

IT Matters – Accountability

4/26/26

2 Samuel 12:1-14

Sunday AM

An avid golfer was on a business trip in Africa and decided to golf on his free day, so the concierge sent him to an exclusive course in the jungle. When he arrived, the pro asked his handicap—and not wanting to admit he was a 20, he said 16. The pro nodded and told the caddy, “Take good care of him – he’s a 16.” So, the caddy grabbed his clubs and a rifle. On the 1<sup>st</sup> hole, the caddy said, “Avoid the trees on the left,” but the guy hooked it straight into them. Just as he’s about to hit again – BANG! The caddy dropped a cobra and calmly said, “Cobra. Very dangerous. You’re lucky.” On the 2<sup>nd</sup> hole, the caddy told the golfer to avoid the bushes on the right – so naturally he hit it right – again, as he was about to hit – BANG! And a lion dropped. The caddy said, “Saved your life again.” On the 3<sup>rd</sup> hole, a par-3 over water, the guys ball came up short and rolled to the edge, and as he stood w/ one foot in the water to hit, a croc lunged out and took a bite out of his leg! As he fell screaming, “Why didn’t you shoot it?!” the caddy shrugged, “Sorry, sir... this is the 17<sup>th</sup> handicap hole – you don’t get a shot here.”

This is funny until you realize how we do the same thing. We adjust the numbers and exaggerate the truth to make ourselves appear better than we really are until reality reveals the truth about us. And this is but one example of the many character issues that plague our culture as we’ve forgotten that character still matters.

Truth – at some point, every generation faces the same defining question: Will we live by **conviction** or by **convenience** – by **courage** or by **compromise**?

Sadly, we’re living in a time when character is no longer assumed – it’s being redefined. While right and wrong haven’t completely left us – the lines have been blurred. What was once **obvious** is now **optional** – and what was once **truth** is now called **personal**.

**Here’s what we know** – when character erodes, it never stays contained. It shows up in our *relationships, homes, churches, and communities*. But when its strong, life can be resilient, stable, and God-honoring.

**DYK** Scripture speaks directly into this. It reminds us that godliness/Christlike character aren’t accidental or automatic – it’s something we must train for. Paul wrote in 1 Timothy 4:7 – *Train yourself to be godly...*

**SEE** – at its core, character isn’t just behavior – it’s spiritual formation. It’s who we’re becoming based on what we believe and what we’re aligning our lives to.

**Culturally** – character is about how we’re perceived, instead of who we really are. It’s shaped by comfort, convenience, and choice inviting us to **be true to self**.

**Biblically** – character is the inward moral and spiritual formation of a person that reflects God’s nature and is expressed thru consistent obedience to Scripture.

**In Scripture**, character isn’t behavior modification, but H.S. transformation from the inside out where God molds/shapes us to look more like Jesus over time.

- It’s formed thru truth | *Psalm 119:105*
- Trained thru discipline | *1 Timothy 4:7–8*
- Tested thru trials | *Romans 5:3–4*
- Displayed thru fruitfulness | *Galatians 5:22–23*

**SO** – at its core, biblical character is godliness. It’s who you are when no one is watching – aligned w/ who God at all times.

But here's the tension: Culture says character is what you define. While Scripture says character is what God forms. Which means every one of us is being shaped – either by the world around us or by the Word of God.

But if we're honest, left to ourselves... we don't drift toward Christ – we drift away. This is why Character matters. And to see just how quickly that drift can happen, we need to look at the life of David.

For our study, character is who you are at your core – formed by what you believe, revealed by how you live, and ultimately aligned either w/ culture or w/ Christ.

And to help us understand character, we're going to look at these differing qualities thru the lives of obscure O.T. characters who exemplified them.

Today, we're going to begin w/ a prophet named Nathan who taught us the necessity of accountability. But before we get to Nathan, we need to set the stage by recalling what happened w/ David.

**As you're likely aware**, David was a giant killer, a worship leader, a king, and a man after God's own heart – and yet, he lost his way.

It occurred in a season when kings went off to war – and David stayed home. This one passive choice set everything in motion, as a glance from a rooftop turned into something costly. Whether this was the 1<sup>st</sup> time he'd seen Bathsheba or not – what matters is one unchecked moment, absent of accountability led to another, and before long David found himself in a downward spiral that put everything at risk.

Looking led to lust → lust led to adultery → adultery led to deception → deception led to murder → and murder led to a cover up.

In the midst of the cover up – silence. No confession. No apparent remorse or repentance. Just self-justification and acting as if nothing ever happened.

**Here's reality:** We can hide sin from people but we can't ever hide it from God. David looked like a king on the outside, but on the inside, he was a dying slave.

Who he was in public was different than who he was in private – and my guess is this occurred b/c when left to ourselves w/out accountability – we drift into the ambitions/appetites of our flesh – and if life unchecked desire leads to compromise and we drift.

This is why accountability matters. And nowhere do we see this more clearly than in the story of Nathan confronting David.

*The Lord sent Nathan to David. When he came to him, he said, "There were two men in a town, one rich and the other poor. The rich man had a number of sheep/cattle, but the poor man had only one little lamb he had bought and raised that grew up w/ him and his children. It shared his food, drank from his cup and slept in his arms. It was like a child to him. Now a traveler came to the rich man, but the rich man refrained from taking one of his own sheep or cattle to prepare a meal for the man who had come. Instead, he took the lamb that belonged to the poor man and prepared it for the one who had come." David burned w/ anger and said, "As surely as the Lord lives, the man who did this must die! He must pay for that lamb (4x) over, b/c he did such a thing and had no pity." Then Nathan said, "David, you're the man! This is what the God of Israel says: 'I anointed you king over Israel, and delivered you from the hand of Saul. I gave your master's house to you, and your master's wives into your arms. I gave you all Israel/Judah. And if all this had been too little, I would've given you even more. Why did you despise the word of the Lord by doing what is evil in his eyes? You struck down Uriah the Hittite and took his wife to be your own. You killed him w/ the sword of the Ammonites. Now, the sword will never depart from your house, b/c you despised me and took Uriah's wife to be your own.' This*

*is what the Lord says: 'Out of your own household I'm going to bring calamity on you. Before your eyes I will take your wives and give them to one who is close to you, and he will sleep w/ your wives in broad daylight. You did it in secret, but I'll do this thing in broad daylight before Israel.'"* Then David said, "I've sinned against the Lord." Nathan said, "The Lord has taken away your sin. You're not going to die.

As the story reads, we find one of the most gracious lines in Scripture – *the Lord sent Nathan to David.*

God gave Nathan insight into David's dilemma. Yet God didn't expose David to destroy him – He sent Nathan to restore him by holding him accountable.

## I What is **ACCOUNTABILITY**

**Accountability** is the intentional practice of inviting truth-telling people into your life who'll help expose any sin/weakness, help realign your heart/motives, and shape your character. It's giving permission to trusted voices to step into your blind spots to love you enough to tell you the truth and walk w/ you when it matters.

***To say it simply*** – accountability is inviting others into your life w/ permission to keep you aligned w/ God.

**In this instance**, God raised up Nathan to speak into David's life when David got too big for his britches.

## II The **NECESSITY** of Accountability

**Accountability** is needed b/c the *demonic* deceives us, the *world* baits us, and our *flesh* betrays us – so that sin might isolate us – pretending to satisfy us – when in actuality, it only seeks to kill, steal, and destroy us.

And David, unfortunately, had reached a point where he could no longer see clearly b/c he lacked accountability. This is what sin does – it makes *wrong* feel *right* and what's *abnormal* seem *normal*. B/c w/out accountability, we rarely notice how far we've drifted into untruth until the damage is done.

**DYK** that a 1° deviation adds up quickly over a very short distance. At 1 mile – a 1° deviation is 92.16 ft off point (nearly the length of a football field). To put it into perspective – if you flew from London to Atlanta, a 1° deviation would put you in Macon 74 miles away.

This is why we all need a Nathan in our lives:

- Someone who sees what we don't
- Someone who says what we won't
- Someone who steps in when we can't

**LWF** – before David became King, he was called a *man after God's own heart* – which proves that even the Godly can drift into depravity when they've neglected accountability – and this is why we need it.

So, what exactly did Nathan do that we can learn about being accountable and holding others accountable.

## III The **ANATOMY** of Accountability

Nathan stepped up and under God's leading creatively confronting David to turn his heart to God. He responded to God's call and allowed the Lord to lead him in an incredibly delicate situation to courageously confront the king – not to attack David but to awaken.

We find this idea in Galatians 6 where Paul offered a step-by-step strategy holding others accountable.

*If someone is caught in a sin, you who live by the Spirit should restore that person gently. But watch yourselves, or you also may be tempted. Carry each other's burdens, and in this way, you will fulfill the law of Christ. If anyone thinks they're something when they're not, they deceive themselves. Each one should test their own actions. Then they can take pride in themselves alone, w/out comparing themselves to someone else, for each one should carry their own load. Nevertheless, the one who receives instruction in the Word should share all good things w/ their instructor. 6:1-6*

Paul teaches us that to hold each other accountable, it begins w/ being led by the H.S.

This is essential b/c accountability should never be thru shame, but thru the grace that leads to restoration.

**WTM** – accountability begins w/ <sup>1</sup> *examining our own hearts and measuring ourselves not against others*, but against Christ – always remembering Jesus' warning to remove the log from our own eye first.

It also requires <sup>2</sup> **vigilance**, recognizing that none of us are above temptation and that any good in us is the result of the cross, not our own strength.

**Next** – when we step into someone's life, we do so w/ a <sup>3</sup> *gentle, humble spirit, approaching them as family, not as judge, jury, and executioner* b/c the goal is never to shame, but to restore to a right relationship w/ God.

Finally, accountability doesn't <sup>4</sup> **walks away quickly** – it stays, bearing burdens over time, trusting in God's timing for a harvest for those who don't give up.

Note – *you who walk by the Spirit*. This is key element as God isn't seeking to push us away or thump us – but to awaken us and brings back into intimacy w/ Him.

**SEE** – accountability that confronts w/out compassion crushes; while compassion w/out accountability coddles. Yet we need both to balance the two aspects.

#### IV The **PRACTICE** of Accountability

##### A We must **INVITE** Accountability

As previously said, NO one drifts into accountability. We have to open our lives to it invite others to speak into our life and ask the hard questions.

Several yrs ago, I was in a group called **Iron Forums** where monthly I met w/ 5 men who ask questions about my walk w/ God, my ministry, my relationship w/ Meg, my parenting, and my thought life.

- Did you strive to walk w/ God every day?
- Did you lead and encourage you wife daily?
- Were you a Godly dad to your kids?
- Did you say, do, or see anything to be confessed?
- Are you telling us the truth?

**DYK** – if your married, your 1<sup>st</sup> accountability should be your spouse. If you're not married, I think it should be your parents. We also need a 2<sup>nd</sup> person of the same gender who we allow behind the curtain of our Oz.

##### B We must Stay **CONNECTED**

Isolation is where sin grows. As we see w/ David, he who is alone w/ their sin is utterly alone. Thus, we don't need more content as much as we need real relationships. You can't be known if you stay hidden.

C We must Practice Humble **CONFESSION**

Call sin what God calls it. Not: “I’m struggling” But: “This is sin.” Confession shrinks sin before it grows.

**Listen** – David’s greatness wasn’t that he didn’t fall – it was how he responded when confronted. He didn’t make excuses or cast blame – He confessed: “I have sinned against the Lord.”

Why” I think it is b/c our response to correction reveals our character more than our failure.

**WTM** – let’s bring this home carefully b/c in a room this size, there are (3) kinds of people:

Some of us are David – We’re drifting and today’s message is mercy b/c you realize that God isn’t trying to shame you – but coming to rescue you.

Some of us need a Nathan – We don’t need more sermons, but we do need someone who knows our life and will partner w/ us to know and care about us

Some of us are being called to be a Nathan – God has placed someone on your heart and you’re feeling the nudge. Don’t ignore it. Prayerfully and gently GO!

Here’s the truth: God loves us too much to let us drift unchecked. So, He sends: His Word. His Spirit. His people to love us to Him.

Accountability isn’t punishment – it is protection. It’s formation. It’s grace.

So, when God sends someone to you—listen. And when God sends you to someone—go. Because at the end of the day... Character is formed in the light—and accountability is what brings us there.