

## A SERIES OF DEVOTIONS BASED UPON THE LETTER OF JAMES

### SIN

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

The human nature of every human being is totally corrupted by the original sin inherited through our parents from Adam. The Psalmist says, “I was sinful at birth, sinful from the time my mother conceived me.” (Psalm 51:5) The result of original sin is you are, by your inherited sinful nature, hostile to God and cannot submit to (obey) His laws.

All human beings in their daily thoughts, desires, words, and deeds disobey God’s Commandments. These sins are what theologians call actual sins. These are the actual sins you commit every day of your life.

The sins you commit are quite often well known to you. God’s Commandments, like a mirror, reflect back to you when you disobey one of them. They are quite clear if you disobey someone in authority you have sinned against the fourth Commandment. Likewise, if you tell lies about someone to hurt them and their reputation you have sinned against the eighth Commandment. In the Small Catechism sins that you commit in direct disobedience of one of God’s commandments are called sins of commission. “After desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin.” (James 1:15)

There is another category of sins which the Small Catechism calls “sins of omission.” Of course, the word “omission” is derived from the word “omit.” The dictionary defines the word “omit” as failing to do something you should do. A sin of omission is also an actual sin. It is prompted by a willful rejection of what God in His Commandments tells you He expects you to do. When you “omit” a particular demand of God from your life you have disobeyed Him. In omitting from your life what God expects of you demonstrates you love evil and neglect to obey God and your own conscience. “Anyone, then, who knows the good he ought to do and doesn’t do it, sins.” (James 4:17)

For all actual sins, whether they are sins of commission or omission, Jesus suffered and died on Calvary's cross. He, "the Lamb of God," came to take away the sin of the world. (John 1:29) Isaiah wrote, "Surely, He took up our infirmities and carried our sorrows. . .He was pierced for our transgressions, He was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon Him, and by His wounds we are healed." (Isaiah 53:4-5)

Prayer: Heavenly Father, I confess that I sin everyday sins that I know and yes, even sins of which I am unaware. Forgive me all my sins for the sake of Jesus, Your Son, my Lord and Savior. It is in His name I pray for this forgiveness. Amen.

To Thee, omniscient Lord of all, In grief and shame I humbly call;  
I see my sins against Thee, Lord, The sins of thought and deed and word.  
They press me sore; I carry to Thee: O God, be merciful to me!

O Lord, my God, to Thee I pray: O cast me not in wrath away!  
Let Thy good Spirit ne'er depart, But let Him draw to Thee my heart  
That truly penitent I be: O God, be merciful to me!

O Jesus, let Thy precious blood Be to my soul a cleansing flood.  
Turn not, O Lord, Thy guest away, But grant that justified I may  
Go to my house at peace with Thee: O God, be merciful to me!  
(LSB 613)