

The Sin that Affects us All

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

By Ben Graydon

We're not talking about a "churchy" sin here: not being there every time the church doors are open, not putting your money in the offering plate, or disobeying your pastor ... No, we're talking about sin as sin actually is: not a breaking of some (man-made) rule, but missing the mark. God's got a calling for – a mark on – you; miss it, miss the mark, and it's sin.

The Passion Translation puts it this way: "So if you know of an opportunity to do the right thing today, yet you refrain from doing it, you're guilty of sin."

Ah, but we don't think about it that way. We think of sin in terms of CO-mmission, not O-mission. But either misses the mark, and we lose out.

God has something so huge for each of His children that it is almost unimaginable. He has given each one of us a calling (an anointing) and a set of gifts to support it that – if we will find the calling, identify and learn to exercise those gifts, then use them to pursue that calling – will allow us, by His accompanying strength, to achieve feats that are humanly unachievable.

Most of us fail on both counts – identifying our calling and our gifts, and learning to exercise the latter to pursue the former – and that is sin: it misses the mark, the standard, that God set for us.

OK, so you ran a five-minute mile. What if God built you to run a four-minute mile? So you told 50 people about Jesus and the change He brings to our lives. What if you were supposed to tell 50 billion? So you and your spouse raised three children to love and serve God (after you decided that three was "enough.") What if God wanted you to have ten? So over your working lifetime you earn an aggregate total of a million dollars and retire in a modest bungalow debt-free? What if God put within you the ability to generate 500 billion dollars and to manage a thousand-acre homestead where you could feed a community and teach others to follow the Genesis 1:28 mandate? Luke 12:48 tells us that to whom much is given, of him shall much be required.

Quit thinking about yourself selfishly, lying there on your comfortable bed (or bed of complaining and griping that brings you comfort), and think about all of those people on the "down-flow" side of your exercising your gifts and your calling in a maximum way instead of the minimum you're (barely) achieving now.

John Maxwell says that money does two things: gives you options and lets you help more people. So who are you to help that you cannot now because you have not lifted your self up off of your sofa of sameness to go to the well of opportunity and draw up bucketloads of options? That, my friend, is sin – it is missing God's mark, God's standard. It is failing to let God truly be God in your life and to fill your sails – the sails that He built into you – to sail to the places that He wrote your map to go to.

This is one of the ways that a religious institution can be so dangerous. It tells you to come in, sit

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AND give your money. But even if it actually is serving as a good vehicle in some locale to help local believers to serve and love the local community, each individual who is using that vehicle still must first be productive in his own life at finding his calling and finding and using his tools. That is one of the ways that God's people are to help each other – to allow their iron to sharpen the iron of another: to help each other find, develop and use each individual's gifts.

This may show you something you're missing in your life right now. Take heart: it is a snapshot; it need not be a trend. It is one or two frames in a multi-frame motion picture. But it can show a trend – a trend of missing God's best, His mark for your life. It's not too late to turn things around. Colonel Sanders didn't make his mark with his chicken until his mid-sixties. Abraham became a father at over 100. Moses lived well past 100 and was in the physical condition of a much younger man when he went. You can, too.

Ah, but, you object, it will take me ten years to get there, to develop those gifts and to reach that kind of success! I'll be too old! OK, how old will you be in ten years if it takes that long for you to realize the calling that God has put on your life – to stop living in the sin of missing that mark? And how old will you be in ten years if you DON'T step effectively into that calling? Even thinking about the answer to those questions, you know that there is something more, something BIG, that you are supposed to do. Will you do it?