

The “sin not unto death”. 1 John 5:16-17

By Philip Shields

www.LightontheRock.org

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Why are there two kinds of sin listed in 1 John 5:16-17. How serious is it to “fall away” from God’s truth and from a strong relationship with God? What are WE each supposed to do when we see someone straying? There’s a lot from God about our inter-relationship with others, in this sermon.

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What is a sin that does NOT lead to death – and what is a sin that does lead to death? Isn’t death the wages of all sin?

1 John 5:16-17

"If anyone sees his brother sinning a sin which *does not lead to death*, he will ask, and He will give him life for those who commit sin not leading to death. *There is sin leading to death. I do not say that he should pray about that.* 17 **All unrighteousness is sin, and *there is sin NOT leading to death.*"**

Romans 6:23 NIV

“For the wages of sin is DEATH, but the **gift of God is eternal life** in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

If the wages of sin is death (Rom 6:23), how can there be a “sin not unto death”? What could that possibly mean?

Let’s talk today about what “a sin which *does not lead to death*” might be referring to – and more. There are even other verses we’ll tackle related to this that *speak of gently and graciously helping to bring people “back to their senses”* and back into fellowship with God and His church, when they wander from the truth and are heading towards spiritual trouble.

God wants each of us to be concerned about one another.

Really, all unrepented sin results in our death. Real death, not just permanent or eternal separation from God, as is commonly taught in other churches, but not in scripture -- and surely unrepented sin cannot result in eternal life just being tortured in a hell fire. The wages of sin is *death*. And that’s why Jesus had to DIE for you and me. He wasn’t just separated from God, but He was killed. Jesus had to die! So you and I wouldn’t have to die.

But let's read the **context leading up to Romans 6:23**. We'll see that *God made a way for us to be set free from sin*, and therefore also its consequences of death, by the crucifixion of our Lord Yeshua/Jesus, dying for us. *So we can go from deserving death to being gifted with eternal life when we repent, turn from our way of sin, and accept God's gift of eternal life.*

Romans 6:20-23 NIV

“When you were slaves to sin, you were free from the control of righteousness. 21 What benefit did you reap at that time from the things you are now ashamed of? ***Those things result in death!*** 22 **But now that you have been set free from sin** and have become slaves to God, the benefit you reap leads to holiness, and the result is eternal life. 23 For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

This starts to explain the “sins that are NOT unto death”. **It's referring to the sins we have repented of**, and turned away from and turned back to God in our lives. When forgiven, we no longer have to die for our sins we repented of. **ALL of our sins we repented of, no matter how bad they were or how shameful, are now washed away in the blood of the Lamb of God – Jesus – who shed his blood for us (1 John 1:9).** The Lamb of God takes away the sin of the world when we accept Him (**John 1:29**).

If you have repented of all your sins, and do so daily, you've had all your sins forgiven. Remember in the “Lord's prayer”: *“Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors”*. Our sins are gone when we repent *and* forgive others. We all have to admit that we have sinned and continue to sin from time to time -- or we make a mockery of God's word (read **1 John 1:8-10**). But once we ask forgiveness and turn our lives around and follow a life of holiness as Rom 6:22 says, our “slate is clean”.

At that moment you're sinless in God's eyes as Jesus has taken on himself all your sins at that moment, and God gifts us with His very own righteousness.

2 Corinthians 5:21

“For He (God) made Him (Christ) who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.”

Jesus' resurrection life becomes our life as **Col. 3:3-4** clearly says. And when we are in Christ, there is no more condemnation on us. If Christ is now *our* life, **how could sinless Christ be condemned?** He can't be. And now we're not condemned either once we're seen as being “in Him”. These are the

“sins not unto death” – not unto *our* death, as Christ’s death fulfilled the requirement of our death penalty.

After “beating himself up” for still sometimes sinning, Paul says this:

Romans 7:24-25

“O wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death? I thank God – through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, with the mind I myself serve the law of God, but with the flesh the law of sin.”

And then the Apostle Paul continues:

Romans 8:1

“There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit.”

When we committed sin worthy of death, we repented and accepted Jesus’ death for us. We also accepted the resurrection Jesus as our new life living in us by His spirit, so now – we are no longer condemned (Rom.8:1) for any sins we committed and repented of. THAT’S the “sin not unto death”.

Of course we have to live a life that shows we want to follow our Messiah, want to be like Him, want to walk “in the light”, and seeking God now. That doesn’t mean we never sin again, but we are no longer *practicing* sin as *our way of life*. Do you see the difference?

1 John 1:6-7

“If we say that we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth. 7 But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and **the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from ALL sin.” Also verse 9.**

Continue reading into **1 John 2:1-2**, where John urges us to be careful not to sin, but now – in the new covenant, when we sin, we have Jesus Christ the Righteous who comes to our defense and atones for our sins. *In the new covenant, we do NOT get separated from God every time we sin, as it was in the old covenant (Isa 59:1-2)*. No, Yeshua/Jesus comes to our defense and covers our sins, as we just read. This is hugely important for you to experience real joy in salvation. Be sure you read 1 John 1:1-2 several times.

Then in verses 3-6, our “walk” must change. We’re admonished that we must strive to keep God’s commandments and walk as Jesus walked, empowered by God’s spirit. Our spiritual walk is different now.

So, “**sins not unto death**” – are about most sins, sins that can be repented of and forgiven as if they had never happened after we repent deeply.

In 1 John 5:16 the apostle John goes on to say that we should help lead those people back to repentance when we see them sliding into sin, like getting drunk or heading into other sins. **DO your best to gently help turn them** to see their sin and stop and repent and turn around. We don’t just sit back thinking “that’s not my problem. That’s their problem” and not do anything about it! God wants us helping turn people away from sin.

Romans 15:1 Holman

“Now we who are strong have an **obligation** to bear the weaknesses of those without strength, and not to please ourselves”.

Galatians 6:1

“Brethren, if a man is overtaken in any trespass, you who are spiritual **restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness**, considering yourself lest you also be tempted.”

SINS THAT ARE UNTO DEATH

Now what about “**Sins Unto Death**”? Let’s read 1 John 5 again.

1 John 5:16-17

"If anyone sees his brother **sinning a sin which does not lead to death**, he will ask, and He will give him life for those who commit sin not leading to death. ***There is sin leading to death. I do not say that he should pray about that.*** 17 **All unrighteousness is sin**, and there is sin not leading to death."

The “Sins that *ARE* unto death” -- are the sins mentioned in **Hebrews 6:4-6 and Heb 10:26-28** category. This is about people who will not repent, and especially, *who - knowing better, turn from God permanently* without repentance and reject the working of God’s Spirit in them. *If we don’t accept the death of Jesus to cover our sins, then we have to die for our own sins.*

And we must deeply realize how our calling to be among the first fruits of God is so high, that we must not treat it scornfully or walk away from it.

Hebrews 6:4-6

“For it is **impossible** for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted the heavenly gift, and **have become partakers of the Holy Spirit**, 5 and have tasted the good word of God and the powers of the age

to come, **6 if they fall away, to renew them again to repentance, since they crucify again for themselves the Son of God,** and put Him to an open shame.”

Once we've been given God's holy spirit and understand the truths of the Bible, we must not ever throw all that away! I shudder as I see people I've known for decades in the truth now discarding everything they once knew. They're heading into the "sins unto death" and God's severe punishment.

Hebrews 10:26-29 NIV

“If we deliberately keep on sinning [“sin willfully” – NKJV] after we have received the knowledge of the truth, no sacrifice for sins is left, 27 but only a fearful expectation of judgment and of raging fire that will consume the enemies of God.

28 Anyone who rejected the law of Moses died without mercy on the testimony of two or three witnesses. 29 How much more severely do you think a man deserves to be punished who has trampled the Son of God under foot, who has treated as an unholy thing the blood of the covenant that sanctified him, and who has insulted the Spirit of grace?”

There you have it. They by their words and actions insult the Spirit of grace. They have sinned against the Holy Spirit, what Yeshua described as unforgivable sin. They end up rejecting God and the Son of God and God's working in them through His holy spirit. Just be super careful to never speak against God's Spirit or reject its working within you. **Here are Yeshua's words** after being accused of performing miracles by the power of Satan (Beelzebub). Be so careful not to ascribe healings and miracles to Satan, though we know in the future that will happen, as the Beast power will have miracles by Satan's power. But normally, be so careful not to just tell people that someone's miracles are by Satan! That's what they said about Jesus.

Mark 3:22-30 “And the scribes who came down from Jerusalem said, **“He has Beelzebub,” and, “By the ruler of the demons He casts out demons.”**

23 So He called them to Himself and said to them in parables: "How can Satan cast out Satan? 24 If a kingdom is divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand. 25 And if a house is divided against itself, that house cannot stand. 26 And if Satan has risen up against himself, and is divided, he cannot stand, but has an end. 27 No one can enter a strong man's house and plunder his goods, unless he first binds the strong man. And then he will plunder his house.

28 "Assuredly, I say to you, all sins will be forgiven the sons of men, and whatever blasphemies they may utter; 29 but he who blasphemes against the Holy Spirit never has forgiveness, but is subject to eternal condemnation" — 30 because they said, "He has an unclean spirit."

Luke 12:10

"And anyone who speaks a word against the Son of Man, it will be forgiven him; but **to him who blasphemes against the Holy Spirit, it will not be forgiven.**"

How does one blaspheme the Holy Spirit? They speak against the Holy Spirit (Matthew 12:32). They reject and speak against God working in them by His Spirit. They reject the urgings and workings of God's spirit in them. And they practice and teach no law, which is lawlessness. That's why Jesus said even to those who claimed to preach in his name, "I never knew you, you workers of iniquity (lawlessness)". He says He NEVER knew them!

Matthew 7:21-23 "Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven. 22 Many will say to Me in that day, 'Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?' 23 **And then I will declare to them, 'I NEVER KNEW you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!'**

But "I never knew you" was not spoken to true believers, because Jesus clearly says he DOES know his sheep (John 10:27-30).

John 10:27-30

"My sheep hear My voice, **and I know them**, and they **follow Me**. 28 And I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; *neither shall anyone snatch them out of My hand*. 29 My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch them out of My Father's hand."

When we see people who have turned so permanently bitter against God and against God's people, I'd pray for them but don't count on being able to turn them around once they get that far gone. Beware, as their horrible attitude could just rub off and infect us too perhaps. They are most likely already past being turned around. Move on, John is saying in 1 John 5, in these cases.

If you're concerned that YOU have committed this unpardonable sin, and feel really upset about it, you most likely have NOT done

the “**sin unto death**” or the unpardonable sin. Someone committing unpardonable sin could care less. It means nothing to him/her.

If you’ve been taught the truth of God, do not turn away from it, as I am seeing so many doing. Obviously we can grow in understanding and fine-tune some of our beliefs, but the major ones should stay intact – like keeping the sabbath and holydays, and who Jesus is, and what God’s plan of salvation is. Those – never walk away from.

And seek to know God’s will in your life and follow HIS will (**Matthew 7:21**). Learn to obey Jesus’ instructions so you are building your spiritual house upon him, the spiritual ROCK (**Luke 6:46-49**). And remain steadfast to the very end and never give up (**1 Cor. 15:1-2**).

That’s why I call this website “Light on the Rock”. The Light is Yeshua/Jesus. The ROCK is Yeshua the Messiah. It’s about glorying in God the Father sending us His son for forgiveness and salvation. This site is about coming to have a deep, deep relationship with God our Father, with Yeshua our Messiah, and with one another. Learn the concept of learning to “fall in love with” your Savior and King. He is our beloved.

TURNING BACK to GOD those who are STRAYING

The message today is ALSO about graciously and gently helping others see themselves turning away and to do our best to bring them back to the truth. It will take ACTION on your part. But many of you will resist this. You “don’t want to cause any trouble” so we will tend to leave people alone to the real trouble they’re headed into unless someone turns them back to God. Of course we’re not harsh or rough in the way we do it – but gentle.

YOU be that one who turns people back to God. It matters greatly to our Father to see you – his child – caring about the other children of God who are weakening. We can’t just claim it’s not our problem. We can’t just SIT BACK doing nothing! Pray about it as your effectiveness hinges a lot on HOW you do this. Go back and read **Gal. 6:1** again.

James 5:19-20

"Brethren, if anyone among you wanders from the truth, and someone turns him back, 20 let him know that he who turns a sinner from the error of his way will save a soul from DEATH and cover a multitude of sins." Read it again.

Wow. Did you get that? YOU can save a soul from DEATH. God is telling us, we must do our best to wake people up who have turned away from the truth if you can, but carefully. *But we must not just sit back thinking it's not our problem. Have you EVER turned someone back who was wandering from the truth?*

Jude 21-23 is similar. NKJV

“Keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life. **22 And on some have compassion, making a distinction;** *23 but others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire,* hating even the garment defiled by the flesh.”

Compare that to the NLT -- Jude 22-23, really a paraphrase:

“And you must show mercy to those whose faith is wavering. **23 Rescue others by snatching them from the flames of judgment.** *Show mercy to still others, but do so with great caution,* hating the sins that contaminate their lives.”

But the point is, we CAN'T just sit back. WE have to show we love our brother or sister in Christ who is straying – so we *take action* and talk to them!

For example, do you ever see a brother drink and drink and drink? You must say something. Do something. Or do you see a brother openly screaming at his wife a lot, in front of others? You must help him. Speak gently to him about what you see happening and how he can turn his marriage around before it's too late. I remember doing that for a man and now he has a fabulous marriage.

Remember we read earlier in Gal. 6:1 that we must do our best to restore gently those taken up into sins. And Romans 15:1 told us we are obligated to bear the weaknesses of the weak spiritually. To help them!

If we STAY close to God and Christ, we have the assurance of glory. We can be presented faultless if we accept the righteousness of God himself, who wants to give us HIS own righteousness as His GIFT (**Romans 5:17; Phil 3:9-11; 2 Cor. 5:21**). Never spurn or reject God's gifts! Praise him for it and accept it!

Jude 24-25

“Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling,

And to present you faultless

Before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy,

25 To God our Savior, Who alone is wise, Be glory and majesty, Dominion and power, Both now and forever. Amen.”