

Sin Unto Death - cont.

pray for our brethren who want to be forgiven. On the other hand, we do not pray for our brethren who sin and who are hardened and unrepentant. We do not pray for our brethren who have no intention of forsaking their sin. Like Jeremiah, sometimes we “pray not” for our unrepentant brethren (Jeremiah 7:16; 11:14; 14:11; see also 15:1-2).

Death or No Death?

All sin is wrong and leads to immediate spiritual death (1 John 3:4,14; 5:17; Genesis 2:17; Isaiah 59:2; Romans 6:23; Acts 8:22). Additionally, all unrepented sins lead to future eternal death – the “second death” (Revelation 2:11; 20:6, 14; 21:8). Friend, the choice is yours concerning what you will do about your sin (Isaiah 1:16-20; Ezekiel 18:26ff).

John teaches us two important lessons about sin. First, take responsibility for the spiritual well-being of your fellow-Christians. Do you “see your brother sinning” (v.16)? If so, do something about it - pray! Second, take sin seriously, knowing that it can and will lead to the fatal consequence of eternal death if persisted in.

- Chris Reeves -

- Scripture of the Week -

For if you altogether hold your peace at this time, then will relief and deliverance arise to the Jews from another place, but you and your father's house will perish: and who knows whether you are not come to the kingdom for such a time as this?

- Esther 4:14 -

This week I will be strong because “Who knows?”, this could be the very week God wants me to act for the good of others.

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For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh, for the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh, but divinely powerful for the destruction of fortresses.
- 2 Corinthians 10:3-4 -

What Is A “Sin Unto Death”?

*If any man see his brother sinning a sin not unto death, he shall ask, and God will give him life for them that sin not unto death. There is a sin unto death: not concerning this do I say that he should make request. All unrighteousness is sin: and there is a sin not unto death.
- 1 John 5:16-17 -*

The Apostle John writes that there is a sin unto death and there is a sin not unto death. What does he mean and what is the difference between the two? It is the purpose of this article to answer this question.

The background to this passage is that of prayer and praying for others. John is addressing prayer requests in the immediate context. Note the word “ask” in 1 John 5:14, 15, and 16. John is making the point that God hears our prayers (v. 14) and that God answers our prayers (v. 15). Then, proper and improper intercession (prayers for others) is dealt with in verses 16 and 17. So, what is “a sin unto death”? A sin unto death is not ...

- A sin leading to the death penalty (Romans 13:1ff). The death penalty is administered by the state and is different than what John is writing about.

- A sin punishable by death from God (Acts 5:1ff). This happened in the case of Ananias and Sapphira, but this is different than what John is writing about.
- A sin punishable by disfellowship from the church (1 Corinthians 5:1ff). A local church must practice “church discipline” when necessary, mark and disfellowship the unrepentant member. But this is not what John is writing about.
- Suicide (1 Samuel 31:4; Matthew 27:5, etc.). This is not a good thing to do, but this is not what John is writing about.
- Blasphemy of the Holy Spirit (Mark 3:29). The blasphemy of the Holy Spirit is done by the one who rejects the teaching, miracles, and character of Jesus. This is different than what John is writing about.
- A “mortal” sin that brings death (in contrast to a “venial” sin that does not bring death). This is the teaching of the Catholic Church. It is not biblical and it is not what John is writing about.
- A specific sin. John does not have a specific sin in mind that is “a sin unto death”. John writes about “a sin” or “sin” in general. This is “a sin”, or any

sin (without the Greek article “the”).

A “sin unto death”, then, is a sin that is never renounced, never repented of, and that leads to eternal death – the “second death” (Revelation 21:8). Some people can get to the point of falling away from Jesus that it is impossible to renew them again unto repentance (Hebrews 6:4-6). They sin and they do not want to stop the sin. In contrast, a “sin not unto death” is a sin that is confessed, renounced, repented of, and forgiven by God. This forgiven sin will not lead to eternal death – the “second death”. A humble and contrite Christian who sins, will always confess (admit) the sin, repent of the sin, and pray for the forgiveness of the sin (1 John 1:7-9; Proverbs 28:13).

For What Sinner Do We Pray?

John encourages faithful Christians to pray for others who sin. There are many examples of the faithful praying for sinners (Job 42:7-9; Genesis 20:7; Psalm 106:23; 2 Chronicles 30:18-20; Ezekiel 22:30; Amos 7:1-3).

Today, we pray for our brethren who sin and who are also humble and repentant (James 4:7-10; 5:16-20). We