

THE THINGS WE DON'T DO, BUT SHOULD

*So whoever knows the right thing to do and fails to do it,
for him it is sin. - James 4:17*

A professor of mine once related a story about his son Nate. Nate could go outside and play, but only after having breakfast at the table and then making his bed. The child would gulp down his breakfast, wipe his mouth and slide out of his chair while saying, "Gotta' go make my bed." His father praised him again and again for the "good job" in being so focused and diligent.

One day, a couple of hours after breakfast, Nate's father walked by the room only to find the bed unmade, toys lying about the floor and Nate nowhere to be found upstairs. When he finally found his son playing downstairs and asked him why the bed was unmade, Nate simply said, "It's raining outside." He saw no need to make the bed if playtime outside did not follow.

Nate, like many of us at times, practiced obedience as long as he reaped the immediate benefit, but his obedience had not yet reached the level of the heart. We hear the standard, and know the truth, but chose to ignore it (James 1:22-25). When faithfulness requires effort and discipline, when the fruit of righteousness is not readily apparent, or when our obedience leads to discomfort or sacrifice, we might be tempted to step back or slow down in our walk with Christ (Gal. 6:9).

But we must remember this: nobody drifts aimlessly toward faithfulness or stumbles accidentally into righteousness. Vision fades, mission drifts and energy leaks, so we must seek God and allow him to refocus, recalibrate and refill us. We must strive for the transformation found in abiding in the truth of Christ alone (Matt. 7:24; John 17:17).

Prayer prompt: Take some time to honestly, thoughtfully and carefully reflect on the following questions from the book *Returning to Holiness* by Gregory Frizzell as well as the corresponding verses for each question. As you read, think and pray, if God convicts you, confess the sin to him, repent, and then thank him for his faithfulness to forgive (1 John 1:9).

- **Do you spend meaningful time with God by reading the Bible and praying? Have you neglected abiding in a close relationship with Christ? (John 15:4-5; James 5:16).**
- **Do you look for ways to serve God or are you content to be served? (Galatians 5:13).**
- **Have you been faithful to give sacrificially to God? (Malachi 3:8-10).**
- **Have you become spiritually complacent and have neglected to push forward toward victory? (Philippians 3:13-14).**
- **Are you more self-conscience than Christ-conscious? (Galatians 2:20).**
- **Have you determined to overcome sin by the power of Christ, or do you put up with the sins that keep cropping up in your life?**
- **Are you seeking to put sin to death or merely manage sin? (Romans 6:14).**

*Therefore we must pay much closer attention to what we have heard,
lest we drift away from it. - Hebrews 2:1*

Spiritual neglect is the easiest of sins to commit. It requires no effort and offers no resistance to us. - Jim Sole

"Then he will answer them, saying, 'Truly, I say to you, as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to me.'" - Matthew 25:45