

# So That You May Know

## An Expository Study of the Epistle of **1 John 5:16&17**

### Chapter 29- The Sin Unto Death

### 269 The Sin Unto Death- Part 9

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WAOY Friday-Monday 10/24-10/27/08

Welcome again, my beloved in Jesus Christ. We're continuing our verse by verse "journey" through the Epistle of **1John**, and today we're going to continue to look at what John taught about "The Sin that is unto Death". So let's open our Bibles and read **1John 5:16&17** again together:

**16** If anyone sees his brother committing a sin not *leading* to death, he shall ask and *God* will for him give life to those who commit sin not *leading* to death. There is a sin *leading* to death; I do not say that he should make request for this.

**17** All unrighteousness is sin, and there is a sin not *leading* to death.

Now over the last several broadcasts- we have been exploring just what John was talking about here when he mentions the sin that leads to death. And I told that that this is a very controversial passage in God's Word over which much debate has raged for many years.

And we saw last time that- in my opinion- based upon my own best honest research- there are only two possible answers to just what John meant when he used the term, "**sin that leads to death**" that doesn't contradict any other verse:

- A. John many have been talking about a sin that is unto *eternal* death as in the unpardonable sin of blaspheming the Holy Spirit as Jesus taught in **Matthew 12**
- B. John may have been talking about a sin that is unto *physical* death as in the case of Ananias and Sapphira as Luke recorded for us in **The Acts 5**.

And we have gone over both of these two possibilities and today I want to look at how we work this out in a practical sense.

Now here, the Apostle John teaches us that we are to pray for those fellow believers who sin a sin that does not lead to death. Now just what is John talking about when he says this? John is talking about the duty and the obligation that we have as believers to uphold one another and to guard each other's souls.

You see, dear friends, being a Christian is not just about your own personal relationship with Jesus Christ and it is more than just what God is doing for you personally. As a believer and as a member of the Body of Christ- I have a duty and a solemn obligation to love my brothers and sisters as well as love God and myself.

And contrary to what is taught today in modern America- how I manifest that Christian love for my brothers and sisters is not up to me to decide but it is spelled out very clearly and very precisely for me already in Holy Scripture. Let's turn to **Hebrews 3:12&13** and read that passage together:

**12 Take care, brethren, that there not be in any one of you an evil, unbelieving heart that falls away from the living God.**

**13 But encourage one another day after day, as long as it is *still* called "Today," so that none of you will be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin.**

Now we are not sure just who wrote the **Epistle to the Hebrews**- it may have been Paul or Apollos or Clement or some other person- but what we do know is that every words of **Hebrews** is inspired like all other Scripture.

And here the writer of **Hebrews** discusses the great need to "**encourage one another day after day**". Now the word that was translated here into English as "encourage" comes from the Greek word, *parakaleoo*, which means: *to admonish; to beg; to entreat; to beseech; to console; to encourage; to strengthen; and to instruct.*

This word has the idea of "*coming along side of someone else*" to encourage or to strengthen them and it has the connotation of "*putting your arms around someone*" who is weak or troubled to help steady them.

Now how often does God's Word say that we are to do this encouraging? Well, the Bible says, "**day after day**". And if you take *that* word all the way back to the Greek- it basically means, "daily".

And then I also want you to notice that this is not a request; it is not optional as though some people do this while others who are too busy get a pass. No, this is a Biblical Command- it is a requirement; it is mandatory. In other words- you are being faithful and obedient if you encourage daily and you are being rebellious and disobedient if you do not encourage daily.

And I also want you to notice who is supposed to do this encouraging. This is not something that the lay people of the Church can sub out to the Pastor or to the Elders or the Deacons- but the writer of **Hebrews** tells us here who is responsible for this daily encouraging right here in verse 12- "**brethren**"

So what we have is probably one of the most overlooked and disobeyed commands in the whole Bible where God, the Holy Spirit inspired this writer to say that every single member of the Body of Jesus Christ is obligated to encourage someone else daily. And why are we to do this? So, we can control other people's lives? No. Are we to do this daily encouraging so that we can look great in the eyes of other people? So, we can make these others people dependent on us for their relationship to Jesus? Not at all.

Well, then why are we supposed to encourage others on a daily basis? Look again at the last part of verse 12:

**... that there not be in any one of you an evil, unbelieving heart that falls away from the living God.**

Now this "falling away" that is mentioned here in verse 12 is *not* talking about someone losing their Salvation. No, this is simply another way of talking about a believer sinning against God. When a person, who is genuinely saved commits a sin- he is "falling away" from the *ways* of God- not becoming unsaved.

And so our duty as believers is to become so yielded to Christ; so available for the Master's use that we become *inconvenienced* by this radical kind of supernatural Love whereby we care enough about each other that we help guard one another from the horror of sin and to help

to deal with the heart of a brother or sister that is being tempted and assaulted from falling into unbelief.

Now dear friends, what I am about to say is not going to win me any popularity contests- but it is nevertheless true- so here goes. There is a plague that has entered the House of God in our day that must be identified and discussed and pointed out and cast out of the Church that has effectively stopped this Biblical Truth from being obeyed in our day. And that is the notion that we can go to Church; be a member of a Church and sit on a pew and serve God with people with whom we don't know and really don't care anything about.

That kind of behavior is sin and it is wrong and it is evil and it is unchristian and it must be rejected by every born again believer. The truth of the matter is that all throughout the Bible- we are told that we should be closer to our brothers and sisters in Christ than we are with anyone else- including our own families- if they are not saved.

Jesus said that the lost world is not going to know who we are; and they are not going to acknowledge Who we belong to by our ability to preach or our ability to prophesy or because we manifest supernatural miracles or because we can cast out devils or speak in tongues or call fire down from heaven or even raise the dead. We are not going to be known by the unsaved world as being a believer by our Bible knowledge or because we wear a 25 year Sunday School pin on our lapel or because we were baptized.

Dear friends, this one single identifier is so vital; so important- that you can wear your hair stacked up to the ceiling and you can wear your dresses down to the floor and you can stay away from bad movies and you can have an internet filter on your computer and you can vote Republican and you can be against abortion and you can campaign against homosexual marriage all you want to- but if you don't possess this one single quality- nobody out in the pagan world will know that you are a believer.

Jesus said that there is one identifier; one characteristic; one method by which the lost world will know without doubt that we have been Blood bought and born again and that one single quality is found in the red letter words of the Lord Jesus Christ in **John 13:35**, when He said:

**By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one**

**another.**

Now listen beloved, the love between family members is wonderful and a beautiful thing. The love that a man has for his wife is an example of Christ's love for His Church and is the bedrock of civilization. And the love that a mother has for her children is immortalized in the earth as being one of the strongest forces known to Man and I am not impugning or minimizing any of those loves.

But the kind of love that Jesus is talking about here is different from any other love on earth. Jesus was not talking about any other kind of love here except the love that believers have for each other. And this kind of love is exclusive to the Church of Jesus Christ- it is found inside the House of God and only inside the House of God. Nobody else on earth has ever or will ever know anything about this kind of love except those who are saved and who are members in particular of the Body of Jesus Christ.

This kind of love will cause the pagan world to sit up and take notice. This kind of preferential love that believers have for each other will cause sinners to be jealous and give up their sin to obtain it. This kind of love will cause the jaw of the most ardent atheist to drop as he stands in amazement at the power and the glory of this amazing love triumphing over racism and over division and over strife and over envy and over all the works of the flesh.

This kind of love will cause one brother to not eat meat while the world stands so as not to offend a weaker and less instructed brother. This kind of love will cause the busiest Christian on earth to drop everything he is doing to sit and weep with a troubled soul; to rejoice with a brother who has been visited by God; and to hold a brother who is broken over his own sin.

The lost world has never known this kind of love; those who are on the outside looking in have never tasted of this kind of mercy and kindness and continual affection that never grows weaker- but which grows stronger day by day.

This love makes it impossible to hold grudges; it makes a person unable to not forgive seven times seventy in one day; and it will *force* you to leave the comfort of your own security and it will *compel* you to risk everything in pursuit of that covenant brother who has grown weak and wandered off.

Now I am not naïve and I am well aware that this brotherly love has taken a great hit lately and it has gone out of fashion to get in each other's faces and to rebuke one another and to hold on to each other when it is just so much easier and less hassle to just let them go. I realize that we can easily just cop out to our Biblical responsibility by saying, "*Well, I'll just pray for him*" as though that is going to wash with Jesus. But the fact of the matter, dear friends, is that that kind of laid back cavalier attitude about this issue is not going to cut it with the Head of the Church and the One Who bought and paid for our souls.

Make no mistake about this, dear friends, but Biblical Christianity is not going to require *some things* from you- no, true, genuine Christ centered Faith is going to require *everything* from you. Jesus is not going to make periodic demands on us that are difficult- no, Jesus looks at us as being His Own Personal Slaves Who He has purchased with His Own Blood and that we no longer have any claim over our lives at all and Jesus looks at us as belonging to Him so He makes no qualms at all about telling us to love and to forgive and to be merciful and longsuffering and patient and kind and forgiving to the other people whom He has called and chosen and washed.

If my time is so precious to me that it hinders me from obeying Christ's command to exhort daily- then may God take my time away- so that I can be about the Father's Business. If my fun or my personal pleasures or my earthly possessions are the cause of me not being willing or not being able to obey Christ concerning this daily exhortation- then may God be merciful to me to take those things away so that I may be found faithful.

But whatever it takes; whether we can come easy or hard- let us all be committed to seeing the importance of loving each other and praying for each other and of exhorting one another daily so that we may not sin against God in a way whereby God may need to take some of us out like he did with Ananias and Sapphira.

Well, I have to stop right here, but please join me on the next broadcast as we continue our journey through the Epistle of **1John**. May God help us all.

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