

# To Him Who Knows To Do Good . . .

Rick Matthews

**James 4:17**—"Therefore, to him who knows to do good and does not do it, to him it is sin"—is an important verse, and it aligns with the principle that we are accountable for the knowledge we have. However, this does not mean that we should remain stagnant in our understanding of YHVH's Word or fail to seek a deeper knowledge of His truth.

## Balancing Accountability and Growth in Knowledge

Here's how we can reconcile the concept that we are accountable for what we know with the calling to grow in understanding and obedience through the Holy Spirit:

### 1. We Are Called to Grow in Knowledge and Understanding

- YHVH's calling is not static. He calls His people to continually seek Him, study His Word, and grow in spiritual maturity. The Holy Spirit is given to lead us into all truth.
  - **John 16:13**: "When He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth."
  - **2 Peter 3:18**: "But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ."
  - **Proverbs 1:5**: "A wise man will hear and increase learning, and a man of understanding will attain wise counsel."

The Holy Spirit empowers believers to discern and understand YHVH's Word, enabling us to align our lives with His truth. While we are accountable for what we know, the calling to seek knowledge makes clear that we must not settle for a shallow understanding.

### 2. Avoiding Rationalization or Stagnation

Rationalizing limited accountability can lead to spiritual stagnation or complacency. YHVH expects His people to diligently seek to understand His ways:

- **Hosea 4:6**: "My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge." This verse emphasizes the danger of rejecting knowledge or failing to seek it.
- **2 Timothy 2:15**: "Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth."

Remaining willfully ignorant or failing to grow in understanding can lead to missing opportunities to fully obey YHVH's commandments. This is why studying and applying the Word is central to the believer's life.

### 3. Accountability Increases with Knowledge

While James 4:17 acknowledges accountability for what we know, the Scriptures also teach that greater knowledge brings greater responsibility:

- Luke 12:47-48: "And that servant who knew his master's will, and did not prepare himself or do according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes. But he who did not know, yet committed things deserving of stripes, shall be beaten with few. For everyone to whom much is given, from him much will be required."
  - This passage confirms that accountability is proportional to knowledge but does not excuse ignorance where knowledge is available.

The Holy Spirit, which is given to YHVH's people, equips us to understand His Word, making us accountable for seeking and applying that knowledge. Rationalizing limited accountability does not align with the active and growing faith described in Scripture.

### 4. Humility and Knowledge Work Together

Humility plays a key role in how we handle the knowledge we gain. It ensures that:

- We remain teachable and open to correction.
- We approach learning and obedience with sincerity, not pride.
  - **Psalms 25:9**: "The humble He guides in justice, and the humble He teaches His way."
  - **Isaiah 66:2**: "But on this one will I look: on him who is poor and of a contrite spirit, and who trembles at My word."

Knowledge without humility leads to arrogance (1 Corinthians 8:1), but humility without a pursuit of knowledge can lead to complacency. YHVH desires His people to embody both.

### Conclusion: Accountability with a Responsibility to Grow

James 4:17 affirms that we are accountable for what we know, but as those called by YHVH, we are not meant to stop there. The Holy Spirit is given to guide us into **all truth** (John 16:13), which means we are responsible for actively seeking a deeper understanding of YHVH's Word and applying it in our lives.

While accountability begins with what we know, our calling requires continual growth in both knowledge and humility, ensuring that we reflect YHVH's character and live in alignment with His commandments. True worship in **spirit and truth** demands this balance.