

YOUR LIFE IN THE **RED**ZONE

ACCOUNTABILITY

REPLAY

Every day after practice on the field, you go to the gym for a workout. Without pumping the iron, you would be trampled on the field by bigger men. The workout requires discipline, commitment, and accountability. For an outsider, the need for discipline and commitment is easy to see. But why accountability? Why can't you work out by yourself?

Any workout done alone will be less effective than with a partner. Alone, you will only push yourself so far. Most of the benefit from a workout comes with the hurt. No pain, no gain is very true in the gym. Players who benefit most from a workout are the ones with a gym partner yelling in their face for one more rep, one more minute on the treadmill, and five more pounds of iron to the bar.

GAME BOOK

Scripture commands Christians help one another out in this manner; "Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ" (Galatians 6:2). Every Christian chooses to workout daily or to skip it. Our workout is Bible study, prayer, and worship. Every part adds to your ability in the game. Some parts of it may be easy for you, but some parts will be harder. You need the partner to make sure you do the parts you don't want to do.

Not just anyone will do as an accountability partner. What traits should you look for?

First of all, you must find someone who cares about your progress (and whom you care about; this is a partnership, after all). "And he has given us this command: Whoever loves God must also love his brother" (1 John 4:21). You and your partner must be teammates, devoted to mutual success. Like a football team, everyone goes to the bowl game together or not at all.

Secondly, a partner must be someone who will correct you, lovingly, when you falter (Galatians 6:1). Your partner must realize that he is not above temptation and can falter himself. Knowing that someone is going to get on you, helps keep people on the straight and narrow.

Thirdly, a partner must encourage you when you succeed and as you go ("...encourage one another and build each other up... (1 Thessalonians 5:11)"). If all you hear about from your partner are your failures, you will not want to

continue the partnership.

Fourth, you must meet with your accountability partner and ask questions. Simply saying "How'd it go?" "Fine. You?" "Fine. See you next week." doesn't strengthen you. It doesn't build you up. You both just wasted time.

Accountability meetings must have probing questions like:

- * "Did you give in to temptation this week?"
- * "What did you do to enhance your marital life this week?"
- * "Did you do your prayer, praise, and Bible study this week?"

An accountability partner will confide in you, pray for and with you, encourage you, and listen as you confide in him. You owe it to your teammates to find a partner and become the player you can be.

TAKE-AWAY

Who's your accountability partner? Do you have someone in your life who makes sure you do the drill (Bible study, prayer, worship) daily? If not, get one. Make sure it is someone who will push you to be better than you would be yourself. Someone who gets in your face and yells for that one more rep! Then when you've pushed beyond what you thought possible, your partner cheers.