# Intro to Accountability

Accountability is a great spiritual discipline to help us grow in closeness in community and in righteousness in different areas of our lives. For many in our culture, men and women included, sexual integrity tends to be an area of struggle, but you may not know how to talk about it. You may even feel alone, thinking you have to figure this out on your own, or that there’s no hope for healing. But God says differently!

Galatians 6:1-2 “Brothers and sisters, 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.”

Proverbs 27:17 “As iron sharpens iron, so one person sharpens another.”

James 5:16 “Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective.”

We are called to help each other through Christ! Through confessing our sins to each other and holding each other accountable, God is healing us and growing us, both individually and in our community. Not only is this necessary for our spiritual formation, it also marks our community as different and holy, set apart.

# How do we meet? What do we do?

If this is your **first time meeting** with your new accountability partner:

* Spend some time getting to know each other better.
  + Share testimonies. How did you come to faith? How has God grown you recently?
* Talk about what are specific areas of sin in your life?
  + Be vulnerable! This is the person who’s going to hold you accountable. Talking about sin (especially sexual sin) can feel awkward or scary at first. That’s okay. It’s awkward for both of you! We promise it’ll feel less awkward the more you talk about it.
  + Just remember that you both are for each other and want to see each other grow. The more open and honest you can be, the more helpful this accountability partnership will be for both of you.
* Ask each other the sexual integrity questions listed on the other page. Again, answer vulnerably.
* Determine are there other questions you want to ask each other in addition to the sexual integrity questions below?
  + For example, maybe another sin pattern like lying or treating people poorly is an issue for you. What specific, direct questions does your accountability partner need to ask you in order to see if you’ve sinned in that area this week, as well as to help that sin pattern dissipate next week?
  + Another example is if you’d like to grow in doing personal spiritual disciplines, e.g. quiet times or sabbath. You could set a goal for how many times you’d like to do that discipline in the next week. Then your partner would ask you how many times you did that discipline.
    - Don’t just make these a checklist though! Also share about how God met you or grew you through your disciplines.
* Ask each other are there ways you can help each other throughout the week?
  + For example, maybe you know being alone in your dorm room is a time you’re tempted to look at porn. Ask your accountability partner if you can text them during these times so they can hold you accountable. If your accountability partner is in your dorm or lives close, you could even see if you can go hang out or study with them so you don’t have to be alone.
  + This is just one example. There are definitely others! The point is that you don’t have to wait until your official accountability meeting to be held accountable.
* Determine when and where you’ll meet again.
  + Plan to meet weekly or biweekly.
  + Pick a time that is realistic for both of you. Maybe over a meal or meeting somewhere between classes.
  + Pick a place where you’re comfortable talking about vulnerable things. A quiet coffee shop may not be the best choice, as an example. :-P
  + Stick to it as much as possible! It’s tempting to cancel when busyness rolls around. Prioritize these as you would a class (at least a class you don’t skip 😊). Accountability helps best when you’re meeting and sharing consistently.
* Pray for each other!

**For subsequent meetings:**

* Ask each other all the sexual integrity questions and any other questions you’ve committed to asking each other.
* If there are any adjustments to be made (e.g. a new question to ask each other, a change in schedule, etc.), then talk about those and adjust.
* Always pray for each other! Your accountability partner probably knows how to pray more specifically for you than almost anyone else. Receive that as God’s gift.
* **IMPORTANT:** What’s said in accountability should stay between the two of you. In order to be vulnerable, it’s important to know that your partner won’t tell other people the things you shared. If there’s a specific reason you should share it with someone else, make sure you get your partner’s explicit permission before you do.

# How to get more help

What should you do if you get in a rut? If you feel like your questions aren’t specific enough, you continue to struggle without seeing change, or you feel like you or your accountability partner are having problems being vulnerable together?

* **Talk to each other** about it! Are there changes you need to make to your questions? Is there something you need to confess that you haven’t been forthcoming about? Tell the other person, and make sure you both are being gracious and open with the other as you share these things. You may have to adjust your meetings along the way.
* **Talk to your small group leader or staff.** They may have more resources for you, or can help make sure your accountability questions are specific and direct enough.

# Sexual Integrity Questions

**Bring this page with you each time you meet!**

* Have you crossed any physical/sexual boundaries with your significant other? With anyone else?
  + Have you done things that would come close to crossing a boundary?
  + Have you put yourself in situations where those could be easily crossed?
* Have you looked at porn this week or anything else sexually explicit?
  + Have you looked at things that would come close to sexually explicit material? (maybe a sexually explicit movie or show, suggestive pictures, etc.)
* Have you masturbated?
* If you crossed a boundary this time, what are your tangible next steps?
  + Have you gone to the Lord in prayer?
  + Is there a clear conversation you need to have with your significant other to reset expectations?
  + If pornography and/or sexual material has been an issue, could you install an internet filter? Could your accountability partner set up a password to your phone or computer? What tangible step/boundary would help you?
* Anything else you need to tell your accountability partner that you don't want to tell them?
  + Anything that happened this week that you’d rather keep a secret?
  + Is there a question you hope no one asks you this week? If so, what is it?