“That Great Sin of Omission”
(By Paul R. Blake)

Introduction:
A. Hosea 10:12; James 4:17
B. What is the sin of omission?
1. J. W. McGarvey once said, “I would esteem above every other gift that could be bestowed upon me as a preacher the power to adequately conceive what sin is and to adequately set it before the people.”
2. Why was this ability so important to McGarvey? Because of the consequences of sin
3. Isa. 59:1-2; Rom. 6:23; John 8:21

I. DEFINING THE SIN OF OMISSION
A. We understand sins of commission; in fact, it is often the only sins that come to mind for some Christians - Col. 3:25
1. Commission of sin is something that is done by desire and by design; engaging in forbidden activity or avoiding commanded behavior willingly and by conscious effort
2. The sin of omission is not named as such in the scriptures, but it is spoke of often
B. Omission - “failure to perform an act agreed to; the oversight, deliberate or unconscious, of a duty to God, an individual, or a group to act”
1. Omission can mean failing to pray, give thanks, follow instructions; the category that encompasses the sins of not doing what we should have.
2. It can also mean doing something without thinking or considering that it is sin. Planned or not, it's still sin.
3. Prov. 24:11-12 - Sin sometimes is doing nothing.
C. Sometimes called the sin of "knowledge without practice"
1. When you know the right thing to do and have the means, to do nothing is a sin - Rom. 7:15.
2. "I decided I would not sin today and so I didn't." "How did you do that?"
   "I just sat down so that I would not walk into sin, I said nothing so I would not sin with my mouth, and I thought about nothing so that I would not think evil." "I see, so you committed the sin of omission? You were the unfruitful fig tree."
D. Many commands require positive action
1. "Do unto others, as you would have them do unto you" requires doing
2. "It is more blessed to give, than to receive" requires giving
3. "Go into all the world and preach the Gospel" requires going
4. One preacher calls Matt. 28:19-20 “the Great Omission” and says the most well-kept command of the Lord is Luke 9:20-21
5. James 2:14-17; 1John 3:16-19
6. The one talent servant didn’t lose or abuse his talent; he just didn’t use it - Matt. 25:26
II. COMMANDS CHRISTIANS COMMONLY OMIT

A. Be humble - 1Peter 5:5
B. Visit the sick - Matt. 25:41-45
C. Take care of widows and orphans - James 1:27
D. Help the poor - Psalm 112:4, 9
E. Give as prospered - 1Cor. 16:1-2
F. Assemble with the saints - Heb. 10:25
G. Singing praise - Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16
H. Pray - 1Thes. 5:17
I. Study - 2Tim. 2:15
J. Provide for our families - 1Tim. 5:8
K. Be thankful - 1Thes. 5:18
L. Teach the Gospel to the lost - Matt. 28:19-20

Conclusion:

A. “Most of us fall short much more by omission than by commission. While the world perishes we go our way: purposeless, passionless, day after day.”
B. “The omission of good is no less reprehensible than the commission of evil.” (Plutarch)
C. “It is not only what we do, but also what we do not do, for which we are accountable.” (Molière)

“I never cut my neighbor's throat;
My neighbor's gold I never stole;
I never spoiled his house and land;
But God have mercy on my soul!
For I am haunted night and day
By all the deeds I have not done;
O unattempted loveliness!
O costly valor never won!”
— Marguerite Wilkinson