

Sins of Omission

Someone wrote and said, "Have you read James 4, vs. 17? Do you visit the hospitals everyday? Do you feed the poor? Do you have any evil desires? Do you always do the good that you ought to do? Do you take care of orphans and widows? Do you ever put anything before God? Do you ever cause discord? Are you ever envious? Do you ever get angry? Do you ever have malice in your heart? I can name hundreds of things you fail to do every day. You don't have a chance. Your works will not save you because there are many things we are commanded to do and you fail to do. You are a hypocrite! "

Answer: This is another verse wrenched from its context to try and prove unconditional eternal security. Like other verses, this too is also used to put others under condemnation and stand hopelessly doomed to a life of sin no matter what. It's a no win situation. This person is in error thinking James says that all omission is sin. It is a verse used to try and prove unconditional eternal security.

The verse actually says,

James 4:17, "Therefore to him that **knoweth to do good**, and doeth it not, to him it is a sin."

If we read the whole chapter and read it in its context, we see James is not dealing with a sin of omission, but one sinning against the light, "...to him that KNOWETH"

James, as with the other writers of the NT, writes to keep us from falling back into sin. From cover to cover God is against sin and there are eternal consequences of those who would want to remain in rebellion against God. Sinning is not essential to salvation, the stopping of sin is essential to salvation. Genuine repentance is a condition for salvation. (Mk. 1:15; Lk. 13:3; Acts 5:31; 11:18; 17:30; 20:21; Ro. 2:4; 2 Co. 7:10; 2 Pe. 3:9).

Secondly, this person seems to be confused about sin and holiness. Often people come up with this red herring about feeding the orphans, helping the homeless, visiting hospitals, etc.. By their own definition, Jesus Himself would have been a sinner. Did Jesus clothe every person who was naked? Did Jesus take care of all the orphans and widows? Did Jesus heal everyone who came across his path? Did the apostles heal EVERYBODY? God had never demanded us to this kind of standard as the person has imposed upon believers! By his standard, he has accused the Matthew, James, Paul, Peter, John and most of all, our Savior as hypocrites!

But most of all, what do the Scriptures say? Do you not believe that Jesus came to destroy the work of the devil? The Bible says he who commits sin is of the devil.

1 Jn. 3:8-10. John says, "My little children, I write these things unto you that you MAY NOT SIN. (1 John 2:1) We are commanded to be holy. (1 Peter 1:15,16)

To distort the Scriptures as a means to support a sinful life must mean the person has not yet experienced true salvation.

"Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom you obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?" Romans 6:16