

Sermon Notes: The Gap between Knowing and Doing
James 4:17 (NIV)

Anyone, then, who knows the good he ought to do and doesn't do it, sins.

Theme: this statement is actually the conclusion of what he has previously written. James' conclusion is that once we know what we "ought" to do, there is no excuse for not doing it. Having taken our excuse away should humble us and motivate us to go to our God for the motivation we need to move into action.

Illustration: Deacon who abandoned the Lord:

"I was better off before I knew Christianity; because now I know the Lord and now I know how I am supposed to live....but I don't want to live that way, and I don't want to walk with the Lord."

Jeanne's Grandmother

"Now that you know the truth, next time I see you, I know you'll have a haircut."
(i.e. you were ignorant before you met me, and now you know better)

1. The issue is a relational, not legalistic issue. In any relationship there are expectations; and it hurts when one does not pursue that on which both agree.
2. A good reminder: What's the point of the Scripture? What is the Scripture for?
3. The dilemma:
 - a. Just knowing what we are supposed to do, does not necessarily motivate us to do what is good and proper
 - b. We can't do all that we know we are to do. We fail.

4. Parallel passage:

2 Peter 2:21-22 (NIV)

It would have been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than to have known it and then to turn their backs on the sacred command that was passed on to them. Of them the proverbs are true: "A dog returns to its vomit," and, "A sow that is washed goes back to her wallowing in the mud."