**The End of Negligence** *(James 4:17)*

**Introduction**

1. Christianity is not only a religion of abstinence from evil, but of action in that which is ***“pure and undefiled religion” (James 1:27).***
2. God requires us to actively pursue His will **(cf. James 4:17)**. If we NEGLECT to do so, we sin, and God is not well pleased.
3. Sometimes we tend to think we are okay since we have no sins of COMISSION in our lives. **However, we fail to recognize the reality and severity of sins of OMISSION.**
4. **Negligent Christians are distasteful to God. He requires our entire devotion to His entire will.**
5. We must recognize the danger of negligence by understanding **The End of Negligence**. *An end which we would rather not see.*
6. God’s Attitude Toward Negligence
7. Ahab with Ben-Hadad (**cf. 1 Kings 20**)
   1. ***“Now Ahab the son of Omri did evil in the sight of the Lord, more than all who were before him” (1 Kings 16:30).***
      1. We know Ahab as a very wicked king, along with his wicked wife, Jezebel.
      2. There are several accounts of his brazen wickedness. Much of which we would never be caught doing ourselves.
      3. **However, the following account shows us how God hated Ahab’s negligence in carrying out His will just as much as the rest of his evil doings.**
   2. Context:
      1. **(vv. 1-22)** – Ben-Hadad, king of Syria determined to attack Israel, but by the provision of the Lord, Ahab and Israel defeated Ben-Hadad before he even had the chance to make his advancement against Israel.
      2. **(READ)(v. 22)** – God’s warning to Ahab that Ben-Hadad would try again.
      3. **(READ)(v. 28)** – The Syrians said they lost the first battle because of the location of the battle. Thus, God determined to give the Syrians into the hand of Ahab.
         1. **Because God had given Syria into the hands of Israel, Ben-Hadad and the Syrians were defeated again.**
         2. **(vv. 31-34)** – Ben-Hadad fled, **and instead of trying to defeat Israel again, had servants petition Ahab for a treaty that would spare Ben-Hadad.**
         3. **Ahab consented, sparing Ben-Hadad, without petitioning God, thus, against God’s will – God delivered ALL, including Ben-Hadad, into Ahab’s hands – none were to be spared.**
   3. Pronouncement of judgment against Ahab by the Lord through a prophet **(vv. 38-42):**
      1. **(vv. 38-40)** – The prophet had a man strike him to make it seem he had been to battle.
         1. **(v. 39a)** – Disguised himself so Ahab did not know he was a prophet.
         2. **(v. 39b-40)** – Told a fictitious story. (Like Nathan to David – to convict Ahab of his guilt of sin.)
            1. Was entrusted with ***“a man”*** **– prisoner**.
            2. Was ***“busy here and there”*** with other things and **NEGLECTED his duties, letting the prisoner free.**
            3. Ahab, hearing the story, convicted the disguised prophet.
      2. **(vv. 41-42)** – The prophet took off his disguise, and **revealed that Ahab had done wrong by letting Ben-Hadad go (because God meant for him to be destroyed)**.
         1. **He would be punished for this.**
         2. **(v. 43)** – Ahab went away sorrowful having heard his punishment.
   4. Ahab was too busy ***(“here and there”***) running a war to ask God what he should do with Ben-Hadad. **He was negligent of his duties given by God, and was punished for it.**
   5. **Are we too *“busy here and there”* to carry out our duties given us by God? Such will not be acceptable!**
8. The Ant vs. the Sluggard
   1. Elihu to Job – ***“Who teaches us more than the beasts of the earth, and makes us wiser than the birds of heaven” (Job 35:11)?*** – There is much we can learn from the work ethic of the ant.
   2. **Proverbs 6:6-11** – Go to the ant you sluggard.
      1. **Sluggard** – lazy; slothful; (Thus, negligent of work.)
      2. **(vv. 6-8)** – The ant has no authority driving it to work, but it labors diligently to give itself a supply of food.
      3. **(vv. 9-11)** – The sluggish one is indifferent, lazy, and negligent of the needed labor – He pays the price of negligence.
   3. **Proverbs 24:30-34** – The one who neglects his property and livelihood will come to the point of no livelihood at all – it will diminish by his neglect.
      1. *“The chapter ends with an apologue, which may be taken as a parable of something yet deeper. The field and the vineyard are more than the man’s earthly possessions. His neglect brings barrenness or desolation to the garden of the soul. The “thorns” are evil habits that choke the good seed, and the “nettles” are those that are actually hurtful and offensive to others. The “wall” is the defense which laws and rules give to the inward life, and which the sluggard learns to disregard, and the “poverty” is the loss of the true riches of the soul, tranquility, and peace, and righteousness.”* (Albert Barnes’ Notes on the Bible)
      2. **If we neglect our work for the Lord, if we neglect to diligently lay up treasures in heaven, we will suffer the consequences.**
9. God’s Expectation
   1. ***“Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with your might; for there is no work or device or knowledge or wisdom in the grave where you are going” (Ecclesiastes 9:10).***
   2. Our purpose in life is to ***“fear God and keep His commandments” (12:13)***. To work the works of God!
   3. When we die, we will no longer be able to do those works. They are appointed for this time.
   4. **We must not be negligent, rather, were must seek God’s work, and do it with ALL THE FORCE AND VIGOR WE CAN BRING.**
10. Jesus’ Life, and Warnings Concerning Negligence
11. Jesus’ Life
    1. **When His parents could not find Him, and He was in the temple listening to teachers and asking questions** – **Luke 2:49** – Jesus did not delay, or waste time. He was about His Father’s business at an early age – 12. (*His whole life was devoted to His Father’s work. He did not neglect His duties.*)
    2. After healing a man on the Sabbath – ***“My Father has been working until now, and I have been working” (John 5:17).***
    3. **John 9:4** – He wished to redeem the time He had to do the Father’s work.
    4. He did not live for Himself to the point of neglecting the Father’s will, but made His will His own – ***“O My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as You will” (Matthew 26:39).***
12. Jesus’ Warnings About Negligence
    1. Man of one talent – **Matthew 25:24-30**
       1. Master gives money to servants to keep and further.
       2. **5 talent man** – doubled the talents – Master pleased.
       3. **2 Talent man** – doubled the talents – Master pleased.
       4. **1 talent man** **– (vv. 24-30)** – Master displeased.
          1. **(vv. 29-30)** – Application – *God has given us responsibilities and opportunities. We must be diligent in taking advantage of these opportunities.*
          2. ***Like the field of the Sluggard, we will have our spiritual livelihood taken away by our neglect!***
    2. Neglecting Opportunity **– Matthew 25:41-46** – To the goats on the left.
       1. **We sometimes give the excuse that we had no opportunities to work.**
       2. There is always an opportunity to carry out the work of the Lord – **many times it is VERY CLOSE TO US!**
13. Do Not Be Negligent
14. Paul to the Romans
    1. We are not to be ***“lagging in diligence, [but] fervent in spirit, serving the Lord” (Romans 12:11).***
    2. **Lagging** – slothful; indolent; lazy.
    3. **Fervent** – to be hot, that is, be fervid.
    4. Our approach to the work of the Lord should not be indifferent, lazy, and negligent.
    5. **We should be “on fire” in our diligence. Always willing, and looking for things to do in God’s kingdom.**
15. Christ to the church in Laodicia
    1. **Revelation 3:15-19** – Those which comprised the church in Laodicia were **indifferent about the work of the Lord, thus neglectful.**
    2. They grew complacent, thus lost their fervor for the work of the Lord.
    3. **We must ALWAYS be at work for the Lord – we must be *“zealous.”***

**Conclusion**

1. We must not be a slothful people. God requires our DILIGENT LABOR.
2. We must not neglect our duties as Christians. SINS OF OMISSION ARE NO BETTER THAN SINS OF COMISSION.
3. ***“See then that you walk circumspectly, not as fools but as wise, redeeming the time, because the days are evil” (Ephesians 5:15-16).*** (WE MUST BE CAREFUL TO USE OUR TIME WISELY IN THE WORK OF THE LORD)

**The Sin of Doing Nothing** (Author Unknown)

He made no mistakes, took no wrong roads,

He never fumbled the ball.

He never went down ‘neath the weight of the load.

He simply did nothing at all.

He lost no hard fights in defense of the right;

He never bled with his back to the wall.

He never fell faint in his climb to the light;

He simply did nothing at all.

So death came nigh, for life slipped by,

And he feared for the judgment hall.

When they asked him why, he said with a sigh,

“I simply did nothing at all.”

So God will pardon your blunders, my friend,

Or regard with pity your fall.

But the one big sin that surely means hell

Is simply to do nothing at all.