

“That Great Sin of Omission”

(By Paul R. Blake)

Introduction:

- A. Hosea 10:12; James 4:17
 - 1. Dad’s prayers: “Forgive me of that great sin of omission.”
- B. What is the sin of omission?
 - 1. J. W. McGarvey once said, “I would esteem above every other gift that could be bestowed upon me as a preacher the power to adequately conceive what sin is and to adequately set it before the people.”
 - 2. Why was this ability so important to McGarvey? Because he was keenly aware of the consequences of sin.
 - 3. Isa. 59:1-2; Rom. 6:23; John 8:21

I. DEFINING THE SIN OF OMISSION

- A. We understand sins of commission; in fact, they are often the only sins that come to mind for some Christians - Col. 3:25
 - 1. Commission of sin is something that is done by desire and by design, whether engaging in forbidden activity or avoiding commanded behavior, it is done willingly and by conscious effort.
 - 2. The sin of omission is not named as such in the scriptures, but it is spoken of often.
- B. Omission - “Failure to perform an act agreed upon; the oversight, deliberate or unconscious, of a duty to God, an individual, or a group to act.”
 - 1. Omission can mean failing to pray, give thanks, follow instructions; the category that encompasses the sins of not doing what we should have.
 - 2. It can also mean doing something without thinking or considering that it is sin. Planned or not, it’s still sin.
 - 3. Prov. 24:11-12 - Sin sometimes is doing nothing.
- C. Sometimes called the sin of “knowledge without practice.”
 - 1. When we know the right thing to do and have the means to do it, to do nothing is a sin - Rom. 7:15.
 - 2. "I decided I would not sin today and so I didn't." "How did you do that?" "I just sat down so that I would not walk into sin, I said nothing so I would not sin with my mouth, and I thought about nothing so that I would not think evil." "I see, so you committed the sin of omission? You were the unfruitful fig tree."
- D. Many commands require positive action.
 - 1. "Do unto others, as you would have them do unto you" requires doing.
 - 2. "It is more blessed to give, than to receive" requires giving.
 - 3. "Go into all the world and preach the Gospel" requires going.
 - 4. One preacher calls Matt. 28:19-20 “the Great Omission” and says the most well-kept command of the Lord is Luke 9:20-21
 - 5. The one talent servant didn’t lose or abuse his talent; he just didn’t use it - Matt. 25:26
 - 6. James 2:14-17; 1John 3:16-19

II. COMMANDS CHRISTIANS COMMONLY OMIT

- A. Be humble - 1Peter 5:5
- B. Visit the sick - Matt. 25:41-45
- C. Take care of widows and orphans - James 1:27
- D. Help the poor - Psalm 112:4, 9
- E. Give as prospered - 1Cor. 16:1-2
- F. Assemble with the saints - Heb. 10:25
- G. Sing praise - Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16
- H. Pray - 1Thes. 5:17
- I. Study - 2Tim. 2:15
- J. Provide for our families - 1Tim. 5:8
- K. Be thankful - 1Thes. 5:18
- L. Teach the Gospel to the lost - Matt. 28:19-20

Conclusion:

- A. "Most of us fall short much more by omission than by commission. While the world perishes we go our way: purposeless, passionless, day after day."
(P. Pilgrim)
- B. "The omission of good is no less reprehensible than the commission of evil."
(Plutarch)
- C. "It is not only what we do, but also what we do not do, for which we are accountable." (Molière)

"I never cut my neighbor's throat;
My neighbor's gold I never stole;
I never spoiled his house and land;
But God have mercy on my soul!
For I am haunted night and day
By all the deeds I have not done;
O unattempted loveliness!
O costly valor never won!"
— Marguerite Wilkinson