deciding that all of the resources we have ultimate from God, and that we are to be managers of them a owners.				
OUR FUTURE By deciding to make service to God and man the mapurpose of our life's work.				
the life of John	rite examples of obedience coming from scripture is revealed in the Baptist. We will end our study for today by looking at John's mple of obedience. Begin your look in Isaiah 40:3 and Malachi			

John 3:30	 		
1-h 2-20	 		
John 3:29	 	 	

WHAT IF I'M NOT CALLED?

Over the years, I have heard many people assert that God has no call on their life. If they aren't called, then surely they won't be accountable, right? Nice try. This misunderstanding may come, in part, from the distinctions we have made between clergy and laypeople. We have come to believe that pastors and "full time" ministry workers are called. In fact, we are ALL called to full time service to the Lord. The differences do not lie in whether or not we are called, but may differ in the nature of the assignment that we are given to do.

Several times, believers are called "priests." Read 1 Peter 2:1-10 and record what you learn about the priesthood of believers:
Notice that we are not called a kingdom with a priesthood; we are called a kingdom of priests. Each person is to offer up service and ministry to God. God calls and equips all of His people, male and female, young and old. This includes all believers! It is tremendously encouraging to realize that all through the Bible, God is calling and using ordinary people who are enabled by God to do His work in the world.
And, their relationship of trust and love for God seems to have been more important than their previously developed abilities. This is not to say that God never uses the education and skills that people have developed; but it is to say that God can't use that education and skill unless the person is yielded to Him.
Sometimes, God completely changes our course, at least short-term. Read the following verses and record what you learn:
Psalm 78:70-72
Amos 7:14-15

God has no loose ends in His eternal plan! When He touches your life, it is a part of a complete and thorough strategy. And the response of each person is vital to the bigger picture.

	en Jesus called His first followers, it was with very specific language. Read rk 1:17 and write the call here:
	at was the role of the disciples?
	at was the role of Jesus?
	iah 58 and John 17 are my two favorite passages in all of the Bible. As you d through Isaiah 58, note specifically:
1.	Who was bringing the message?
2.	What was God's expectation?
3.	What was God's reward?
	w, read John 17 carefully. Who was Jesus praying for?

2.	What were His requests to the Father?
3.	How do you fit into this prayer?
Co	mplete your study for this section by reading Romans 8:29-30:
Do	a word study on the following:
Fo	reknew:
Pre	edestined:
Ca	lled:
	stified:
	prified:

THE UNIQUENESS OF THE CALL

God is more concerned about our faith in Him, our firm belief that He can do what He desires through us, than He is in developing a handbook of operational methods. This is why God does not focus on a particular methodology. Although the church has developed many methods over time (is anyone thinking Pharisees?), we see God giving direction but rarely the specific instructions on how to accomplish it. This is where listening to the Spirit comes in!

When a person is a new Christian, they have to grow and learn to use their spiritual senses. They need to learn to function within their spiritual family. This takes time and and experience, and the help of a believer who is farther along in his/her walk with God. God raises up and equips some people in the body specifically for the purpose of helping the new believer recognize his calling.

Read Ephesians 4:1-14 and record what you learn about giftings and discipling new believers				
Continue your reading in Philippians 3:12-15				
Carefully reread the "great commission" found in Matthew 28:17-20. Is the goa to make converts or disciples? Who can be a disciple?				
Name the things that mature believers are to do for new believers:				
1				
2				

The job of a discipler isn't easy..in fact, it can be very time consuming. It is also spiritually demanding. There are certain things that the new believer must understand before he/she can begin to fully appreciate the uniqueness of an individual call.

In the space provided, write how each of these can be accomplished. Provide a scriptural reference that affirms your entry:

Receive spiritual nourishment
Develop spiritual senses (discernment)
Develop a sensitivity to sin
Learn the strategies of Satan
Know the nature of confession
Learn holy living (position yourself to hear from God)
Read Matthew 13:11 and see how this corresponds with your answers above:
Continue this thought in Matthew 13:16
Hebrews 5:13-14
Hebrews 5:13-14

Jesus assured His disciples that they would hear and recognize His voice.	Read
John 10:2-4, 27	

Unsaved people cannot understand what we are talking about when we quote the above verses.

Jesus answered, "I assure you, unless someone is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God."

THE PARABLE OF THE SHEEP

If you want to hear God's call, you have to be following Him. God takes the initiative. He leads. He most certainly wants human leaders as well. But they have to be yielded to God and under His control.

Read John 12:26			
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Every teacher has a good sheep parable. Here is mine!

One spring day, we were returning from a ski trip, driving east on 170, headed for Denver to catch a plane home. We rounded a mountain curve and traffic on the interstate was completely stopped. The reason? Several hundred sheep were on the road, in all four lanes. They were apparently unwilling to go back up the mountain on the north side of the road. They were unable to go down the mountain on the south side of the road because there was a guard rail. People began getting out of their cars trying to shoo the sheep around the rail, but the more the people shouted and waved their arms, the more distressed (and noisy) the sheep became. Not a single sheep actually got off of the road, despite the best efforts of the motorists. After ten minutes or so, a very disheveled shepherd came running down the mountain. He paused a few feet up the mountain from the roadway, looking over the sheep. Then, he calmly walked onto the road, told the motorists (politely) to please get back into their cars, went and took one sheep by the neck and led it around the guard rail. All of the others fell into line, following the shepherd and the lead sheep, and the road was cleared in a couple of minutes.

This parable taught me a number of things:

- 1. Sheep don't seem to have great perception, so when people are compared to them, it might not be the nicest compliment we have ever received.
- 2. Sheep can get lost and have no idea how to get where they want to go.

- 3. Non-shepherds trying to act like shepherds create more chaos that helpful solutions. (screaming "shoo, fluffy" at the top of your lungs isn't helpful)
- 4. Sheep recognize the voice of the shepherd.
- 5. Sheep will follow a recognized leader sheep.

Read the following verses, and see if you can figure out the lessons I learned.
Isaiah 53:6
Luke 15:4-6
Jeremiah 50:6
Jereman 50.0
John 10:27
John 10:4

This is why we always have to be very, very careful when we decide to follow a particular leader.

2 Peter 2:1-3 But false prophets also arose among the people, just as there will also be false teachers among you, who will secretly introduce destructive heresies, even denying the Master who bought them, bringing swift destruction upon themselves. Many will follow their sensuality, and because of them the way of the truth will be maligned; and in their greed they will exploit you with false words; their judgment from long ago is not idle, and their destruction is not asleep.

2 Corinthians 11:14,15	
Complete your reading for this section in John 10:11-18	

This is also the reason that we are warned to beware those who only look like

sheep. Read the following verses and journal your thoughts here:

IF A CHRISTIAN DOES NOT KNOW WHEN GOD
IS SPEAKING, HE/SHE IS IN TROUBLE AT THE HEART
OF THE RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD. IF THIS IS A
DIFFICULTY FOR YOU, STOP EVERYTHING ELSE
AND ASK GOD TO TEACH YOU UNTIL YOU
ARE CERTAIN OF HIS VOICE.

WORDS AND ACTIONS WITHOUT RELATIONSHIP

One of the most difficult, even frightening, accounts in the Bible is found in Matthew 25:34-46. Read through these verses and journal your thoughts as we begin our study for this week:
Particularly note the actions that were discounted here:
If we saw Jesus walking down the road, thirsty and tired, we would definitely go out of our way to offer Him a drink. But would we go out of our way to help someone we didn't know? Someone who looked a bit bedragled? Someone who looked a bit dangerous?
It is very clear in scripture that we aren't saved by doing good things. We all know people who do many "good things," honest people who love their families, and work hard, but who do not have a relationship with God.
Read Ephesians 2:8-10
But this passage also teaches us that God does have good works for us to do. And when we stand before Him, we will give an account of how we accomplished the work He had for us to do.
Many times people mistakenly think that Paul and James were at odds regarding salvation. Read James 2:14-20 and journal your thoughts here:
James clearly believed that, if you really have saving faith, that faith will result in doing what God has for you to do. James also makes a distinction between "belief" and "saving faith."

Many who are not saved believe in Jesus. James tells us that demons believe. Muslims believe in Jesus. Some in New Age religions believe in Jesus. But these don't have a saving faith in Jesus. There is a HUGE difference.

James offers many insights into saving faith. In many ways, these parallel Jesus' Sermon on the Mount. Complete your study for this week by reading these parallel passages

Lesson

Reference

When your life is full of difficulties and persecutions, be glad. A reward awaits you.	James 1:2 Matthew 5:10-12
You are to be perfect, mature, and complete, not lacking anything.	James 1:4 Matthew 5:48
Ask God, and he will answer.	James 1:5; James 5:15 Matthew 7:7-12
Those who are humble (who don't amount to much by the world's standards) should rejoice in their position as those whom God loves.	James 1:9 Matthew 5:3
Watch out for your angerit can be dangerous.	James 1:20 Matthew 5:22
Be merciful to others, as God is merciful to you.	James 2:13 Matthew 5:7; Matthew 6:14
Your faith must express itself in helping others.	James 2:14-16 Matthew 7:21-23
Blessed are the peacemakers; they sow in peace and reap a harvest of righteousness.	James 3:17-18 Matthew 5:9
You cannot serve God and money, pleasures, or evil. Friendship with the world is hatred toward God.	James 4:4 Matthew 6:24
When we humble ourselves and realize our need for God, he will come to us and lift us up.	James 4:10 Matthew 5:3-4
Don't slander or speak against others; it speaks against God's command to love one another.	James 4:11 Matthew 7:1-2

Treasures on earth will only rot and fade James 5:2 away—we must store up eternal treasures in Matthew 6:19 heaven.

Be patient in suffering, as God's prophets

Were patient.

James 5:10

Matthew 5:12

Be honest in your speech so you can say a James 5:12 simple "yes" or "no" and always be trusted. Matthew 5:33-37

REWARDS FOR BELIEVERS

It is true that God will hold us accountable. It is also true that He rewards believers who faithfully complete the work that He has for them to do. This is our encouragement to keep on going....hearing God say, "well done."

Read the words that Paul wrote to his disciple, Timothy, as he knew that his life was nearly over: 2 Timothy 4:6-8						
Jesus spoke frequently about the rewards for believers. Read the following verses and record Jesus' message:						
Matthew 5:12						
Matthew 5:46						
Matthew 6:1-2						
Matthew 6:4-6						
Matthew 6:16						
Matthew 6:18						
Matthew 10:41-42						

Mark 9:41
Luke 6:23
Luke 6:35
One of the most important verses in all of scripture is found in 1 Corinthians 3:8. This verse speaks of the value of teamwork, and the rewards based on a person's individual contribution. If you have ever been a part of a team where everyone didn't do their share of the work, you are going to LOVE these verses. Read 1 Corinthians 3:1-9 and record what you learn here:
Continue reading in 1 Corinthians 9:17-18
Our attitude toward the job that God gives us is very important. Read Colossians 3:23-25 and journal your thoughts here:
Complete your study for this section by reading the following verses, noting the time frame and what is promised:
Revelation 11:18
Revelation 22:12

LIVING THE CALL

When God knows that you are in a growing, loving, and responsive trustful relationship with Him, He continues His call on your life. This happens most usually in the middle of our daily routine. Through this routine, God cvalls a person to a special and deeper relationship with Him. It is remarkable that this daily response brings the enabling presence and power of the Holy Spirit into the forefront as we accomplish our assignment from God.

Today we will begin by looking at the life of Moses. Read the call of Moses in Exodus 3 and 4. Record the highlights here:
Particularly note Exodus 4:14. Wow! But God placed His Spirit on Moses, and later the seventy elders who were appointed to work with him. Read Numbers 11:16-25 for this story:
When God told Moses to build a tabernacle, God placed His Spirit on the men who would do the work. Read Exodus 35:30-36:21 for this story:
Throughout the Bible, we see God placing the Spirit on people who are called to do His work. God has, in our time, given all true believers in Jesus, the Holy Spirit as a helper.
Read Ephesians 1:13 and record what you learn:

As we look at our nation today, we readily identify with the words of the prophet Ezekiel. Read Ezekiel 22:30 and record your thoughts:							
Just as God has used the apostles, the believers of the early church, the men and women of the Reformation, He desires to use us today. The world is changing and God is orchestrating His people for His purpose. So much is in the balance. God's process involves us.							
Read 2 Chronicles 16:9 and relate it to yourself:							
The really good news is that God equips those He cvalls. Read Philippians 4:19 and write here how many of your needs are supplied:							
Read also 2 Corinthians 1:20 and 2 Peter 1:3-4							
The Holy Spirit is God, present and active in our lives, enabling us to do whatever God has commanded. The Holy Spirit reveals, guides, and causes remembrance.							
Read the following passages and record your thoughts:							
John 16:13-15							
1 Corinthians 2:9-16							

Romans 8:26-28
Ephesians 6:17
It is important to remember that God can and will affirm His will for His servants. When God promises to do something, He does it. If you sense that you have heard God's will, but you don't see God doing what He promised, then God may be trying to tell you that either you are not in His will after all, or that His timing has not yet come. God may be taking the necessary time to develop character in your life before He can give you all He has planned for you. Ask God and He will guide you into the truth of your situation.
As we end this session, read the following verses:
Isaiah 46:11
Isaiah 14:24-27
1 Kings 8:56

FINAL THOUGHTS

One of the most profound verses in all of scripture is found in Hebrews 11:16:

But as it is, they desire a better country, that is, a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God; for He has prepared a city for them.

Hebrews 11:16

How wonderful would it be to stand before Jesus and have Him say that He wasn't ashamed to be called my God! I want this! We should all want this!

Sometimes we close our prayer time by asking God to go with us and bless what we are doing. We have it backwards. God has a will and plan for our lives each day. We should be asking that we will be going with Him. He alerts us to the call for the day through prayer and His Word. That is why I find it very helpful to start out each day with those important elements. In our quiet time with God, He brings to our hearts the full assurance of what He is doing.

Because God is working in us and will complete what He has started, we can live with a clear sense of expectation and anticipation of His working every day!

Read Isaiah 14:24-27 and journal your thoughts:
Continue your summary thoughts by reading the following encouraging passages:
Isaiah 55:8
Numbers 23:19
Hebrews 13:20-21

Isaiah 55:8
It is important to recognize the activity of God working in your life so you can quickly join him. Read John 5:17-20
Think over the past month. How has God been working in your life. Spend some quiet time and let the Holy Spirit remind you. List here the ways you have identified:
One final thought about God's call and your response involves interdependence with other believers. Not only will they help you know and clarify the will of God in your life, but they can stand alongside you to assist you in fulfilling it. God designs into His work an interdependence between believers. There are no loners in living out the Christian life. We are mutually dependent by God's design.
Read the following passages and record what you learn about this interdependence:
Romans 12:3-8
1 Corinthians 12:4-31
Ephesians 4:1-7

Ephesians 4:11-16			
•			

Notice that we are working together "until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of God's Son, growing into a mature man with a stature measured by Christ's fullness."

This calls for willing accountability to each other in addition to accountability to God. When we work together, we experience the excitement of being on a mission with God. Together, we help each other with our accountability to God.

Being accountable involves:

- 1. Believing what God has revealed in His Word. Everyone God called, He held accountable to answer to Him specifically.
- 2. Being immediately obedient to all God speaks with "fear and trembling."
- 3. Choosing a spiritual partner, class, or other group, to hold you accountable to do what you know God has said.
- 4. Taking spiritual inventory frequently, looking for clear evidence of God's activity and blessing
- 5. Being aware of an ultimate eternal moment before God when you give account of the work you have done for Him in this life.

The call of God is a call to a total relationship for the purposes He had for us from before the foundation of the world. God calls by causing us to want to do His will and enabling us to do it. He first calls us to salvation through faith in Jesus. Within that relationship, God has provided all we need to live fully with Him. That relationship always involves us in His redemptive activity and work in our world. As we do this work, we come to know God more and grow in Christlikeness. This in turn prepares us for eternity with God. What an amazing plan! I pray that we may all respond to Him as He works in us and through us!

REMEMBER! YOU ARE ACCOUNTABLE!