

## INSIGHT

In ancient Israel, watchmen were stationed on the highest parts of the city walls. Their responsibility was to inform the city's inhabitants of the progress of a battle (*1 Sam. 14:16*) or of approaching messengers or enemies (*2 Sam. 18:24-27; 2 Kings 9:17-20*). Israel's prophets saw themselves as watchmen warning the nation of God's approaching judgment if the people did not repent (*Jer. 6:17; Ezek 3:16-21; Hosea 9:8*). Vineyards and fields also had watchmen, especially during harvest time. Their responsibility was to guard the produce from animals and thieves.

The concept of *watchmen* still remains for God's people today. The Lord's Church--called the *nation* of God (*1 Peter 2:9*), the *city* of God (*Hebrews 12:22-23*), the *field* of God (*1 Cor. 3:9*) and, by analogy, the vineyard of God (*Matt. 20:1-16*)--has watchmen appointed to encourage faithfulness to the Lord. Who are these "watchmen"?

**1. God** (*1 Cor. 11:32; Hebrews 12:1-11*). God disciplines us for our own good. The Lord's discipline prevents us from being condemned with the world (*1 Cor. 11:32*).

**2. The Word of God** (*2 Tim. 3:16,17*). The Word teaches, rebukes, corrects and trains us in righteousness.

**3. The Church** (*1 Thess. 5:14-15; Heb. 10:23-25*). We are called to patiently warn, encourage, and help one another. We are to spur one another on toward love and good deeds.

**4. Your Disciplex** (*Matthew 28:19-20; Heb. 13:7,17*). Elders, ministers and disciplex are there to teach you what is good; not to destroy you! They are there for your benefit--don't grieve them.

**5. Yourself** (*1 Tim. 4:7,8,16; 2 Tim. 1:7*). It is our responsibility to train ourselves to be godly. God gave us the power to discipline ourselves.

## The Attitude in Christ Accountability

**Key Text:** **Ezekiel 3:17**

*"Son of man, I have made you a watchman for the house of Israel; so hear the word I speak and give them warning from me. "*

### Theme:

Discipleship brings about maturity. When a father disciplines his child, it is out of love for the child--to bring him to maturity and righteousness. God disciplines us for our own good--to bring us to peace and holiness. We must not be afraid to acknowledge our wrongs and to welcome a brother's or sister's correction. Let us learn to repent and to accept a true friend's love for us!

### Application:

Here are some practical suggestions:

- 1. Repent** when you do wrong. Don't hold on to sin. Learn to hate sin!
- 2. Don't be difficult** when your disciplex or anyone else corrects you concerning sin. He/She is trying to love you and help you. Regard him/her as a true friend!
- 3. Learn to love reproof.** It will make you wise! Read *Proverbs 15:31-32*.
- 4. Thank those who correct you!** Whether it be your relative, a church member, or a stranger!
- 5. Don't fight fire with fire!** Don't purposely point out your brother's sin when he is correcting you! Don't be spiteful! God sees right through that!
- 6. Pray** to the Lord to have a disciplex's heart and meditate upon the Word daily!
- 8. Encourage** and correct with a genuine spirit of love, and not with a spirit of criticism!

**May the Lord richly bless you!**

SERMON OUTLINE
<p><b>Accountability</b></p> <p><b>I. Ezekiel (God Will Strengthen)</b></p> <p><b>A. Personality</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. He behaved very strangely (4,5)!</li> <li>2. He was conscientiously obedient to the Lord</li> </ol> <p><b>B. Ezekiel's Call (3:16-21)</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Sent as a <i>Watchman</i> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Requires a total submission to the Lord</li> <li>b. Israel in a military state; exposed to enemies</li> <li>c. Watchmen are in peril from the enemy               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>--kill the watchman, gain entrance</li> <li>--yet, watchmen are devoted to their general--in this case, the Lord</li> </ul> </li> <li>d. Ezekiel's duties:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>--To take notice and to give notice</li> <li>--Preliminaries:                   <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1)His answer is from the Lord (vs 17)                       <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>--he ate the scroll-vs 1-3</li> </ul> </li> <li>2) He was going to people who understand (vs 5)</li> </ol> </li> </ul> </li> <li>e. Purpose:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>--we (all) are personally responsible for our own behavior</li> <li>--God wants to give life!</li> </ul> </li> </ol> </li> </ol> <p><b>C. The Church Today</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. We are under a military state, with the enemy, Satan, trying to destroy</li> <li>2. A faithful watchmen:       <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. rejected by men if faithful</li> <li>b. rejected by God is unfaithful</li> </ol> </li> <li>3. Our duty as faithful Christians:       <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Warn of the dangers of sin</li> <li>b. Assurance of the benefits of repentance</li> </ol> </li> </ol> <p><b>II. Conclusion: 33:11</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. God does not take pleasure in judgment</li> <li>2. He rather bestow life and blessing!</li> <li>3. We are called to warn and to exhort!</li> <li>4. Goal: Repent and return to the Lord</li> </ol> <p><i>Like an earring of gold or an ornament of fine gold is a wise man's rebuke to a listening ear.</i> Proverbs 25:12</p>

SMALL GROUP STUDY
<p><b>Warm-up:</b></p> <p>Have you ever been in a situation that was both hurtful and helpful--sort of a catch 22 situation?</p> <p><b>See To It</b> <span style="float: right;"><i>Ezekiel 33:7-20</i></span></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. What was Ezekiel duty? Explain his job.</li> <li>2. How was Ezekiel to speak to those who engaged in sin? What does it mean to <i>dissuade</i>?</li> <li>3. Why would God hold Ezekiel accountable for not warning the wicked of his ways?</li> <li>4. How does this apply to the Christian today? Who are considered the wicked?</li> <li>5. How does these passages relate to the preaching of the gospel? What must be taught?</li> <li>6. How do you we respond to those who feel their sin is too great and they are hopeless?</li> </ol> <p><b>Seeing It Closer:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. How does verse 12 relate to us today?</li> <li>2. What is God's goal for His people? What is the purpose for the warning?</li> <li>3. How are we like Ezekiel? What is the duty of faithful Christians?</li> </ol> <p><b>Getting To It:</b></p> <p>Go around the room and take turns sharing with each other what these verses in Ezekiel have taught you. Pray for each other to be faithful watchmen: to encourage one another with a spirit of love, patience and sincerity.</p>