
Chapter 7

How to Grow pt 4 | Accountability

If you've stuck with this course to this point, congratulations! This is the last official chapter, though if you stick around a little longer, there are a few bonus pieces of material for you. More on that at the end of this chapter.

First, let me briefly recap what we've covered so far. **We began with the concept that words matter.** We've all heard the catchy childhood saying, "Sticks and stones may break my bones, but words will never hurt me." We all know it isn't true. Words can destroy, and words can create and build. Words matter, and I believe ONE word can matter.

But like any resolution or goal, the Word of the Year project can be a bust much more easily than it can be successful. The key to its success is intentionality. I have multiple ways you can grow from your Word of the Year, but none will work, as well, if you don't intentionally follow through on them.

The starting point is to believe that your Word will be transformative this year and to take a step of faith by sharing it with a close friend in person and with other friends online.

That step is to kick-start your year, but the real growth happens by learning through study, prayer, meditation, and contemplation, and marrying that with hands-on action. These two steps require setting aside a specific time and place to learn and act, and then picking up the art of journaling what you know.

Once Again...Intentionality

Let me circle back to the intentionality piece one last time. While preparing for this Word of the Year course, I thought of my friend Mark. Mark is about ten years older than me and has had a highly successful career in the corporate world. He recently quit that job to follow his dream of starting his own business in a completely different business sector.

I recently visited his retail location in a brand-new, beautiful building. It was impressive to see his dream become a reality. I remember riding in his truck just a year or two earlier, hearing about his plans, discussing possible build sites, and the investment it would take to get the business off the ground.

Mark lives this concept of intentionality. In fact, one of Mark's favorite sayings is "Live your dash." It refers to an experience he had walking through a cemetery after attending a funeral. Observing

gravestone after gravestone, Mark noticed how most monuments listed the deceased's name along with a birthdate, followed by the date of their death. In between the two dates was a simple dash.

It didn't matter how long that person lived, whether a child who died too young or a person well into their 80s, 90s, or beyond. It didn't matter how successful the person had been, either. A single dash defined a lifetime of living. Mark concluded that, in that walk through a cemetery, the only way to differentiate my dash from anyone else's was by intentionally working toward the things that matter most.

As you live your dash, let me give you one last hint on how to make your Word of the Year successful intentionally.

Accountability

In the "Share" section, I hinted at the importance of having people in our lives to hold us accountable for our Word at the beginning of this course. In fact, the writer of Hebrews defines this well:

Let us hold on to the hope we say we have and not be changed. We can trust God that He will do what He promised. Let us help each other to love others and to do good. Let us not stay away from church meetings. Some people are doing this all the time. Comfort each other as you see the day of His return coming near. -Hebrews 10:23-25

We need one another if we are to stand firm in the things we hear from God, including your Word of the Year. There are two vital parts to being accountable—initiation and follow-through. Both are equally difficult.

The first way to be accountable is what I shared earlier in this course – sharing your word with friends in person and online. Your willingness to share personal insight can be very intimidating. Who knows what that person may think? Here is why I encourage sharing your Word in person as a first step in the Word of the Year process: speaking your Word out loud to another person makes it real in a way that doesn't happen as an internal, personal project. **We grow best when we invite other people into our journey.**

However, to grow and learn from this project, you must follow up with those you share your word with within the following weeks and months. Ask them to quiz you on what you are learning. Have them force you to consider what you gain through your word in the middle of the year.

This second step of accountability is vital to learning from your Word of the Year.

My Substack site is my accountability; before that, I wrote on a blog for years. I also share my Word with my wife and a few friends throughout the year, and what I am learning.

In 2024, I shared my Word content on my Substack and then went on to say how impactful this project was. That post put some of my credibility on the line. Because I shared how important the Word of the Year has been for me and my Word with my community, I felt compelled to follow up in August 2024 with a series on what I had been learning.

My transparency with my community forced me to reflect on the year. As I looked over my journals and thought about what I had experienced, CONTENT became real in a way it hadn't before. **My accountability to my community helped me grow, and I want the same thing for you.**

Within my Substack community, I've offered this accountability. I meet with anyone interested in an online group setting every quarter. In this group, we are working through the tips I share in this course. You're welcome to join me there or create the same thing in your own circle of influence—friends, family, and co-workers.

One More Story

A couple of years ago, my friend Todd (the one who carved his Word into an ax handle) encouraged me to create a course from the Word of the Year material I had been sharing online for over a decade. We talked a few times, and I started the process, but I never finished.

On the one hand, it went nowhere. Todd planned to help me film and edit the project, but it never materialized. Just two years later, another friend reached out to me to create a course for his photography community. And now, I've taken all of that material, added my Christian faith back into it, and you are currently finishing the final product (good for you!). The initial contact through Todd went nowhere, but on the other hand, Todd's encouragement, help, and support held me accountable for following through with this project.

You never know the impact that sharing your Word with someone will have on them and on yourself. Be accountable to someone with your Word and your growth this year!

Chapter 7 Homework | Accountability

1. Find one to three people to share your Word.
2. Commit to yourself and each other to meet quarterly (or more) to share what you are learning as you work through your Word.

About Andy



My name is Andy Bondurant. In over 25 years of professional and volunteer ministry experience in the urban, suburban, international, and domestic worlds, and now as a pastor at a local church in Kansas, I have found that most people make connecting to God too complicated. Most people don't believe they can personally connect to Jesus.

Understanding the God of the Bible is easier than you might think, and I want to show you how.

You can find a new article about once or twice a week, where I'll show you how to connect with and understand God. If you don't want to miss one of these, sign up for updates, and I'll send you a free eBook devotional that will help you draw closer to God in just 30 days.

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