

“Being Sure of Your Future3”

Part 4

September 29, 2024

Scripture Text: 1 John 5:16-21 ESV **16** If anyone sees his brother committing a sin not leading to death, he shall ask, and God will give him life—to those who commit sins that do not lead to death. There is sin that leads to death; I do not say that one should pray for that. **17** All wrongdoing is sin, but there is sin that does not lead to death. **18** We know that everyone who has been born of God does not keep on sinning, but he who was born of God protects him, and the evil one does not touch him. **19** We know that we are from God, and the whole world lies in the power of the evil one. **20** And we know that the Son of God has come and has given us understanding, so that we may know him who is true; and we are in him who is true, in his Son Jesus Christ. He is the true God and eternal life. **21** Little children, keep yourselves from idols.

VERSE 16: *If anyone sees his brother committing a sin not leading to death, he shall ask, and God will give him life—to those who commit sins that do not lead to death. There is sin that leads to death; I do not say that one should pray for that.*

In our sermon series, John’s first epistle reminds all believers that we have eternal life only in Jesus Christ. He wants us to be confident in our position in Christ and cautions us about two types of sin: one that does not lead to death and another that does.

In **Acts 5**, the sin that led to death was lying to the Holy Spirit. Ananias and Sapphira lied when asked about how much they sold their property for. In **1 Corinthians 11:30**, Paul mentions another example of a sin that leads to death. People who had been abusing the *Lord’s Supper* had become sick, and some even died, not discerning the body or blood of the Lord. These are the only two clear instances in the New Testament of

believers who committed sins unto death. John mentions a sin unto death in his first epistle, but he does not offer any specifics regarding what the sin is. He is speaking of categories of sin, not pointing out specific sins.

We have been instructed to pray confidently, asking God anything according to His will... not allowing sin to hinder our prayers. Psalms 66:18 (“If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me.”) Praying according to His will is to ask for something God has communicated to us that He desires. What does the Lord desire? **From the beginning, God wants a relationship with every human being created in His image and Likeness!** God wants every person to live eternally in His presence! God wants us to fulfill our purpose through humility and the power of the Holy Spirit! God wants us to be like His Son, Jesus Christ, who prayed continually and did the works of the Father!

VERSE 17: *All wrongdoing is sin, but there is sin that does not lead to death.*

Believers must recognize the seriousness of sin, avoid continuing in sin, and pray as God has willed us to. Take note of the qualifier that John (and Jesus) places on prayer (according to His will). God does not promise to do whatever we ask without condition. We should ask God for what He has revealed... and wants for us. When a person sins, not unto death, we can pray for God’s mercy to save and deliver them.

John distinguishes between these two kinds of sin even as he acknowledges that all sin is unrighteousness. The distinction John makes between the sin that does not lead to death and the sin that does lead to death illustrates that there are some requests not according to God’s will. The believer should not expect to be granted these requests because if we’re praying for things outside of God’s will, we should not expect an answer.

VERSE 18 *We know that everyone who has been born of God does not keep on sinning, but he who was born of God protects him, and the evil one does not touch him.*

We who have been born again have the Holy Spirit, who will remind us that we are conforming to the likeness of Christ, and we quickly repent. In the battle against sin, we must keep our minds on who we are in Jesus Christ. If we are **born of Him**, we have the resources to be free from habitual sin: 1. **The Holy Spirit** 2. **The Word of God** 3. **Continual prayers!** These three resources make us more than conquerors over the enemy's weapons.

When the enemy comes to snatch our joy, the sweet fruit of peace prevails, and patience embraces our soul as we wait upon the Lord to renew our strength. We think about the Lord's lovingkindness, praising Him for His goodness and faithfulness in interceding on our behalf.

VERSE 19: *We know that we are from God, and the whole world lies in the power of the evil one.*

We lived a sinful life before Christ, and there was a drastic change when we repented and received Him. He forgave, cleansed, filled us with love, and removed the darkness from our lives. **2 Corinthians 5:17:**
“Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold all things have become new.”

Knowing this means we can be free to be who we are in Jesus and not be controlled by the world's systems. With the abiding presence of the Holy Spirit, we speak the truth in Love to one another. We want to always walk and abide in God's will so that unbelievers witness our good works and glorify our Heavenly Father.

We are **born of Him**, set apart from the world, and sealed with the Holy Spirit—we are no longer **under the power of the wicked one**, even though the **whole world** still is. The world calls good evil and evil good. Some have hearts filled with the pride of life as they lie and deceive one another unto death.

VERSE 20 *And we know that the Son of God has come and has given us understanding, so that we may know him who is true; and we are in*

him who is true, in his Son Jesus Christ. He is the true God and eternal life.

John summarizes his letter by saying, We Know – Greek (Ginosko) means knowing Christ through experiential knowledge, Knowing Christ through sensory perception, Knowing Christ by personal relationship, and Knowing God in Christ intimately and spiritually.

After being saved, we give the Lord the right of way in our Hearts. **Philippians 2:13** says, “*For it is God who works in us to will and to do for His good pleasure.*” He works in us with blessings upon blessings, so we should, without fail, want to choose what pleases Him. Lord, be glorified in all that we say and do!

VERSE 21: *Little children, keep yourselves from idols.*

Endearingly, he closes his letter by saying, “*Little children, keep yourselves from idols.*” We can only have a *real relationship* with the God who is *there*! Idolatry, whether apparent (praying to a statue) or subtle (living for your career or someone other than God), will always choke out a real relationship with God and damage our relationships with our brothers and sisters in Jesus. **Keeping ourselves from idols** is how we *protect* our relationship with God.

APPLICATIONS:

The only reason not to receive eternal life is to reject God’s gift in His son.

The forgiveness of God is the cure for man’s infernal affliction.