The Sin of Uselessness

Intro: Jam. 4:17 “Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin.” James has laid down many practical principles in this book. Now in order to get people to act on these he gives this instruction. Many people have a knowledge of the truth, yet they do not allow that knowledge to regulate their lives; they never **DO**.

1. In fact must of us do not need so much instruction in morals, but the stimulation to do what we know.
2. We come and hear three or four lessons a week, which is a great responsibility, but do not allow those lessons to influence our lives.
3. Yet, it is a sin to hold to a truth in our mind and do not allow it to affect our emotions and will.

I. **SINS OF COMMISSION AND OMISSION.**

A. We have often heard prayers asking the Father to forgive the sins of commission and omission.

B. **Sins of omission are just as serious, if not more serious, than sins of commission.**

1. Some think sins of commission are worse than that of omission.
2. Sin consist not only in violating prohibitions, but also failing to come up to the positive requirements.
3. The same authority that forbids some things (sins of commission) binds other things (sins of omission)
   a. Many would never blaspheme God, but how many love God. So many times people ignore this all their life and never feel guilty.
   b. The same Bible that instructs us not to steal, also instructs us to do good unto all men. If I have the opportunity and ability to help and don't do it I am just as guilty as if I had the opportunity and ability to steal and stole.
4. Sins of commission are often committed only once (maybe in the heat of passion), while sins of omission will be repeated.
5. Sins of omission precede sins of commission. The neglect of Bible study, prayer, etc. leads to violating things that are forbidden.

II. **THE TEACHINGS OF CHRIST ON THE SIN OF USELESSNESS.**

A. **The rich man.**

1. Luke 16:19-31 “There was a certain rich man, which was clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day: 20 And there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, which was laid at his gate, full of sores, 21 And desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man’s table: moreover the dogs came and licked his sores. 22 And it came to pass, that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham’s bosom: the rich man also died, and was buried; 23 And in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom. 24 And he cried and said, Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame. 25 But Abraham said, Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivesth thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things: but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented. 26 And beside all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed: so that they which would pass from hence to you cannot; neither can they pass to us, that would come from thence. 27 Then he said,
I pray thee therefore, father, that thou wouldst send him to my father’s house: that he may testify unto them, lest they also come into this place of torment. 29 Abraham saith unto him, They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them. 30 And he said, Nay, father Abraham: but if one went unto them from the dead, they will repent. 31 And he said unto him, If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead.”

2. We can not find some great moral evil in the rich man.
3. Yet, he is in torment. Why?
4. He had the opportunity to do good and did not do anything; he was useless.

B. The fig tree.
1. Mat. 21:18-20 “Now in the morning as he returned into the city, he hungered. And when he saw a fig tree in the way, he came to it, and found nothing thereon, but leaves only, and said unto it, Let no fruit grow on thee henceforward for ever. And presently the fig tree withered away. 20 And when the disciples saw it, they marvelled, saying, How soon is the fig tree withered away!”; Mark 11:12-14,20-21 “And on the morrow, when they were come from Bethany, he was hungry. 13 And seeing a fig tree afar off having leaves, he came, if haply he might find any thing thereon: and when he came to it, he found nothing but leaves; for the time of figs was not yet. 14 And Jesus answered and said unto it, No man eat fruit of thee hereafter for ever. And his disciples heard it. 20 And in the morning, as they passed by, they saw the fig tree dried up from the roots. And Peter calling to remembrance saith unto him, Master, behold, the fig tree which thou cursedst is withered away.”
2. The fig tree had leaves on it indicating that it should have fruit (figs).
3. It was fruitless. This is the only thing for which Christ cursed the tree.
4. The fig tree was not poison, just fruitless.
5. It was not doing that for which it was intended.
   a. A fig tree is suppose to produce figs.
   b. We are to do good (Eph. 2:10 “For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.”).

C. The one talent man.
1. Mat. 25:14-30 “For the kingdom of heaven is as a man travelling into a far country, who called his own servants, and delivered unto them his goods. And unto one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one; to every man according to his several ability; and straightway took his journey. Then he that had received the five talents went and traded with the same, and made them other five talents. And likewise he that had received two, he also gained other two. But he that had received one went and digged in the earth, and hid his lord’s money. After a long time the lord of those servants cometh, and reckoneth with them. And so he that had received five talents came and brought other five talents, saying, Lord, thou deliveredst unto me five talents: behold, I have gained beside them five talents more. His lord said unto him, Well done, thou good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord. And the one that had received two talents came and said, Lord, thou deliveredst unto me two talents: behold, I have gained two other talents beside them. His lord said unto him, Well done, good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord. Then he which had received the one talent came and said, Lord, I knew thee that thou hast an hard man, reaping where thou hast not sown, and gathering where thou hast not strawed: I was afraid, and went and hid thy talent in the earth: lo, thou hast that is thine. And I was afraid, and went and hid thy talent in the earth: lo, thou hast that is thine. His lord answered and said unto him, Thou wicked and slothful servant, thou knewest that I reap where I sowed not, and gather where I have not strawed: Thou oughtest therefore to have put my money to the exchangers, and then at my coming I should have received mine own with usury. Take therefore the talent from him, and give it unto him which hath ten talents. For unto every one that hath shall be given, and he shall have abundance: but from him
that hath not shall be taken away even that which he hath. 30 And cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth."; Luke 19:12-26 “He said therefore, A certain nobleman went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom, and to return. 13 And he called his ten servants, and delivered them ten pounds, and said unto them, Occupy till I come. 14 But his citizens hated him, and sent a message after him, saying, We will not have this man to reign over us. 15 And it came to pass, that when he was returned, having received the kingdom, then he commanded these servants to be called unto him, to whom he had given the money, that he might know how much every man had gained by trading. 16 Then came the first, saying, Lord, thy pound hath gained ten pounds. 17 And he said unto him, Well, thou good servant: because thou hast been faithful in a very little, have thou authority over ten cities.

18 And the second came, saying, Lord, thy pound hath gained five pounds. 19 And he said likewise to him, Be thou also over five cities. 20 And another came, saying, Lord, behold, here is thy pound, which I have kept laid up in a napkin: 21 For I feared thee, because thou art an austere man: thou takest up that thou layest not down, and reapest that thou didst not sow. 22 And he saith unto him, Out of thine own mouth will I judge thee, thou wicked servant. Thou knewest that I was an austere man, taking up that I laid not down, and reaping that I did not sow: 23 Wherefore then gavest not thou my money into the bank, that at my coming I might have required mine own with usury? 24 And he said unto them that stood by, Take from him the pound, and give it to him that hath ten pounds. 25 (And they said unto him, Lord, he hath ten pounds.) 26 For I say unto you, That unto every one which hath shall be given; and from him that hath not, even that he hath shall be taken away from him.”

2. The parable:
   a. The man with five talents increased his by five.
   b. The man with two talents got two more.
   c. The man with one talent hid his and returned it to the master.

3. Lessons.
   a. We see that it is not the amount of activity that is done; instead the use of our abilities.
   b. The man with one talent did not waste or lose it; he just did not do anything.
   c. He was useless.

D. The judgment
   1. Jesus does not, here, condemn adulterers, murderers, etc.
   2. The basis for the judgment.
      a. Living in a world where there is need and not taking the opportunities to help.
      b. Thus, they are fit for the company of the Devil.
   3. "Lord, when saw we thee?" Mat. 25:44 “Then shall they also answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto thee?”
      a. Others did see and did to the brethren of Christ.
      b. They did not look, thus condemned.
   4. Mat. 13:15 “For this people’s heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and should understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them.”
      a. We use this on our religious friends.
      b. What about our blindness in doing what needs to be done.
Conclusion: Let us not neglect to do good. While we are not to violate God’s commands, we are to neglect to do what God commanded.