

INTRODUCTION:

1. John Greenleaf Whittier, "For all sad words of tongue and pen, the saddest are these, 'it might have been.'"
2. Luke 10:30-37.
3. Every sin is either a sin of commission or a sin of omission.
4. We sin by commission when we do or **commit** things we should not do. Ephesians 4:25, 28-29. Examples: lying, stealing, speaking corrupt words. The thieves.
5. We sin by omission when we don't do or **omit** doings things we should do. James 4:17. Examples: not visiting the fatherless and widows in their afflictions (James 1:27); not abounding in the grace of giving (2 Corinthians 8:7); not loving our wives just as Christ loved the church (Ephesians 5:25). The priest and the Levite.
6. Is the golden rule, "Don't do to others what you don't want them to do to you"? No, it includes this principle but demands far more. Rather, the golden rule is, "Do to others what you want them to do to you." Matthew 7:12.
7. What is true of the golden rule is true of all Christianity. Christianity is much more than not doing things that are inherently wrong. It includes this, but its reach is far greater in scope. Christianity is also about doing things that are inherently right.
8. Consider Galatians 5:19-23A. Our task as Christians is to be putting off the former AND to be putting on the latter. We must do both if we want to be pleasing to God.
 - A. For example, to please God we must not get drunk. But, to please God we must do more than just not get drunk. We must also put on self-control. The former will stop us from drinking a large quantity of beverage alcohol. The latter will stop us from drinking any beverage alcohol.
 - B. As another example, to please God we must not hate. But, to please God we must do more than just not hate. Can we be indifferent and be pleasing to God? No, we must put off hate as well as indifference and put on love.
9. By passing the wounded man by on the other side, the priest and Levite were just as guilty before God as the thieves. Likewise, we are just as guilty when we fail to do something we should have done as we are when we do something we should not have done.
10. I'm concerned about God's people. I'm not sure we are putting off sins of omission as we ought. If not, I hope this lesson will help us do just that. Tonight we'll discuss six things we must do to put off sins of omission and we'll make four important applications of what we've learned.



TO PUT OFF SINS OF OMISSION WE MUST:

1. **Learn the actual demands of righteousness.**
 - A. Some people don't put off sins of omission as they ought because they don't realize all the good things God expects them to be striving to do.
 - B. I don't know about you, but the more I learn the word of God, the more I come to understand that the realm of good works I need to be doing is far larger than I previously imagined.
 - C. Put another way, the more I study, the greater I come to see the gap between what I do and what I must do to be holy just as God is holy.
 - D. I think Paul learned this same truth as he grew in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. 1 Corinthians 15:9; Ephesians 3:8; 1 Timothy 1:15.
 - E. Practically applied, the standard for what we should do is what Jesus would do if He were in our place. At the end of any given day, how many of us can look back on our day and honestly say that we did everything Jesus would have done if He had been in our place?
 - F. Make no mistake about it, the bar of righteousness is high.
 - 1) "'You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength.' This [is] the first commandment. And the second, like [it], [is] this: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself'" (Mark 12:30-31).
 - 2) "Let all [that] you [do] be done with love" (1 Corinthians 16:14).
 - 3) "Whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God" (1 Corinthians 10:31).
 - 4) "In everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you" (1 Thessalonians 5:18).
 - G. The demands of Christianity pervade every aspect of our lives, certainly our words and deeds (Colossians 3:17), but also the thoughts and intents of our minds. Hebrews 4:12-13.
 - H. Luke 10:25-29.

2. **Not fear failure.** Some people don't put off sins of omission as they ought because they fear failure. Matthew 25:24-25, 30. The only thing worse than trying and failing is failing to try.
3. **Work hard.**
 - A. Some don't put off sins of omission as they ought simply because doing so takes lots of hard work.
 - B. It is relatively easy to put off sins of commission. The really hard work begins when we start putting off sins of omission.
 - C. What is harder?
 - 1) Not committing adultery against your wife, or loving her like Christ loved the church?
 - 2) Not supporting institutionalism from the church treasury, or visiting the fatherless and widows in their distress as individual Christians?
 - 3) Not lying or telling people the truth about the gospel of Jesus Christ?
 - 4) Not robbing and beating people, or doing what the Samaritan did?
 - D. Matthew 25:26-29.
4. **Not procrastinate.** Some people don't put off sins of omission as they ought because they put off until tomorrow what they must be doing today. Proverbs 3:27-28. Truly, the road to hell is paved with good intentions.
5. **Accurately assess our abilities and opportunities for doing good.**
 - A. Some people don't put off sins of omission as they ought because they underestimate their abilities and their opportunities for doing good.
 - B. We've often heard, and rightly so, that responsibility is a function of ability (Matthew 25:14-15A) and opportunity (Galatians 6:10). In other words, ability + opportunity = responsibility.
 - C. Admittedly, determining ability and opportunity involves a degree of judgment. But, we must use good judgment because we will answer to God for the choices we make. Matthew 25:19.
 - D. We all have far greater ability to do good than we realize. Ephesians 3:20; Matthew 25:29A.
 - E. Brethren, we all have ample opportunities for doing good. John 4:35. Let's be honest with ourselves. There are so many opportunities for us to do good that our constant task should be determining which good deeds have the highest priority (Titus 3:14) and our constant lament should be that there is always more work than week when it comes to our doing all the good that needs to be done.
6. **Not underestimate or overestimate God's expectations regarding sins of omission.**
 - A. First, given the height of the bar of righteousness, I strongly suspect that many people really don't think God is going to hold us responsible for failing to do what He says we ought to be doing. They underestimate God's expectations regarding sins of omission. But, there is absolutely no scriptural reason to draw this conclusion.
 - B. Consider, for example, Matthew 12:35-37. "Careless" or "idle" is *argos*, literally "not working." It means "free from labor, at leisure ... lazy, shunning the labor which one ought to perform." Idle words are not inherently evil words. Rather, they are words that serve no constructive purpose or less than the best possible purpose.
 - C. God makes it clear that time is too precious to waste. Proverbs 14:23; Colossians 4:5 (in the NKJV, "making the most of the opportunity" is "redeeming the time").
 - D. Brethren, we must not think God accepts anything less than our best effort at trying to clear the bar of righteousness. This is what we can all do and it's what we all must do. Revelation 2:4-5; 3:15-16, 19.
 - E. Second, given the height of the bar of righteousness, I strongly suspect that many people really don't think they can do what God says they must to go to heaven. They overestimate God expectations regarding sins of omission.
 - F. Brethren, we must not think God demands anything more than our best effort at trying to clear the bar of righteousness. This is all we can do and it is all we must do.
 - G. While the way that leads to life is difficult, it is definitely doable. We must never think otherwise. Our standing with God does not depend on us always clearing the bar of righteousness. Rather, our standing with God depends on us always trying our best to clear the bar of righteousness. Ecclesiastes 7:20; Romans 3:22-23; 1 John 1:8-10; Luke 18:9-14.
 - H. To put off sins of omission, we must not underestimate or overestimate God expectations regarding sins of omission. God doesn't expect less or more than what we can do – but He does expect what we can do and for some of us, that's far from what we're doing.

SOME APPLICATIONS:

1. **Are we leaving things undone?** Joshua 11:15.
2. **Are we working as hard as we ought?** Titus 2:14. Can we honestly say we are trying our best to put off the old man and put on the new man? Are we working so hard that we feel the need to pray as Jesus did in Matthew 9:35-38?
3. **Are we working as hard as we ought at the most important things?** Titus 3:14; Luke 10:38-42. The greatest dangers to the most important thing are the second and third most important things.
4. **Have we retired too soon?** 1 Corinthians 15:58. Heaven is the place for Christians to rest. Hebrews 4:9. If we are still breathing, we must not bury our talents. We still have many important things to do. Psalm 71:17-18; Philippians 3:12-14; 2 Timothy 4:7, 6.

CONCLUSION:

Matthew 25:31-46. Note: there is no mention of sins of commission, only sins of omission.

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