

The First Epistle of John

(Week 55 – 1John 5:16-17)

Text: 1John 5:16-17 (ESV), *“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.”*

- I. **Review: Christian Certainties**
 - A. We can know if we have eternal life (1John 5:13)
 - B. We can confidently approach the throne of God and know that He hears us
 - 1. Biblical prayer is not trying to talk God into giving us what we want
 - 2. Prayer is submitting our will to His!
 - a. Praying for His will to be done requires trusting in Him!
 - b. We can confidently know that God does not ignore our requests
 - i. God loves us and knows what is best!
- II. **Pray Correctly**
 - A. We need to learn how to pray (Luke 11:1) and what to pray for
 - 1. Matthew 6:9-13
 - a. In prayer:
 - i. We address God as our Heavenly Father
 - ii. We ask that His will to be done
 - iii. We recognize our dependency on Him for everything that sustains us
 - iv. We confess sin and seek His mercy (realizing that He forgives us in the same manner as we forgive others)
 - v. We ask Him to lead us into paths that please Him
 - vi. We ask Him to protect us from Satan
 - B. But prayer is not just about us
 - 1. Our confidence in prayer applies to intercessory prayers as well
 - a. John tells us to be quick to pray for those caught up in sin...
 - i. 1John 5:16a, *“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...”*
 - 1. Isn't it encouraging that some of us may have repented of foolish ways because someone was laboring over us in prayer?
 - Epaphras was a man who wrestled in prayer for the spiritual welfare of his brothers at Colossae (Col. 4:12)
 - 2. Here is a painfully honest question: How often have we seen someone drifting in the wrong direction and simply looked the other way?
 - 3. Here are four things we need to realize:
 - Every Christian is our brother, not our competitor
 - a. We must be careful not to harbor a spirit of envy
 - b. It is easy to allow ourselves to secretly delight in the failings of others so we can “look” better.
 - c. We must always repent of such attitudes.
 - No sin is minor
 - a. John says in verse 17 that all wrongdoing is sin
 - b. Sin moves us away from fellowship with God

- c. The sooner we pray for someone caught up in sin, the better!
 - When one member suffers, we all suffer (1Cor. 12:26)
 - a. When someone falls into sin, it reflects on the whole community!
 - b. When someone is caught up in sin, it impacts our fellowship
 - c. In the OT, the nation of Israel suffered because of the sin of even one individual:
 - i. In Joshua 7, Israel was being defeated by her enemies because one Israelite, Achan, secretly hid some of Jericho's accursed property in his tent.
 - d. Sin hinders God's Spirit from working in our midst.
 - If you love someone, you will be concerned for that person should they fall into sin
 - a. Throughout 1John, we been learning that those who are born of God love each other (1John 4:7)
 - b. If we really care and love those who are caught in sin, the first thing we must do is pray for them.
- b. 1John 5:16b, "*There is sin that leads to death; I do not say that one should pray for that.*"
 - i. **John mentions sins not leading to death and sin that lead to death:**
Question: What is meant by "there is sin that leads to death?"
 1. Some common understandings:
 - If "death" is understood as physical death:
 - a. If it's God's will that a certain sin ends in physical death, then do not pray for God to impart physical life to that person:
 - i. Example #1: Uzzah in 2Samuel 6. He touched the Ark and his sin lead to physical death.
 - ii. Example #2: The man who gathered sticks on the Sabbath in Numbers 15: His sin lead to physical death.
 - iii. Example #3: There were some people taking the Lord's Supper in an unworthy manner, resulting in their physical death (1Cor. 11:29-30)
 - If "death" is understood as spiritual death:
 - a. The unpardonable sin: Blaspheming the Holy Spirit
 - i. In Matthew 12:31-32, Jesus said that those who speak against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven.
 - b. The false teachers: Gnostics
 - i. These persons denied the deity of Jesus and acted immorally
 - ii. Such men were teaching doctrines of demons and their consciences have been seared (cf. 1Timothy 4:1-2)