

## *When or When Not to Pray*

### *1 John 5:16-17*

This title may seem strange since we just covered how that we are to have confidence when we pray. But...what happens when the BELIEVER that we are praying for does everything in their power to rebellion against our prayers, and ultimately, God's will for their life? Do you or I continue to pray for them? That is what John speaks on briefly in these next two verses. Everyone sins and that is the spiritual DNA that we inherited from our earthly father (Romans 5:12). However, there is a difference in sinning because you are a sinner and sinning because you are hard-headed and openly rebellious against God's Word. This is where we will begin tonight.

## **I. IF THERE IS SIN**

(a) **What We See**: Sin is a visual stimulation just like any other event in life that can be observed. You can watch a person sin just as easily as you can watch an athlete play their chosen sport. In simpler terms, John is stating the obvious. We can 'see' sin.

1. But what do I or YOU do about what we see? How involved do we become when we SEE a brother/sister sin a sin (hamartia) that will not result in 'death' (Gr. Thanatos *Death that is either literal OR figurative*).

Illustration: In "Preacher's Homiletical" it describes these sins as 'sins of frailty'. God is NOT going to 'take you out' for driving 60 MPH in a 55 MPH zone. He is not going to give you liver disease because you took a double-dose of Nyquil or three Tylenol instead of two like the label says. That is not the God of Grace that sent His Only Son to Earth to die for our sins. That misguided outlook of God being super-strict, ungracious, and unloving is what we call 'legalism'.

2. This is where John jumps in and basically tells us to intercede on our brother or sister's behalf in the hope that they will make better decisions on the highway or for their health.

- "Lord, help ol' Tom to slow down while he drives so he can enjoy the beauty of the creation that You made for him".
- "Lord, help Sister Betty's nose to stop running and her head to stop hurting so she won't need Nyquil or Tylenol."

Galatians 6:1-2 *Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted. <sup>2</sup> Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ.*

2. I know that those were some pretty simple examples but there are believers who will see such 'sins' and overreact to the point that they forget that we don't always 'see' things the same way. Tylenol is not a 'gateway' into alcoholism and Tylenol doesn't propel someone into opioid addiction. This is where Jesus encourages us to harmless like doves (Matthew 10:16). Mind your own business and pray for them.

1 Thessalonians 4:11 *And that ye study to be quiet, and to do your own business, and to work with your own hands, as we commanded you;*

a. There are 'sins' that ain't gonna kill you (Vs. 17).

## II. THERE IS A SIN UNTO DEATH

(a) **It is a Reality**: If you recall, I said that "Preacher's Homiletical" called those sins just previously mentioned as 'sins of frailty'. But what about seeing a Christian in open rebellion against God (Father, Son, Holy Ghost)?

- What about where Paul said that anyone, either man or angelic being, who 'preaches' a 'gospel' apart from the Gospel of Jesus Christ (Galatians 1:8-9) and Paul said, "Let them be accursed!"
- What about where Paul said in 1 Corinthians 16:22 that if they don't love the Lord, let them be "Anathema"!
- What about the sexual deviate in Romans 1 that is turned over to a reprobate mind?

1. These are just a few of the scriptural examples of LOST people and how they will be dealt with over their sin. Paul wrote this to the believers in Corinth,

1 Corinthians 5:12 *For what have I to do to judge them also that are without?...*  
<sup>13</sup> *But them that are without God judgeth.*

2. But, again, what about the believer? The Letter of 1<sup>st</sup> John is written to believers and is about a believer's relationship or fellowship with the Lord (1 John 1:7). What do we do about praying for or approaching a believer that is openly in rebellion against the Godhead and still comes to Church AND wants you to 'zip your lip' about it?

1 Corinthians 5:1-2, 5 *It is reported commonly that there is fornication **among you**, and such fornication as is not so much as named among the Gentiles, that one should have his father's wife. <sup>2</sup> And ye are puffed up, and have not rather mourned, that he that hath done this deed might be **taken away from among you**...<sup>5</sup> To deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.*

a. WHOA! Now, what is Paul saying? Let's talk about this for a moment.

b. Here is what another believer will say, "Who am I to judge?" Let's answer that. Just as my own body takes care of anything in it that tries to destroy it from within (antibodies, white blood cells, sneezing, coughing, fever, etc.) as the body of Christ, the Church is supposed to do the same thing. What happens instead?

- Folks get 'puffed up' (angry) at those who are trying to purify the body instead of the ones trying to poison it! Instead of seeing anger, we should be seeing repentance or mourning!

1 Corinthians 5:11-13 *But now I have written unto you not to keep company, if any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolator, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner; with such an one no not to eat. <sup>12</sup> For what have I to do to judge them also that are without? **do not ye judge them that are within?** <sup>13</sup> But them that are without God judgeth. Therefore put away from among yourselves that wicked person.*

3. These same Corinthians also dealt carelessly with the Lord's Supper and listen to what happened to them for their carelessness.

1 Corinthians 11:18-34

(b) **It is Goal Oriented**: The entire Book of 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians is an old-fashioned tail whoopin' (Hebrews 12:6-11); it is the Bible's clearest example of reproof. Why include it in the Canon of Scripture IF it's going to make folks mad or 'hurt their feelings'? It's because the goal of holding believer's accountable for open rebellion is restoration AND reconciliation and not death.

*2 Corinthians 5:17-20a Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new. <sup>18</sup> And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation; <sup>19</sup> To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation. <sup>20</sup> Now then we are ambassadors for Christ...*

1. Just as 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians is all about reproof, 2<sup>nd</sup> Corinthians is all about correction. Hebrews 12 tells of the earthly father that corrects so that his son will live and not die. Here is why Paul 'corrected' his 'children'.

*2 Corinthians 7:8-11 For though I made you sorry with a letter, I do not repent, though I did repent: for I perceive that the same epistle hath made you sorry, though it were but for a season. <sup>9</sup> Now I rejoice, not that ye were made sorry, but that ye sorrowed to repentance: for ye were made sorry after a godly manner, that ye might receive damage by us in nothing. <sup>10</sup> For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death. <sup>11</sup> For behold this selfsame thing, that ye sorrowed after a godly sort, what carefulness it wrought in you, yea, what clearing of yourselves, yea, what indignation, yea, what fear, yea, what vehement desire, yea, what zeal, yea, what revenge! **In all things ye have approved yourselves to be clear in this matter.***

- It's over
- It's done
- It's under the blood
- It has now opened the doorway of reconciling their relationship with the Godhead
- Did it sting? Yes!
- Did it make you mad for a minute or two? Yes!
- But now you are free and clear, and you'll be more careful in the future
- Now we can pray AND praise God for the gift of forgiveness