

The Saints Subtle Sins

James 4:11-17

Pastor John Miller

We're all familiar with the story of the prodigal son; right? But did you know that there were two sons in the story? We focus mainly on the younger son, but in the passage about the prodigal son, it said, "A certain man had two sons." We focus on the younger son, who said to his father, "Give me my portion of goods." The son took his money, went to a far country and wasted all his substance on riotous living. It was the party life. He went to Las Vegas and partied there. Then he came to himself in the pigpen and thought, I'll go back to my father. I'll say, 'Father, forgive me. I'm no longer worthy to be called thy son. Just make me one of your hired servants.' Then he started on his journey, and the story says that his father saw him a long way off and ran toward him, embraced him, put a ring on his finger, shoes on his feet and a robe on his back. Then the father had the fatted calf killed and threw a big party. He said, "My son, who was lost, has now been found. My son, who was dead, is now alive." So there was this big party going on.

But the story doesn't stop there. We normally stop there. The story goes on to say that the older brother, who had been a good boy, stayed home, had done everything his father asked him to do, worked hard, was coming home from working in the fields. He's sweaty and dirty, his sleeves are rolled up, and he's been working hard. He hears the music and the festivities going on at the celebration and party. He asks one of his servants, "What's going on? What's happening?" In our hippie days, we'd ask, "What's the skinny? What's goin' on?"

The servant said, "Why, haven't you heard? Your younger brother, who was lost, has now been found. Your younger brother, who was dead, is now alive. Your father has killed the fatted calf, and he's throwing a big party."

You would expect that older brother would have smiled and said, "Oh, wonderful! Praise God! My brother has come home." But no. He got angry. He got bitter and jealous. He said, "My father has never thrown a party for me! I've been home. I've worked hard. I've done everything right. I'm a good person. And as soon as this son of his..."—He doesn't even claim him as a brother—"...who has been out wasting his money on prostitutes..."—the story never said that; he just added that, so he's slandering his own brother—"...comes home, he kills the fatted calf and makes a party for him." He was angry and bitter and wouldn't go in to the party. Everyone was having a good time except for one—the older brother.

I believe that this parable is not just about the younger son. It's not just about the love of God. It is about the older brother, because Jesus actually told the parable about those who are righteous but despise others. People were complaining to Jesus that He ate with sinners and hung out with them. So Jesus was showing that the results of bringing sinners home is that we should have joy.

What I want to point out is that both of these brothers represent two kinds of sin. The younger

son represents sins of the flesh—the party life—that we, as Christians know so well. We condemn that lifestyle. But the older son represents what a lot of Christians today have, and that is attitude sins—sins of the spirit, such as pride, jealousy, anger, gossip, backbiting, rebellion. Did you know that God not only looks on the outward appearance, but God looks in the heart? We are so quick to condemn the sins of the younger brother, when in reality, we are sinful as well, like the older brother.

Maybe you are proud today. Maybe you think you deserve something today. Maybe you're mad at God today, because He hasn't done what you want Him to do, and you're living in rebellion against God. So there are sins of the flesh, and there are sins of the spirit.

In our text today, we come face to face with two common sins committed by Christians. They are subtle sins, and sadly, they are often acceptable sins, because they are sins of the spirit and not sins of the flesh. What are these two sins that are acceptable, common sins of the saints? The first one is leaving God out of your speech. It results in gossip and slander. The second one is leaving God out of your plans. You plot, you plan, you lay out your life, but you don't include the will of God. You don't seek God. You don't put God first. You basically practice atheism; you believe in God, you profess to be a Christian, but you live as though God does not exist. So James is still talking about the sin of worldliness. It can manifest itself in leaving God out of our speech and leaving God out of our plans.

Let's look at the first one in verses 11-12. It's the sin of leaving God out of your speech. James says, "Do not speak evil of one another, brethren." I want you to notice that James is speaking to Christians. He calls them "brethren." Also notice how often he uses the words "speak" or "speaketh." "He who speaks evil of a brother and judges his brother, speaks evil of the law and judges the law. But if you judge the law, you are not a doer of the law but a judge. There is one Lawgiver, who is able to save and to destroy. Who are you to judge another?"

Notice this question in verse 12. If I were to paraphrase that, it would be, "Who do you think you are? God?" That would be the John Miller translation. "Who do you think you are? There's only one Lawgiver, and that's God. He's able to save and to destroy. You think you're God?" So we're usurping the prerogative that belongs to God alone.

How does this sin of leaving God out of our speech manifest itself? The answer is in a critical, fault-finding, judgmental attitude and speech toward our fellow Christians. What James is condemning here is a critical, fault-finding, judgmental attitude that comes out in our speech toward fellow Christians.

So in verse 11, James issues a command, and in the Greek it's in the present tense. Number one, it's an imperative; it's not an option. When James says in verse 11, "Do not speak evil of one another," he's commanding us to stop backbiting, gossiping and speaking evil of other Christians. He's flat out saying that. Because it's in the present tense, it indicates that these Christians were doing that.

You say, "Oh, I can't believe that Christians would gossip." Really? You haven't been around very long; have you? It never ceases to amaze me how cruel Christians can be. Sometimes the only exercise Christians get is running others down and jumping to conclusions. That's Christian athletics. We love the gossip or little tidbits or "Did you know...?" We malign or slander other people. That's sad.

In verse 11 James says, "Do not speak evil of one another." What does James mean by "speak evil of one another"? Let me tell you what he is not saying. He's not forbidding all forms of judgment by Christians. We can and should judge a person's actions as sinful when they are contrary to the written Word of God. If God says in the Bible that something is wrong and you see someone doing that, you can say, "That's sinful. That's wrong." We get this idea that we shouldn't judge. "Don't judge. Judge not lest you be judged." Then I would say, "You're judging me, so I'll judge you." "Well, you're judging me, so I'm judging you that you're judging me." What's that all about?

We get this idea that we have to have this "sloppy agape"; that if we love people, we'll let them do whatever they want. We'll never judge them. We'll never confront them. In Matthew 18:15, Jesus said, "...if your brother [or sister] sins against you..."—You backbite them; right? No you —"...go and tell him his fault between you and him alone." You confront them privately. You don't tell anyone else. You take it to them and you talk to them. So there is a time and place to confront people. Jesus said, "You will know them by their fruit." You might say, "I'm not a judge; I'm just a fruit inspector. And your fruit is rotten." So Jesus didn't say we can't have discernment or ascertain; that it's sinful behavior.

What then is James condemning? He is condemning the speaking evil of a person. The Greek phrase literally means "to talk down" or "to talk against." It means to speak disparagingly, to slander, to defame, to gossip—and I hate to use the word—to backbite. Isn't that an interesting term? Wouldn't it be something if someone actually bit your back and you felt it? I think when we came to church we would be saying, "Ouch! Ooh!" We love to backbite people. It's saying behind their back what we would never say to their face. Flattery is saying to their face what we would never say behind their back; the opposite. We love to talk about people.

Ask yourself: When you get together with other Christians, what is the topic of discussion? People? What they're doing? Rather than issues or maybe talking about the Lord? You use phrases like, "I don't mean to be critical, but..." or "Perhaps I shouldn't say this, but..." or "I really like so-and-so as a person, but..." then we throw in our little tidbit. We like to lower others, so it elevates us. Isn't it sad that we're so proud that we have to lower others?

That's what that older brother did. He said, "That son of his. He wasted his money on prostitutes, and now he's had a party for him. I've been a good boy all my life. I've done everything right. I deserve a party." His heart wasn't right. His attitude wasn't right. There are a lot of Christians—yes, they are Christians, and they come to church on Sunday—who are saying things about other Christians that dishonor God and are sinful. We often put others down to make ourselves look good.

Jesus did condemn this same sin in Matthew 7:1-5. We know it well. He said, "Judge not, that you be not judged." Then He went on and said, "For with what judgment you judge, you will be judged; and with the measure you use, it will be measured back to you. And why do you look at the speck..."—or "sliver"—"...in your brother's eye, but do not consider the plank in your own eye?"

Think about how ludicrous that is. A guy has a 2x4 hangin' out of his eyeball. When he comes to church, he knocks somebody over with the board. Then he goes up to someone else and says, "You have a sliver in your eye. Let me take it out." Then boom! He knocks the guy over with the board in his eye. Jesus said, "Hypocrite! First remove the plank from your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother's eye." That's the same thing that James is condemning here.

James gives us two reasons why this evil speaking is sinful in the text. Number one, when you are judging others, you're putting yourself above the law. You think you're better than the law, and that it doesn't pertain to you. Verse 11 says, "He who speaks evil of a brother and judges his brother, speaks evil of the law and judges the law. But if you judge the law, you are not a doer of the law but a judge." So you're basically breaking the law. "You are not a doer of the law." So if you're not a doer of the law, you're a breaker of the law.

What law is he talking about that we are breaking by backbiting, slandering and being judgmental toward others? It's basically the law of Leviticus 19:18: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." You know the verse. Now I realize you can ask, "Who is my neighbor? Not that guy over there." Or you can look around and say, "I don't consider any of these people my neighbor." Your neighbor is anyone and everyone.

Back in James 2:8, he had already said, "If you really fulfill the royal law according to the Scripture, 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself,' you do well." I believe that the law we are judging and we are breaking and we're putting ourselves over is the law of love. Way back in the Old Testament, God said, "Love your neighbor as yourself." You're judging the law as being no good. "I don't need to do that." We become critical and judgmental toward other people. When Jesus said, "Judge not lest you be judged," He was talking about a critical, fault-finding attitude toward others. We don't know why people do what they do. We don't know the circumstances of their lives. We can't judge the motives and intents of their hearts, because God alone knows that. We're not to be critical, judgmental or fault finding. So number one, we're judging the law, number two, we're breaking the law and number three, we're setting ourselves over the law. "I'm above the law. I don't have to love my neighbor as myself."

It's like speed-limit signs. Have you ever been driving down a highway and there is no one around, no traffic, nothing going on, you're in a hurry and the speed limit sign has the speed limit way too low. I hate that. "Come on! Someone change the sign." So I conclude that sign doesn't apply to me. That's for everyone else except Pastor Miller. So I step on it and take off. The cop pulls me over. He says, "Do you know you were going 20 miles over the speed limit?"

“Yeah, but that sign is stupid. It’s way too low. Besides, it doesn’t apply to me. It applies to everyone else.” I’m going to get a big, fat ticket; right? It does apply to me, and I’m not above the law. When you judge other people, you’re saying that you are above the law. And you’re actually saying the law is no good.

The second point is in verse 12. It says you’re putting yourself not only above the law, but you’re putting yourself above the Lawgiver, who is God Himself. “There is one Lawgiver...” — We know that’s God—“...Who is able to save and to destroy. Who are you to judge another?” So there is one Lawgiver, and He is God.

Who do you think you are? If you are critical, fault finding and judgmental toward other people and you put them down, slander them and attack them verbally, you’re saying that you’re not only above the law, but you’re above God Himself. You’re usurping the prerogative that belongs only to God. Only God knows what’s going on in a person’s life. Only God knows a person’s heart. We don’t have all the facts. We don’t know everything. Only God knows everything.

I was reading a commentary on this passage by Charles Swindoll, the famous preacher. He was saying that when he was a lot younger, something happened to him that pained him on a day when he was in seminary as a senior. He was an upperclassman in charge of the students in the school. They had a chapel service at Dallas Seminary. They all gathered together, and a missionary came to give a talk. He said it was terrible; the worst he had ever heard. After the service was over, he was at the back of the church criticizing, attacking and maligning. He got a group around him and said, “Can’t that guy preach the Word? Doesn’t he know how to talk? That was miserable!”

Then a younger student came up and said, “Chuck, you don’t know all the facts.”

He said, “What do you mean? That was a terrible message.”

The young student pulled him aside and said, “Do you realize that two hours before that missionary showed up to teach the service that he got a call from his wife that his daughter had just been murdered? And do you realize that two weeks ago his wife was diagnosed with cancer and not expected to live?” Chuck said that it just hit him to realize how foolish he had been.

Some people say, “They didn’t even smile at me. They didn’t say ‘Hi.’ They just walked right by me.” How do you know what’s happened? Maybe they just got a phone call. Someone they loved just died. Maybe they just got bad news. Maybe they’re going through something very difficult. Why is it that we can’t give people the benefit of the doubt?

I love that passage in 1 Corinthians 13:7-8 where it says that love “believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never fails.” “God, fill us with Your love. Help us to love one another.” We’re all fighting battles. Let’s be kind to everyone we meet. How quick we are to judge and censor other people.

There is a second sin in this passage that is condemned. It's a subtle sin and often an acceptable sin. It's in verses 13-17. It's the sin of leaving God out of your plans. First of all, you leave God out of your speech. You malign, gossip, backbite and criticize. Secondly, God's not in your plans. You plot and plan but leave God out of the picture.

Verses 13-17 say, "Come now, you who say, 'Today or tomorrow we will go to such and such a city, spend a year there, buy and sell and make a profit'..."—these are the plans—"...whereas you do not know what will happen tomorrow." You don't know what tomorrow holds. "For what is your life? It is even a vapor that appears for a little time and then vanishes away." In verse 13, it's "you...say," and now in verse 15, it's "you ought to say." There's a contrast there "Instead you ought to say, 'If the Lord wills, we shall live and do this or that.' But now you boast in your arrogance. All such boasting is evil..."—or sinful—"Therefore, to him who knows to do good and does not do it to him it is sin." This is what is known as the sin of omission. Knowing to do something and not doing it, you have committed sin.

These verses condemn an arrogant, independent spirit opposed to God. Yes; Christians can be guilty of that. We don't pray about who we're going to marry. We don't pray about where we're going to go to school. We don't pray about our jobs. We don't pray about our children. We don't pray about relationships. We don't pray about how we spend our money. We live like God doesn't exist. It's called "practical atheism." We change the St. Augustine statement, "Love God and do as you please" to "Do as you please, and say you love God." That's what a lot of Christians today say. "I love God, so I go to church on Sunday, but the rest of the week is mine. I do as I please and live how I please." It's so sad.

We plan but we don't pray. When we do pray, it's only to ask God to bless our plans. Think about that. We're all guilty of that. "Lord, we're going to do this in summer. Next year, we're going to do that. Lord, we're going to start this new business, and we're going to do that. So Lord, please bless." Maybe you should say, "Lord, is it Your will? Do You want this? Where do You want us to go? What do You want us to do? Lord, whatever Your plan is for us."

Instead it's, "I don't like that. I want to do what I want to do." That's living like God doesn't exist. You want God to bless your plans, but you don't want to submit to His plans. I found out that God gives the best to those who leave the choice to Him. Many times God will allow us to go along our own stubborn, sinful, independent, arrogant way so we fall flat on our face. Then when we cry out, "God, I'm sorry!" He says, "I've been waiting for you. Do you want Me to help you now? Do you want Me to guide you now? Do you want Me to lead you now?"

"Yes, Lord! Save me in this marriage. Save me in this new business. Save me on this new job." It's much better to pray early and trust the Lord and give the plans to God.

Why is it foolish to live an independent, arrogant life without God or to forget God? There are three reasons from this text. Reason number one: because of the complexity of life. Verse 13 says, "You who say, 'Today or tomorrow we will go to such and such a city, spend a year there, buy and sell, and make a profit.'" They mean they're going to buy low and sell high and make a

killing. They're got it all planned out. Life is complex. We think we know better than God what is best for our lives. We set our own time—"today or tomorrow." We select our own path and place—"We will go to such and such a city." We decide the duration—"spend a year there." Then we arrange the activities—"buy and sell." Then we predict the outcome—"and make a profit." All these complexities of life.

Have you ever noticed that we plot and we plan, but we don't often say, "Lord, what do You want me to do? Do you have another plan? If so, I want to follow that." We forget God. It's so very important not to forget God. Life is getting more and more complex every day.

I'm not a tech guy. I've got a smart phone and I've got a computer. I stumble my way through that stuff, and I remember when I got a smart phone. I'm a dumb guy with a smart phone. I couldn't figure it out. I still can't. Sometimes my phone freaks out. What did it just do?! Why's it doing that?! They should make Nerf phones, so you can just throw them against the wall when you're frustrated. In Jesus' name! I'm kidding. Some of you looked like, "We've got to pray for Pastor Miller! He's freakin' out!"

And you get emails and you get advertisements on your phone and on your computer. Remember what it was like when you could just go somewhere and no one bugged you? No one texted you or called you. It was like, "Oh, praise God!" The other day I was gone for a few hours and forgot my phone. It was like, "This is awesome!" Life just gets so complex.

You go through school, get out of school, you go to college, you get married, you have kids, you raise your kids, you go to soccer games, you come home from soccer games, you go to soccer games, you go to more soccer games, more soccer games. Baseball. Football. Does life ever slow down? Then there are graduations and weddings and birthday parties. It's too much. (I told you, you have to pray for me.) Life is complex.

We plot and plan the time. We plot and plan the place. We decide the duration. We arrange the activities. We predict our outcome. But we forget God.

If I'm speaking to a young person—it's pretty cool that in our church we have young people, we have middle-age people, we have older people, people from every social status and color. But I want to speak to you young people. There's nothing more important than a young person saying at a very early age, "Lord, have my life. Lead my life. Guide my life. Direct my life. What do You want me to be? Where do You want me to go? How do You want me to live?" When you become a Christian, the Bible says that you're no longer your own. You were bought with a price, and you are to glorify God in your body, which actually belongs to God.

I got saved right out of high school. The summer I graduated from high school, I gave my heart to Jesus Christ. I haven't looked back. I'll never forget saying, "Lord, I'll go where You want me to go. I'll do what You want me to do. I'll be what You want me to be. Lord, use me. Have Your way in me." I had my plans. I had it all plotted out. I knew where I wanted to go and what I wanted to do. Then I became a Christian and realized that it's not mine to decide. My life

belongs to God.

But I'd never take back what God has done with my life these last, many years; the ministry He has entrusted to me, the blessings He has given me, the wife, the kids—just the over-abundant blessings He has given me. It started with a 19-year-old boy saying, “Lord, I’m Yours. Have Your way. Take my life. Let it be consecrated to You.” Then God led me and guided me in all these steps.

If I’m talking to middle-age people—I’m no longer middle age. I remember middle age. I think, Oh, to be 40 again! Awesome! But I remember how difficult it was. You’re in the heat of the battle. The Bible talks about “the destruction that wastes at noonday.” It’s almost like a reference to middle-age problems. Some of the greatest challenges are in mid-life. You go through a “mid-life crisis.” You remember when you were young, and you try to revert back to it. You get a sports car, get a new haircut and put on new clothes. You go disco dancing or whatever. You throw out your hip and you’re in the hospital.

But at that time, I remember all of our kids being young. We had multiple kids in diapers. Do you remember when you had multiple kids in diapers and this old guy said, “Man, enjoy those kids. They grow up so fast.” I’m thinking, You come change these diapers! Grow up so fast? Yeah, right! The sooner, the better. Diaper after diaper! But now that I’m an old guy, I actually say that to young people. “Enjoy your kids while they’re young. They grow up so fast!” Whoa; I’m an old guy now!

But when you’re in that mid-life, just ask God to guide you, help you and recognize your need to depend on Him. You mid-lifers, you need God in every aspect of your life. Pray and commit your way to the Lord. Ask Him to help your marriage. Ask Him to help you raise your children. Ask Him to guide and direct you in your life.

Then what about you older folks? I can talk to you because I’m one of them. I’m a senior now. My wife and I freak out. It’s so cool; when we go somewhere, they have a senior discount. “Whoo! Praise God! That’s us. Hallelujah! We save \$1.50!” I remember the first time I pulled into a state park and they had the senior discount. I went, “That’s me! I’ll take that one!”

You get to that point in your life where your kids are all gone, and it’s just you and your wife. There are challenges. Your body starts to go; physical challenges. Social challenges, spiritual challenges. But God has promised to be with you each step of the way, so you can enjoy the moment. It’s always a blessing to walk with God. Whether you’re young, middle age or old, God “will never leave you nor forsake you.” It’s so important that we not forget God.

Let me give you the second reason we should not forget God: because of the uncertainty of life. First in verse 13, you have the complexity of life. Then in verse 14, you have the uncertainty of life. It says, “...whereas you do not know what will happen tomorrow.” Think of Job that day when he came home from the fields and found out all his kids were dead. What a shock that was! Everything he owned was gone. You talk about a bad day! He only had one

thing left: that was his loving, encouraging, supporting wife. She said, "Sweetheart, curse God and die right now."

"Thank you, honey. I needed that encouragement."

Have you ever thought about the fact that one ring of the phone could bring bad news? Every time the phone rings, your life could be completely turned around. You don't know if you'll wake up tomorrow. In a congregation this size, it wouldn't be insane to think that someone may not wake up tomorrow. I mean that. It's happened so many times. People have been in church on Sunday, and they're dead on Monday. The Bible says that we don't know what a day might bring forth. We don't know what tomorrow holds, but we know who holds tomorrow. We can trust God with each day, each moment of our lives. Proverbs 27:1 says, "Do not boast about tomorrow, for you do not know what a day may bring."

Don't forget God. We need His wisdom, His strength, His guidance, His provision and His protection. Don't forget to live in the present; not in the past or in the future. We spend so much time trying to go back to our life in the past, or we think it's going to be better in the future that we miss the "now." Wherever you are—young, middle age or older—it doesn't matter; God wants to meet you right here, right now. You can enjoy knowing God and glorifying Him.

Let me give you the third reason why it's foolish and sinful to forget God in your life: because of the brevity of life. Verse 14 says, "For what is your life? It is even a vapor that appears for a little time and then vanishes away." That word "vapor" could be used of our breath on a cold morning. You're all bundled up and it's really cold outside and you breathe out. You see that puff of vapor when you breathe out and then it suddenly dissipates and disappears. Or maybe you've seen steam coming out of a stack. It billows white and then it's gone. It just dissipates and disappears.

The Bible says that's what life is like; it's brief. Psalm 102:11 says that it's "like a shadow that lengthens." In Job 7:9, the Bible says that life is like a vanishing cloud. Psalm 103:15 says, "As for man, his days are like grass; as a flower of the field." Think about how short life is, how quickly it passes. Someone said, "About the time your face clears up, your mind gets fuzzy." "I just got over my acne, and my mind doesn't work anymore." Life accelerates; it just seems to go so fast. "I just got out of elementary school, and now I've got grandkids! How did this happen?" Life just goes so quickly, so don't forget God.

The Bible teaches us to "number our days so that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom." I read that verse almost every time I conduct a memorial service. I can't tell you how many times I've stood on this stage or in a cemetery and there is an open casket. Young, middle age, old—it doesn't matter. The Bible says that life is brief and death is certain. "Who is he who lives and shall not see death? Who can save his soul from the hand of the grave?" The Bible teaches not only about the brevity of life but also the certainty of death; life is short, death is certain. So we need to number our days so that we can apply our hearts unto wisdom. "Lord, what do You want to do with my life? How do You want me to live my life? How do You want me to invest my

life?”

You're looking at retirement, but maybe God doesn't want you to retire. He wants you to serve the Lord. Maybe he wants you to be a missionary. Maybe God has other plans and ideas for you. Do you know that God called Moses into full-time ministry when he was 80 years old? You think you're over the hill! Moses was just getting started at 80! I know; you need to sit down to think about that. It makes you tired. It's amazing what God can do at any point in time in our lives.

So how should we then live? In closing, we need to live in dependence on God, seeking to do His will. Verse 15 says, “Instead you ought to say...” I pointed out a contrast in verse 13: “Come now, you who say...” He then tells us what not to say. Now in verse 15, he tells us what we should say: “If the Lord wills, we shall live and do this or that.” In other words, it's all about God's will for your life. “Lord, what is Your will for me?”

You say, “I'm old now; it doesn't matter.”

“What is God's will?”

“I'm middle age.”

“It doesn't matter. What is God's will?”

“I'm still very young.”

“What is God's will for your life?” God has a perfect and acceptable will for you.

In verse 16, don't live in self-boasting and independent from God. It says, “But now you boast in your arrogance.” That's boasting in your plans. You've got the five-year plan. You've got the ten-year plan. You've got it all laid out. You might be dead tomorrow. (I just thought I'd encourage you.) How about the “Lord plans”? Verse 16 continues, “All such boasting is evil” or “sinful.” So he's actually saying this is sinful behavior.

Then in verse 17 we have the conclusion: “Therefore, to him who knows to do good and does not do it, to him it is sin.” What is the good you know to do? The good that you know to do is to not speak evil of other brothers and sisters, not to be critical of them or judgmental of them and to include God in all of your plans. So “to him who knows to do good and does not do it, to him it is sin.” The word “sin” is in the Bible. It means you've missed the mark. You've broken God's commandments.

This is what I said was the sin of omission. Did you know that you can sin by doing nothing? You say, “But I didn't do anything.” That's exactly right. You knew to do right, but you didn't do it. You knew you should have trusted God. You knew you should seek the Lord. You knew you should follow God's will for your life, but you went your own, stubborn way. You lived in an arrogant, independent way apart from God.

I don't care where you are in your life, but if you live in arrogant independence of God, you're living in sin, and you're headed for heartache and misery. The Bible says that we were created to know God, to enjoy God and to glorify God. Without that purpose in our life, life is empty.

If you don't know Jesus as Savior and Lord, you need to trust Him. You're not a Christian unless you believe in and trust Jesus Christ and you've been born again. You have to be born again of the Spirit to be a Christian. You're not a Christian without that. And then once you've become a Christian, you say,

Take my life, and let it be

Consecrated, Lord, to Thee;

...

Take my silver and my gold.

Not a mite will I withhold;

Take my lips....

Take my feet....

Take my hands....

Let me be used for Your glory.

Proverbs 3:5-6 says, "Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths" or "He will make your paths straight."