



The Right Thing To Do

James 4:17

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to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to
him it is sin. (KJV)

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Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin. (KJV)

- **“Therefore” – a conclusion based upon a principle just established**
- **James 4:13-17**
 - “but probably the apostle meant that it should refer to the point specified in the previous verses - the forming of plans respecting the future.” - Barnes
- **Sin of presumptuous confidence regarding tomorrow**
 - When we know our future depends upon God
 - To know to walk humbly but in practice to ignore it is sin

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Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin. (KJV)

- Therefore **if** this principle has a more general application...
 - ... it is in the context of not assuming we have tomorrow
 - We should not **put off** or **pass up** an opportunity “*to do good*”
 - We know “*to do good*” whenever we get an opportunity
 - We know we may not have that opportunity tomorrow
- **MAIN POINT**: The phrase “*to do good*” has situational application as opposed to absolute application

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Therefore to him that knoweth **to do good**, and doeth it not, to him it is sin. (KJV)

- **“Good” – sounds absolute (good vs. evil); a conceptual infinitive**
 - any and all the good that could possibly be done
- **“Good” here “is not the idea of good” – Wiesinger**
 - a description of the act required in a given situation
 - *“to do”* – to perform or accomplish – STRONG’s
- **We are not talking abstractly about any and all good that could be done, but the goodness of an action in a particular situation**

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- **The Problem**: if we feel guilt when we do not do all “the good”
- **The Root of the Problem**: “Am I doing enough?”
 - Question implies there is an amount that is enough
 - Mindset suggests there is a standard which I can achieve
 - We’re right back to pursuing self-righteousness
- **The Answer**: what counts is the nature of our works **not** the number

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Therefore to him that knoweth **to do good**, and doeth it not, to him it is sin. (KJV)

Therefore, to one who knows **the right thing to do** and does not do it, to him it is sin. (NASB)

So whoever knows **the right thing to do** and fails to do it, for him it is sin. (ESV)

- ***“to do good”*** – sounds absolute
- ***“the right thing to do”*** – depends on the situation or opportunity

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Therefore to him that knoweth **to do good**, and doeth it not, to him it is sin. (KJV)

- **James is reinforcing something he has already taught (2:16-17)**

16 And one of you say unto them, Depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled; notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful to the body; what doth it profit?

- **An **opportunity** when we know the right thing to do but don't do it!**

17 Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone.

The Right Thing To Do

- **What does opportunity look like?**
 - Abraham sitting in the door of his tent (Gen. 18:1-5)
 - The Good Samaritan traveling along the road (Luke 10:33)
- **We may not always have opportunity** - Phil. 4:10
 - Paul knew the Philippians would do good, when they did...
- **We may not be in position to respond to opportunity** - 1 Cor. 16:12
 - Paul had confidence Apollos would do good, when he could...
- **What should we do when we see an opportunity?** - 1 John 3:17-18
 - *“Little children, let us... love in deed and truth.”*

The Right Thing To Do

- **Don't pass up an opportunity when we know the right thing to do**

9 Let us not lose heart in **doing good**, for in due time we will reap if we do not grow weary. 10 So then, **while we have opportunity**, let us **do good** to all people, and especially to those who are of the household of the faith. (Gal. 6:9-10)

- **What should we do when we have opportunity?**
 - Do what we know to do...
 - Do good
 - Do the right thing to do

