

## **The Biblical Responsibility Of Individual Accountability**

**Christians have access to unlimited and unimaginable resources. Along with this access comes accountability. One of the greatest motivators, and probably the biggest single need regarding stewardship, is accountability.**

---

Accountability begins with the person, not the gifts. Accountability in the human sense is recognized favorably by any society and rewarded accordingly. If you don't take care of that old clunker of a vehicle you now own, how can you take care of a new car? If you goof off during the day at your current job, why would God want to bless you with a better one? If God cannot trust you with \$100, how can He trust you with \$1,000 or \$100,000? If you cannot take good care of your apartment or rental house, how can you be trusted with your own property? A principle is at work here! We must prove that we can be good stewards!

A profound illustration of this principle taken from biblical times is found in the life of Joseph. It seems that in every job he had, he started at the bottom and eventually landed at the top. (See Genesis 39-41).

Joseph was tested severely on many occasion; he was lied about, cheated on and forgotten for two years by a man for whom he had done a great favor. What was his secret of success? Joseph was a hard worker, and no matter what job he was assigned, he went after it with efficiency, enthusiasm and energy! And to his credit, Joseph never allowed temporary adversity to make him bitter. He always had a great positive attitude and he maintained a devout trust in God. God honors effort and He will always bless those who are giving their best.

Accountability is the responsibility of people in all economic situations. It doesn't matter how rich, how poor, how educated or how illiterate. The Old Testament includes a story of a very poor woman's accountability. A woman who had very little by way of possessions, yet obedience and accountability was required of her.

### **1 Kings 17:8-16**

"Then the word of the LORD came to him: 'Go at once to Zarephath of Sidon and stay there. I have commanded a widow in that place to supply you with food.' So he went to Zarephath. When he came to the town gate, a widow was there

gathering sticks. He called to her and asked, 'Would you bring me a little water in a jar so I may have a drink?' As she was going to get it, he called, 'And bring me, please, a piece of bread.'

"As surely as the LORD your God lives,' she replied, 'I don't have any bread – only a handful of flour in a jar and a little oil in a jug. I am gathering a few sticks to take home and make a meal for myself and my son, that we may eat it – and die.'"

"Elijah said to her, 'Don't be afraid. Go home and do as you have said. But first make a small cake of bread for me from what you have and bring it to me, and then make something for yourself and your son. For this is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says: 'The jar of flour will not be used up and the jug of oil will not run dry until the day the LORD gives rain on the land.'"

"She went away and did as Elijah had told her. So there was food every day for Elijah and for the woman and her family. For the jar of flour was not used up and the jug of oil did not run dry, in keeping with the word of the LORD spoken by Elijah."

This story is about a woman who was accountable to God in faith and obedience to meet the need of another with what she had in her household. Elijah was dependent on God's provision through this poor widow, one who had almost nothing and was ready to die. This woman was in a famine, a time to be very careful and self-protecting, but the famine was not in her spirit. She had a generous and giving spirit. The famine could not break her; her generosity could not be bound. She gave from her need and poverty from what she had in her household.

This story shows that even if you think you are lacking, God can use the things you do have to meet a need. You may think you just don't have the money to give right now or you may think that because you have very little, God will excuse you from your responsibility to be fully accountable with what you do have. Not so. God expects accountability from people of all social-economic classes.

If you cannot afford to give largely, you must not despise the day of small beginnings. God never asks us to give what we do not have. He only asks that we be willing to give all we do have. 2 Corinthians 8:12 shows us that it is the heart that matters. "For if the willingness is there, the gift is acceptable according to what one has, not according to what he does not have." We can look to the needs and then look to our own household, listening to and obeying the voice of the Holy Spirit when He says, "Give."

Like this widow, we too will experience seasons of testing. Enduring such seasons will teach us faith and trust in God. We must not allow a spirit of poverty to bind us, choke us or keep us from giving. If you are experiencing a season like this right now, I encourage you to take the words of Elijah to heart. In I Kings 17:3, he tells the widow, “Do not be afraid.” When in doubt, we must believe the words of hope that fill the Scriptures, not fearing what our minds or circumstances may say to us. As we put fear aside, we move into the realm of faith, trusting God to provide for us, just as He did for the widow of Zarephath.

**Learn the right way to live. Understand the responsibility of individual accountability!**