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Being Accountable To Christ Jesus

Dave Roberson

In the language of the Gospel, when we speak of "the carnal appetites of the flesh", we are talking about lust, fornication, adultery, etc., what most of us consider to be the more serious sins against God. But there is another side to the flesh that is every bit as dangerous, though maybe not quite so obvious. That is the willingness to excuse or protect the areas of the flesh that we are not willing to change.

We become very defensive or evasive whenever someone touches on an area in our life that we are not ready to deal with, such as indifference or complacency. "I was too busy", "I did not have time", "I had to go somewhere", "I am just too tired at night to pray", etc.

In my own walk with God, I can still hear myself offering excuses for those weak areas of my life that I was not yet willing to change. And it is my prayer that this teaching letter will save you or someone you love the years it has cost me while trying to justify myself before men instead of before God ... while I was trying to protect those weak areas of my life that needed changing.

When I first entered the ministry full time some 20 years ago, there was not much demand on my time. So those first few years were spent mostly in prayer, and the greater part of that in tongues for personal edification. Not knowing much about prayer at that time, I did not realize that part of the edification process was that praying in tongues supernaturally worked the plan of God in a person's life. As a result, from time to time God would allow me to slip over into the Spirit to see little glimpses of the future, sort of an inner vision that I could see on the inside of my spirit showing me what was in God's plan for my life.

One of those times, 18 years ago when I was 31 years old, I saw a large circular building full of people being saved and healed and where incredible miracles were taking place. You can imagine how I felt six years later when I obeyed God and moved to Tulsa where I saw a large circular building ... the Mabee Center on the campus of Oral Roberts University. I felt that somehow it was all coming together.

Then in October of 1992, quite unexpectedly I had a visitation from God concerning the election and our nation's stand, as far as immorality is concerned, and the consequences of letting sinners legislate our morality while the church sleeps the sleep of **INDIFFERENCE**.

God showed me that the church as a whole has dropped her standards of righteousness and true holiness. Instead of living holy, the church as a whole has begun to search the Word for reasons to justify a promiscuous life style and has finally adopted "grace" as an overall covering for sin ... accepting no condemnation for their actions. In reality, the word "condemnation" is not the word they

should have been using, but "accountability" because they believe "grace" makes them unaccountable for their actions once they have been born again. Our nation is literally advocating abortion up to the ninth month and legalizing homosexual marriages as a family units.

It was during this particular visitation that God called my own life to accountability in certain areas that needed to be changed if I was ever going to realize the fullness of God's call. Of course, I am not talking about blatant sin but I am talking about an area of my life that I was more willing to protect than to change. As God's Word says, it is the little foxes that spoil the vine.

At about this same time, I was driving by the Mabee Center here in Tulsa where an evangelist had just packed the building to capacity and even turned 3,000 people away. Even though in my own ministry, 10,000 preachers (Baptists, Catholics, Methodists, etc.) in Brazil received the Baptism of the Holy Spirit over a period of two years, I knew that, in America, I had never seen anything like what was taking place in the Mabee Center that night. This caused me to think about where my own ministry was going.

I began to make excuses for the differences between his ministry and mine, why my own ministry was no further along than it was or why I was not harvesting souls on the scale that he was, by thinking back to the camp-meetings I had preached where as many as 1,600 people would be saved or baptized in the Holy Spirit over a six week period.

One of the excuses I used to justify myself was "God, I was a late starter. I did not enter the ministry and begin preaching until I was 31 years old! Just give me a few more years ..." And what God did to me (or for me) for the next few moments has changed my life.

The evangelist holding the meeting at the Mabee Center that night had been saved at an early age, much younger than myself, and, because Christianity was against the religion of his parents, they tried to force him to deny Christ by excluding him from eating with his family, by restricting him to his room, etc.. So, right in the middle of excusing myself as a late starter, God changed my thinking and used the life of the preacher at the Mabee Center to teach me a lesson.

God said to me, "You are not a late starter. You walked away from Me when you were 17 years old because you preferred partying and serving the devil over Me. You waited until you were 22 years old to recommit your life to Me while My servant (referring to the evangelist at the Mabee Center) remained faithful against persecution from his own family and against sin. His persecution was greater than yours, but he did not walk away from Me and you did. You had the same opportunities for early ministry as he had, so do not say you are a late starter."

I wept. I remembered the whole thing like it was yesterday. And you know, God did not show me any of this to bring me under any kind of condemnation. But rather He did this to give me the strength I needed for change, for as long as I continued to offer myself excuses, or to justify myself for allowing anything in my life that should not be there, then I was preventing God's power from setting me free. As long as I excused myself for giving in to something I had been redeemed from, then I was not taking responsibility for change.

I began to understand what God was trying to tell me. I did not have to walk away from Him when I was 17. I did it because I wanted to and, as long as I used any kind of excuse to justify my actions, then I would be willing to justify myself for other things He needed to change in my life.

I thought about all those so called "legitimate" excuses we all use so freely to excuse our prayerless, powerless lives, and most of them only serve to make us appear more spiritual than we really are in other people's eyes.

God made me understand that there are many people who have not yet learned how to release God's power in their lives. They are weak in certain areas. They keep falling over and over to the same traps because they are not willing to quit justifying themselves in the areas of their failures. But rather they keep protecting them and, in so doing, continue to successfully block God's power from administering grace in those weak areas.

Let's take a look at what it really means to confess our sins and to have God, not only forgive us, but TO CLEANSE US from all unrighteousness.

Beginning with I John 2:1: *"My little children, these things write I unto you, that you sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the father, Jesus Christ the righteous."*

Notice the instruction John is giving to you and I as believers. He is saying "these things write I unto you THAT YOU SIN NOT." Evidently contained within the first chapter of First John is the information we need to keep from sinning. John would not have said what he did in this verse had there not been people then, as well as now, who were sinning and had deceived themselves into believing that they were not ... calling darkness light and excusing the darkness by claiming to be in fellowship with God when they were not.

Look at the first chapter of First John and find out what he wrote that would keep us from being deceived by sin. I John 1:6-9 says: *"If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth: But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin. If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."*

When I was first born again at 17 years of age, I received a new nature down on the inside of my spirit that immediately began to dictate to the rest of my person that sin was wrong. By merit of the new nature alone, my conscience knew that sin was wrong. No one had to tell me.

Looking back now, I knew when I backslid that no one made me do it. I did it because it was the choice I made. Later, at 30 years of age when I answered the call, I wanted to give myself excuses as to why I had backslid ... the temptation was more than I could bear ... I did not have enough Word, etc. But truthfully, by merit of the new nature alone, I knew it had been my choice. The devil could not make me do it, the flesh could not make me do it, and people could not make me do it. ONLY I COULD MAKE ME DO IT ... THE CHOICE WAS MINE.

In a subtle way, I was calling darkness light. I was wanting to excuse myself for walking away from God when I backslid at 17. But God was trying to show me that the part I needed to confess as sin was not just falling back into blatant sin, which of course I repented of gladly, but to quit calling darkness light by confessing the whole attitude causing me to make excuses for myself AS SIN!

Continuing to offer excuses for myself was the same thing as saying God's salvation plan did not have enough power to keep me from falling back into sin. And, as I said before, the conscience I had received at my new birth was enough to tell me that sin was wrong, and enough to keep me from going back into sin. Romans 8:15-16 says: *"For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God:"*

THE PROBLEM IS THAT MOST OF US CARRY THE ATTITUDE THAT JUSTIFIES AND OFFERS EXCUSES FOR OURSELVES INTO OTHER AREAS OF OUR LIVES WHERE WE DO NOT WANT TO BE ACCOUNTABLE.

Let me give you an example. Sometimes it is much easier to give excuses than to face responsibility for change. But, as long as we are willing to justify ourselves with excuses, then in a subtle way, we are shifting the blame back onto God such as, the temptation was more than I could bear, the devil made me do it, etc.

In other words, the devil made you do it because God did not give you power over all the power of the enemy? Is the temptation more than you could bear because I Corinthians 10:13 does not apply in your case? *"There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it."*

For a period of time, I fell out of prayer and, of course, I blamed it on the devil. It was my schedule, etc. The Lord forbid that anyone even dare suggest that it was "ME" that took me out of prayer.

At that time in my ministry, sometimes 2,000 would be saved or filled with the Holy Spirit over a three month period. Of course, the devil was not going to put up with that. So, a messenger from Satan came to break me down. I believe he was the equivalent to a ruler of darkness, and, it felt as if he had enough power to lift an African witch doctor ten feet off the ground and suspend him in mid-air, or enough to put a person in an insane asylum and all of a sudden, it seemed as though all that power and turmoil attached itself to my mind like a tornado.

It seemed as though the only way I could get any relief for the pressure on my mind was to bury myself in television, stay away from prayer, not read the Word, create lots of activity. Later, when I had defeated this thing, one of my favorite cliches was, "The devil really took me out of prayer for awhile, the devil made me do it" until God said, "No, the devil did not take you out of prayer. "YOU" took you out of prayer and, as long as you continue to offer yourself excuses, then undoubtedly, you will take yourself out of prayer again."

That's when I realized that the reason God revealed this to me was not to condemn me but rather to strengthen me. What He needed was for me to quit offering excuses for the areas of my life that

needed to be changed and, as much as it hurt me, I had to admit or confess that the devil could not make me do anything I refused to do. As I stood before God and confessed my sins, His power began to cleanse me from all unrighteousness. It felt like adjustments were being made on the inside of me that has given me new stamina to do His will like nothing I have ever experienced before.

It seemed as though that was the hardest confession I had ever had to make. The most difficult thing I have ever said to God was, "All right, I did not have to turn to television, activities, etc., during the attack of the strong man. I did not have to turn away from You when I was 17, I could have turned to You, God. I did not have to turn to any of those things." When I quit justifying and offering excuses for myself, God made His power available to me. It was the kind of confession He needed to take me on into the best He has for me.

God is so faithful. All He asks is that we be accountable. When we get honest with ourselves and with Him, we free Him up to move on our behalf so that we can go onward and upward in our walk with Him. God bless you.

Your friend and partner,
Dave Roberson