

James 4:17

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

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

Analysis

Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin.
To him who knows the good (kalon, καλόν) to do and does not do it, it is sin. Omission is culpable; knowledge increases responsibility.

Reformed ethics affirm sins of omission. James ties the planning discourse to obedience: ignoring known good, whether generosity or justice, is sin.

Historical Context

Diaspora merchants knew obligations to care for poor saints yet delayed. James reminds them that enlightened conscience demands action. Paul's collection efforts demonstrate similar accountability.

Related Passages

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

Study Questions

1. What good do you know you should be doing but are delaying?
2. How can you ensure obedience follows conviction quickly?

3. Who can help you follow through on Spirit-led initiatives?

Interlinear Text

εἰδóτι	οὕν	καλόν	ποιοῦντι	καὶ	μὴ	ποιοῦντι
to him that knoweth	Therefore	good	doeth	and	it not	doeth
G1492	G3767	G2570	G4160	G2532	G3361	G4160
ἁμαρτία	αὐτῷ	ἐστίν				
sin	to him	it is				
G266	G846	G2076				

Additional Cross-References

John 9:41 (Sin): Jesus said unto them, If ye were blind, ye should have no sin: but now ye say, We see; therefore your sin remaineth.

John 13:17 (Parallel theme): If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them.

John 15:22 (Sin): If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin: but now they have no cloke for their sin.

2 Peter 2:21 (Parallel theme): For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them.

Romans 1:32 (Parallel theme): Who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them.

Romans 7:13 (Sin): Was then that which is good made death unto me? God forbid. But sin, that it might appear sin, working death in me by that which is good; that sin by the commandment might become exceeding sinful.