

345 **Steve Morgan**

346 Let me talk just a minute about accountability. Because when you talk about making
347 decisions like this, especially with people that have long church backgrounds, the issue of
348 accountability comes into play. And I've been thinking about this a lot over the past six or
349 eight months because I want to be accountable. I never want to be in the spot where I
350 don't have a group of men around me that I am accountable to. It's so important for our
351 safety. And that's supposed to be the other overseers that are around me. But our problem
352 is, we frequently think of accountability from a perspective of suspicion. Do you follow
353 me? What we think is, I'm going to watch you and be sure. We think of accountability
354 from a perspective of suspicion. But I don't think that's Christian accountability. I think
355 Christian accountability is from the perspective of trust. Does that make sense?

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357 That we can say you about your lead pastor and us about you, that I so trust you. I trust
358 you, not based on some I've just met you so but I trust you because you look nice. I trust
359 you because I know you and you know me. Do you follow that? Does that make sense?
360 And accountability based on trust is a completely different thing. It is to protect. It is the
361 safety that God means for the overseers to have amongst themselves and the lead pastor
362 who has to champion the vision for it to have not accountability based on suspicion, but
363 accountability based on trust. And we can trust because we know each other. We've
364 confessed our sin to each other. We know each other's stories. We're transparent with
365 each other. There's trust. And in that atmosphere, it's safe. It's, I would say, true
366 accountability. Accountability that is redemptive. Does that make sense?

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368 It's really important. Most people see a board as functioning from a perspective of
369 suspicion accountability. That's how our cultures work. But it's not how Jesus' church
370 ought to work. And that's why Paul says things to Timothy in 1 Timothy 5:19, "Do not
371 entertain an accusation against an elder unless it is brought by two or three witnesses." In
372 other words, if it's two, I'm not sure if I'm even going to entertain this. But if it's three, I
373 have to. Those who sin are to be rebuked publicly so that the others may take warning.
374 And I think publicly there means in front of all the rest of the overseers. I don't have time
375 to explain why I think that right now, but that's what I think it means. And if it was
376 visible teaching, preaching overseer that's been in front of the church all the time, it has
377 to be in front of the whole church, probably. At least in front of the team meeting.

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379 So, why does Paul say that? "Do not entertain an accusation against an elder, an overseer,
380 a pastor, unless it's probably by two or three witnesses." I think he's saying you better
381 know these overseers well. You ought to know that they're trustworthy. And you've got to
382 know that the evil one will try to accuse them. And if you harm the relationship and break
383 trust by not protecting them and defending them when that happens, that is there're
384 accusations being brought without clear evidence of sin. You got to know this is not

385 talking about character weaknesses. I don't mean that. That's not what I mean. I don't
386 know what I mean. This is not talking about those kinds of faults that do not sin. Like me,
387 for instance. Our overseers frequently have to explain what I meant when I said
388 something like an idiot that I didn't get it out quite right because I don't always get it out
389 quite right. Do any of you always get it outright? Larry does, but none of the rest of us
390 young guys do. That's what experience does for you.

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392 And so, what happens when somebody comes to me and would complain about Andrew,
393 or complain about David Chery, or Ern? I know exactly what to say. I say, "Wait, I trust
394 them completely. I know inside and out. You better have something worth talking about,
395 and there better be a couple of others of you that can verify it or I will not even listen to
396 you, because the Bible tells me I may not. I may not even listen to your accusation. If you
397 don't have any proof, you better shut up." And I have to say that. The Bible requires me
398 to say that, to defend and to protect. And that's the same role that our overseers have in
399 defending and protecting me. It's not because they're the boys and they're going to cover
400 up all my sins. If I have sinned, I'll confess it. If I have sinned, I'll say I sinned. Here it is.
401 It's not like that. It's not a good old boy club trying to get away with something, but it's
402 that the church and the leaders are not safe if the rest of the overseers don't understand,
403 you do not entertain an accusation against the lead pastor or a fellow overseer if there are
404 not two or three witnesses.

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406 Other overseers, not the lead pastor, if you hear that, man, you got to be telling the lead
407 pastor about that, because that's one of the main roles in protecting the church. It's so
408 important. It's safety for the lead pastor. As a lead pastor, I absolutely cannot lead if I
409 don't feel safe. And there are lots of times when I've not felt safe because things were
410 happening. And where it always comes back to safety for me is when our overseers and
411 I've experienced it over and over through the years, here and in Blue Sky now, when the
412 overseers get around me and protect me and say, "Speak truth to me. We got this. It's
413 okay. We're together." All of that stuff, well, then I'm safe. But if I wonder about that, I'm
414 not safe, and I can't lead.

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416 And what I personally do, in all of our personalities, styles, and weaknesses are different,
417 but what I personally do is I start shrinking back from leading. Because one of my
418 tendencies is to become a little afraid and not want to assert myself where I shouldn't.
419 And so, I'll start pulling back. But if I feel safe, I'll lead. I remember years ago when
420 Sándor and I were trying to figure this out for the first time. Remember all that, Sándor?
421 People would come to Sándor and complain to him about me. And it's always subtle and
422 sweet, right? It's always, "I just have this problem I'm working through" And they would
423 tell you, by the end of it, he'd realize, "Oh, I just got fired. What they meant to do was
424 complain about Steve, and they acted so sweet." And then finally, back in the Vineyard
425 days, Dave Stark sat us down. Up in St. Louis, wasn't it? And he started talking with us

426 about that and talking to Sándor because I didn't know what to tell him to do. I had never
427 done this before. What did he say, Sándor?

428
429 **Sándor Paull:**

430 He's really helpful. I mean, [inaudible], I've done my job. [inaudible]

431
432 **Steve Morgan:**

433 Right. So don't think that that's going to be innocuous. I mean, those kinds of accusations
434 come from hell. And the evil one is true to his character. He always mixes partial truths
435 in, right? That's how he tempted Jesus. He always mixes partial truths. I mean, man, if
436 you want to find weaknesses in me, you can find them. I can list them for you. He always
437 mixes them together. And what Sándor learned that day was a few lines. I remember
438 when he first started using, he'd be so excited because at first, it was getting so he could
439 catch it. When it first started happening, before it went very hard. Because what
440 happened was, even if it didn't take me out, it would end up hurting Sándor, because he
441 listened to words designed from hell. It would cause him to doubt, suspicion, fear, all of
442 those kinds of things.

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444 But once he learned to say, "Listen, it sounds like you have a problem. I know Steve, and
445 I trust Steve." Once he started saying that, that you're going to have to work through your
446 problem and discerning when it was something big enough that it became from a leader
447 or something like that when he had to send them to me. And when it was something to
448 say, "Your heart's not right. You have a problem. You better just deal with it and get over
449 it and not send them to me." It took a while, kind of learning what's what on that so I
450 don't have to deal with every grapy person in the church. But once he started doing that,
451 amazing, the spiritual difference. He stepped into a protectoral.

452
453 How can you do that and have accountability? Because the Bible tells us we must. Do not
454 entertain an accusation against an elder unless they're two or three witnesses, and those
455 that sin. So we know he's talking about sin, not weakness. Right? He's not talking about
456 weaknesses. He's not talking about me sometimes being impatient, he's not talking about
457 me saying things flippantly sometimes, that is misunderstood. He's talking about sin.
458 Those who sin. Then you have to deal with it from an issue of sin and we have provisions
459 for doing that. Does that make sense?

460
461 Accountability-biblically is based on trust. If you don't trust the lead pastor, you need to
462 just resign and get out of that spot, that's not right. That's not right. And lead pastor, if
463 you don't trust your overseers, you have the wrong people on the spot, you need to
464 release them. Give them freedom. Don't put them in the impossible spot. Does that make
465 sense? Where there is unity among the overseers, where there is fierce protection of one

466 another, the evil one cannot come in and breathe lies.

467

468 And the safeguard force is we know what to do where there really is sin. Rebuke them
469 publicly. So that the others may take warning and not sin too. Okay? So it's not like
470 there's no provision for if we really do sin. I mean if I sin, if I screw up, if I had an affair,
471 there's a lot of provisions and we're all set up to know what to do with me. Right? Just
472 like any of you overseers, if you did that, we know exactly what to do with you. We'd
473 rebuke you publicly. Deciding whether that's in front of the other overseers, in front of
474 the team meeting; depending on what your visibility was, if you're visible in front of the
475 whole church, it would be some explanation in front of the whole church so that
476 everybody else, especially the other overseers will take warning and not sin. Makes
477 sense?

478

479 Okay. And really, this is about redemption. I mean, any of you not sin? I mean the list of
480 sins in my life is so long it would kill a cow if they tried to swallow it. It's bad. But I don't
481 live like that now. I don't live like that anymore. I just used to.