

Commission and Omission

Sin is sin, but there are two *basic* types of sin: sins of *commission* and sins of *omission*. When we hear the word, “sin” most people think of sin as sins of commission. Simply put, that means **sins we *commit* by action**. James 1:14, 15 teaches us that **lust is where it starts,**

But each one is tempted when he is carried away and enticed by his own lust. Then when lust has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it has run its course, brings forth death.

That certainly describes sins of *commission*. Humans lust for something sinful, then they consider doing it, then they actually *commit* it. Sins of commission are the most well known, well recognized and well understood types of sins in our minds. But sins of *omission* are often the ones most common in our cultures.

Sins of *omission* are best described in James 4:17,

So for one who knows the right thing to do and does not do it, for him it is sin.

That’s pretty clear! When we know the right thing to do, but simply don’t do it, that *inaction* itself is a sin. The less people read their Bibles, the more uninformed they are about what God calls us to do, and the more sins of omission run rampant.

For those who do, indeed, read God’s word, sins of omission are more recognizable, but often still rampant. It is just so easy to put off things until later. It is just so comfortable to tell that nagging feeling to quit nagging! Yet sins of omission can be the very sins that bring down individuals, families and even nations.

That said, consider positive and negative commands from God. Negative commands are usually clear and concise, therefore usually they are easily recognized and followed. Think about it, “Thou shalt not steal, thou shalt not murder,” etc., are quite easy to understand and to know whether or not we have *committed* them.

Positive commands are usually harder to evaluate. When God says, “Honor your father and your mother...” we must think more carefully and evaluate more fully. “Have I done that properly or enough or with the proper attitude?” The same is true for the positive commands, “Love one another,” “be devoted to one another in brotherly love,” “build up one another,” “have the same care for one another,” “serve one another through love,” et al.

Whether it is loving, sharing, giving honor, etc., we must not simply ignore doing what is right. I would apply that standard to standing against abortion and same sex marriage - it is clearly *doing what is right*. We must never shirk opportunities to stand against sin and also to help those trapped in its clutches.

Perhaps it’s God’s way of telling us, “Stay involved, get in gear, keep on keeping on!”

Ray Wallace