

1John 5:16–17  
Our Crucial Prayer Assignment

Thursday, July 11, 2024 • Read 1John 5:16–17

Questions from the Scripture text: What might someone see a brother doing (v16)? What sort of sin? What can he do for this brother? What will God do? For the person committing which specific sort of sin? What other sort of sin is there? What can't be done for them? What is every unrighteousness (v17)? But what doesn't necessarily result from every sin?

**What should we do, when we see a brother sinning?** 1John 5:16–17 prepares us for the second serial reading in public worship on the Lord's Day. In these two verses of Holy Scripture, the Holy Spirit teaches us that **when we see a brother sin, we should pray to God to give Him life.**

There are those who go by the name of brother, but are not actually saved or elect (cf. 1Co 5:11). Such a man's sin is unto death. Praying for him will not get him life (v16). But notice that this scripture does not forbid for praying about it, only that this is not what the apostle is saying that we should pray for.

The verb form here does not have the full force of an imperative (command), but it is implied that the apostle is giving us a special topic for our prayers: the sins of our brethren.

Coming out of how our assurance of faith (v13) gives us confidence that God hears us as we are praying according to His will (v14) and answers those prayers (v15), God emphasizes something that it is His will for us to pray about. We are to pray for the brother that we see sinning.

This is not an invitation to make a prayer list of others' sins. It is an instruction to interact with God in real-time as an intercessor for sanctification. This is the will of God for believers (cf. 1Th 4:3).

So, a noble, thrilling part of having assurance is joining with God in His work in real-time. Not that we do part of the work, but when His providence gives us to see a brother sinning, it is a call to be praying, while God is sanctifying. We will be praying, and God will be giving the brother life (v16) to put that sin to death.

There is a strong warning here against monkeying around with sin. There is sin that is unto death, and all unrighteousness is sin (v17a). The text intentionally does not tell us what sin leads to death, or at what point we might know that our sinning is unto death. Certainly those who are grieved over their sin and concerned about their sin have not reached an irretrievable point of hardening. So a right response here is not a vain curiosity about what/when this might be, but rather a resolve against any sin whatsoever in one's own life.

And for the one who has this concern, who has this resolve, who is grieved and troubled at the presence of remaining sin, there is this wonderful comfort: remaining sin is not evidence that God has abandoned him. Because of the death and resurrection of Christ, there is sin that is not unto death (v17b). There is sin for which God has forgiven us in Christ. There is sin from which God is cleansing us. There is sin against which God is giving us life. There is sin about which God tells us to pray, for ourselves and for our brother.

The Lord's Prayer teaches us to pray for one another's forgiveness: "forgive us *our* debts." This passage teaches us to pray for one another's sanctification, when we see a brother sinning. Yes, if we see a brother wandering from the truth, we are to talk to him about it (cf. Ja 5:19–20). And, when we see the brother sinning, the first thing that we are to do is to talk to God about it, asking Him to give our brother life!

What are some occasions on which you might see a brother sinning? To Whom should you immediately talk about it? What should you be asking Him to do? What is one reason, from this passage, that it is so dangerous to trifle with sin? What encouragement do you have, when you are troubled by your remaining sin?

*Sample prayer: Lord, we thank You that it is Your will to sanctify us. Help us to remember this, whenever we see a brother sinning, and whenever we sin. Forgive us for how often we are more concerned with our own vindication than with our brother's need for life. Forgive us for how often we talk to people about others' sins, before we even talk to You about them. Help us to remember that there is sin that is unto death. Forgive us for when we have trifled with sin, when it is so offensive to You and so deadly to us. Forgive us, and cleanse us, and give us life, we pray through Christ, AMEN!*

Suggested songs: ARP51A "God, Be Merciful to Me" or TPH503 "From Depths of Woe, I Raise to Thee"

(The following is a machine-generated transcription. PLEASE BE AWARE of—and patient with—transcribing errors. If there is something confusing or obviously erroneous, you are invited to listen to the audio recording via [hopewellarp.org](http://hopewellarp.org))

First John 5 verses 16 through 17. These are God's words. If anyone sees his brother sinning a sin, Which does not lead to death, he will ask. And he will give him. For those who commit sin, not leading to death. There is sin. Leading to death. Do not say that he should pray about that.

All unrighteousness is sin. And there is some not leading. To death. We're going to send this reading of gods, inspired and inerrant word. I hope that you remember back in, verse 13, When we had the purpose of first, John as a whole, it was that we might have Assurance of And then last week in verses 14 and 15 that this Assurance is especially a blessing to us in prayer.

because if we are assured that we are in a state of grace, if we are assured that we have eternal life and that we have, therefore, the Himself. Then we know that while we are praying. God is listening. He is hearing us. We pray and fellowship with him.

according to verse 14 and that as we pray, according to his will not only is he hearing us, but he is giving us What we ask for now? God gives us. one of the things to pray for that is according to his will. One of the things to ask God for a special, Assignment in prayer.

And that assignment comes in a particular circumstance that we often have in our lives. If anyone sees his brother sinning, Now, there is this sin unto death sin, not unto death. dynamic in these two verses and that's just Him saying, there are, there are those who are called brother.

But are not actually converted. And are not even actually elect. and when someone who is not elect and is not saved sins, their sin is unto death. Their sin is not something that they've been forgiven of their sin is not something that they are killing by the grace of God.

And that the sin will die and be gone. Like, we heard in the first chapter. If if we confess our sins talking about Believers, those who have Fellowship with one another, and with God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, if we confess our sins, he is faithful. And just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

So, we know that that's God's will for believers. But there are those who go by the name of brother but are not and he's just saying here that You do not have a. Prayer superpower to overcome. the secret will of God. We're to pray. Especially according to the revealed will of God.

And so you pray, according to the Bible. In this case, you pray for your brother whom you see sinning But this prayer is not going to. Overcome the secret will of God. Now as soon as you understand it in that way, you stop saying, oh well what is the sin unto death?

Has to do with the secret will of God. It's not for you to know. And note that he doesn't prohibit. Praying for them. He's he just says, I do not say that he should pray about that. With the implication that He should pray about that and that God will give give life in response so we're not forbidden.

What he does though, is he gives us a specific situation if anyone sees his brother, Sinning a sin. Now, we have lots of things that we're tempted to do when we see our brother sending us in. We're tempted to feel judgmentally. We're tempted. to if it's against us or against Someone for whom we have particular affection.

obsess about exposing the the sinner or Getting restitution or whatever. But we have an immediate Assignment from God. And it is not to tell other people about the sin that we just saw, It is to talk to God. About the sin that we just saw. Now, it's not wrong to.

Want Vindication, especially for someone else. But here is our first assignment. When we see a brother sending us in. Is that we should ask God to give him life. We should ask God to help him fight against that sin. All sin has death in it and is from death.

But when the believer sins, If he has Christ, if he has eternal life, Then God is giving the believer Life by, which he is going to kill that sin. And so, like first Timothy 4 verse 13 says, this is the will of God for you, your sanctification. You want to pray for things that are according to God's will.

I'll pray for believers, sanctification. And what I hope it will be to us. To respond rightly in the situation. When a Believer is sinning. If the initial response is to pray to God, that God would help the believer fight against a sin. That God would give that believer the life.

By which he God continues to cleanse us. From. All unrighteousness. And so, There are is very easy to get hung up on what is this sin unto death? What is this, sin not unto death and to miss? The, what verse 16 is doing is it's giving us. A special case.

For this. Assured prayer. Of verses 14 and 15. And then you see how Noble and thrilling. It is to be joining with God. In one of the great works that he's doing on Earth. There are two great works that God is doing on Earth. He is bringing. The elect to Faith.

And he is building up. The Believers in righteousness and life. This is the great work of there are of course, innumerable other things that God is doing in the rise and fall of Nations and all these other things. But these are the two great things that God is doing.

And so, you want to you want to enjoy this assured prayer life, where if you ask according to his will, you know, that he is hearing you, you know that he is giving it, I'll do these two things. Pray for the conversion of unbelievers and pray for the sanctification of Believers.

this will give give you much to Enjoy and fellowship with God as he listens to you. In your praying. So, if anyone sees his brother sending us in, Which does not lead to death. sin not unto death. He will ask and he that is God, will give him.

That is the brother. For those who commit, the sin not unto death. There is sin unto death. I did not say that he should pray about that. Now, if you know, That there is sin, that there is that is unto death, that there is sin. That exposes even someone who is called brother.

As not really having been converted. And, There is probably even implied here as is taught in other scriptures. That there is a point of hardening. In which? Someone is left to himself. God leaves the person to himself. And and does not even afflict his conscience anymore. Doesn't show him any of what we call common operations of the spirit, which Which the spirit does even to.

those who are not elect, even to the reprobate. You know, that sin is so deadly. And that there is such a sin as this Then this teaches you not to trifle with sin. Especially, since he doesn't. Tell us. Either. How to recognize a sin that is unto death or how to recognize, whether you're being hardened to the point of no return.

Why risk being hardened at all? Don't trifle with sin. Don't tolerate any measure of it. Lest you find yourself on the worst end of the hypothetical cases? In these two verses. But on the other hand, he says in verse 17, all unrighteousness is sin. certainly makes us hate sin for what it is.

It's offensiveness to God. It's being against him. And, or bought. There is sin, not unto death. So on the one hand, he teaches us to cease sin correctly, but on the other hand, not to despair over it. Because if you have God in Christ, if you have Christ, if you have eternal life from God in Christ, God will give you life to kill your sin.

Rather than having your sin kill you. So there is Comfort here for the one who is troubled about his sin. There's Comfort here. For the one who grieves. Has sin and especially the one who is worried. About his sin that he may be sending the sin unto death. Take that worry.

And bring it to God. And seek from him, The Godly sorrow that leads to repentance that you wouldn't just be afraid of consequences. But that he would make you hate sin for its sinfulness and that he would give you life. And if you have, trusted brothers who will pray for you, maybe they didn't see you sinning.

but they can still pray for you. In this special assignment. And we can, Be joined together in this wonderful work that God is doing for believers. To cleanse us. From all unrighteousness. So, I hope that helps you respond. Well When you are seeing people sitting, it may be very helpful for you.

To practice, first and foremost in our household. That you you take it as a literal. Command when God and his Providence gives you to see a brother or sister sin and I mean, both blood brother and brother in Christ. When God in his Providence gives you first, pray that God would give them life.

And then move on to the other right in biblical responses as as appropriate. But if you start by praying that God would be giving them life. That will help you very much. in the way that you Confront or choose not to confront if it's not something that needs necessarily.

Not everything is for you necessarily to confront immediately. but always start with this prayer. And that will help you do. whatever else you need to do correctly. And then, when your parents, And remember to do it with your children, too. And that will help you. Engage them correctly.

As the ones who have been especially assigned, For their sanctification. Well, for their evangelism first, then there's sanctification. All right, let's pray. Hi gracious. God in our heavenly father, thank you. For giving us. The ability to be assured of our faith. Thank you for The confidence that Assurance gives us in prayer.

Thank you for telling us. that your will is for the sanctification of the leafers. Thank you for. The participation that you give us in asking you to give Life by which sanctification happens. Forgive us Lord for how And often. Internal. Response and even our relational response to other sin.

Been poor and sinful ourselves. Thank you for giving us this instruction. That helps us know what to do immediately and shapes. Our other responses, Grant by your spirit. That Not only would our hearts and Minds be conformed. To your word at this point, but that we would develop this Habit. Of how to respond to seeing others sin. Before we ask all these things in Jesus name, amen.