

Rom. 14:19 So then let us follow after things which make for peace, and things whereby we may edify one another.

THE LENEXA EDIFIER

John 8:32 And ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free.

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DAVID...VENGEANCE...PURE HEART

Jim Stauffer

Psa. 116:5 *Gracious is Jehovah, and righteous; Yea, our God is merciful.* The very concept of righteousness precludes personal vengeance. Vengeance is meted out by an objective authority such as a ruler ordained of God. **(Rom. 13:3,4)** Or it can be appropriately taken by the righteous judge of all, God, Himself. **(Rom. 12:17-19)**

We have all heard people make such comments as "I don't get mad, I get even." There is a natural urge to get immediate justice when we have been wronged. But God has censored that action by willing vengeance to be taken by divinely ordained authorities as mentioned above. The best answer I have heard to quiet this urge came from a preacher several years ago. He questioned why a child of God would want to lower himself to the level of his enemy by "getting even with him."

John says we know we love God when we keep His commandments. **1John 2:3** *And hereby we know that we know him, if we keep his commandments.* **4** *He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him;* **5** *but whoso keepeth his word, in him verily hath the love of God been perfected. Hereby we know that we are in him:* **6** *he that saith he abideth in him ought himself also to walk even as he walked.* This is the principle that must rule our lives if we are to obey His command to leave vengeance to Him.

David serves as an excellent example of what we should be. He had been pursued by King Saul to the point he became a wanderer to preserve his life. Saul was jealous of David and resented his successes and his approval by the people. It is worthy of note then that David resisted the urge for vengeance by remembering Saul was God's anointed. **1 Sam. 26:8** *Then said Abishai to David, God hath delivered up thine enemy into thy hand this day: now therefore let me smite him, I pray thee, with the spear to the earth at one stroke, and I will not smite him the second time.* **9** *And David said to Abishai, Destroy him not; for who can put forth his hand against Jehovah's anointed, and be guiltless?* His first loyalty was to God and therefore, even though another man had wronged him, he was able through his love for God to obey.

As we can see so readily in the life of David a pure heart was where his ability to submit to God originated. Jesus says it is the way to a permanent relationship with God. **Matt. 5:8** *Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God.* And Paul tells Timothy it is central to the preacher who accepts the charge of sustaining the truth of the gospel. **1 Tim. 1:5** *But the end of the charge is love out of a pure heart and a good conscience and faith unfeigned:* On the contrary, Jesus teaches a special lesson to the Pharisees about the heart. They were far more concerned about the superficial things such as eating with unwashed hands. **Matt. 15:12, 18-20** *Then came the disciples, and said unto him, Knowest thou that the Pharisees were offended, when they heard this saying?.....18 But the things which proceed out of the mouth come forth out of the heart; and they defile the man.19 For out of the heart come forth evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, railings:20 these are the things which defile the man; but to eat with unwashed hands defileth not the man.*

The concept of love and obedience to God was clearly enunciated by David. He had sinned against both Uriah and Bathsheba when he committed fornication with her and subsequently arranged for the death of Uriah so he could marry her in an attempt to hide his sin. He says in **Psa. 51:4** *Against thee, thee only, have I sinned.....* He recognized before his actions wronged any man, he had violated his trust with God through the impure thoughts of his heart. Jesus explains such sin, **Matt. 5:27** *Ye have heard that it was said, Thou shalt not commit adultery: 28 but I say unto you, that every one that looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart.*

Our role as the light of the world and salt of the earth is one that can be seen in our lives. **(Mat. 5:13-16)** We must be able to rise above the crowd. We cannot allow ourselves to follow, but must lead by our example. **2 Cor. 6:17** *Wherefore Come ye out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, And touch no unclean thing; And I will receive you,*

There is nothing more visible than the ability to suffer personally to benefit the cause of Christ. The

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simple fact is this. Furthering the message of Christ is more important than my personal feeling of justice.

2 Tim. 1:8 *Be not ashamed therefore of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me his prisoner: but suffer hardship with the gospel according to the power of God;*

My desire for justice can be expressed to God in prayer where I not only cast my care on Him, but leave vengeance to His will. (**1 Pet. 5:7; Phil. 4:6**)

STUDIES IN 1st JOHN

By Randy Harshbarger
DEEP DESIRE

“Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world--the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life--is not of the Father but is of the world. And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever” (1 John 2:15-17).

What is the deepest desire of your heart? What are you passionate about? What drives you, motivates you, animates your life, your thinking, your actions? What do you love? John says that we should not love the world. This world is not the universe in which we live; that world is the creation of God and is good (**Genesis 1:31**). And the world John speaks of is not people—men and women, humanity. That world is the world for whom Jesus died (**John 3:16**). The world John speaks of is the world of sin; it is the spiritual sphere that is under the control of the evil one. John says that this world loves the darkness. *“And this is the condemnation, that the light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil” (John 3:19)*. This is the world Christians have been called out of. Many passages tell us that a change has occurred in our lives. That change is seen when our lives, our actions, our motivations change. And they change in very practical ways (**Colossians 3:5ff**).

It may have been that John had in view the Gnostics. These people said that the world was evil because an evil god created it. They had only disdain for everything in the world. One result of this mindset is that they repudiated the humanity of Jesus. Jesus claimed to be God in the flesh. How, though, can God be clothed with a body of flesh—flesh that is sinful? Another result of this view is that the Gnostics basically said that it did not matter how you lived, or what you did. The flesh is sinful, so go ahead and indulge the flesh (**cf. Colossians 2:18-23**).

The Christian has to decide what world he or she will live in. Actually, the Christian should have already made up his or her mind about the matter. When we obey the gospel, we are saying that we are turning from sin, we are living for Christ, and that the world of darkness is repugnant to us. We want to walk in the light of God’s word. Sadly, though, the lure of the world is still strong for many. And it was so in John’s time.

Let us remember that if we love this world the love of the Father cannot be in us. The two are mutually exclusive. We cannot serve God and mammon

(**Matthew 6:24**). To strike a friendship with the world is to be at odds with God (**James 4:4**).

What are the desires of your heart? What do you get excited about? Is it sports? Education? Money? What takes up most of your time? What do you talk about more than anything else?

John says that the world of sin, of darkness, of the evil one is antagonistic to a right relationship with the Father. The world contaminates us and that relationship. What is this world John speaks of?

First, there is the lust of the flesh. The word lust is used here in a bad sense. It signifies something that is forbidden. *“Therefore God also gave them up to uncleanness, in the lusts of their hearts, to dishonor their bodies among themselves” (Romans 1:24)*. These are the passions of the flesh (**2 Peter 2:18**). John is not speaking about our need for water, food, or shelter; these are normal and natural. He means desires that are fulfilled in sinful ways. James speaks to this by saying: *“But each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed. Then, when desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, brings forth death” (1:14-15)*.

The lust of the eyes suggest that we might yield to temptation from things we see. Jesus said: “But I say to you that whoever looks at a woman to lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart (**Mat. 5:28**). We might “see” and then be attracted to the flesh, to pride, greed, covetousness—the list goes on.

The pride of life needs some definition. Pride can mean arrogance, boastfulness, or ostentatiousness. John is saying that we can get caught up in this life—in the pursuit of this life whatever those pursuits might be—because we think that is what life is really about. *“But whoever has this world’s goods, and sees his brother in need, and shuts up his heart from him, how does the love of God abide in him?” (1 John 3:17)*. We seek the goods of this world (money, cars, houses, etc.) and then boast about it. Why? Because for us, these things are important. They show what kind of heart we really have. Rather than giving thanks to God for all that we have, we boast and act as if it is because of our own doing, our own power, that we have what we have.

“Thou hast created us for thyself, and our heart is not quiet until it rests in thee” (words of Augustine, Bishop of Hippo, AD 354-430). These words expressed the desires of Augustine’s heart. His expressed desire did not come easily. An early hedonistic lifestyle, though, soon gave way to his pursuit of God. And so, he came to realize that only in God can mankind find true rest. What do you find rest in? What are the pursuits of your life?

John says that the pursuit of this world can only lead to ruin. This world is passing away. Why, then, do we so enthusiastically chase after the things of this world? We sometimes think that these “things” will make us happy, only to soon realize that we are not happy, satisfied, or fulfilled. So, we start off on another pursuit of some kind.

The world we live in was created by the power of God’s word. Believing that is an important part of Biblical faith. **Genesis 1:1**: *“In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.”* We must also have

faith that this world will one day come to an end. *"But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in which the heavens will pass away with a great noise, and the elements will melt with fervent heat; both the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up"* (2 Peter 3:10).

It is not only this material universe that will be burned up, it is also the world of the flesh, of lusts, of pride. When these are the consuming elements of our lives, let us remember that they will come to an end. And we will come to that certain end, too. That is, we will pass into eternity having failed to hold on to God and His word. When we emphasize this world and its goods, we will lose them. In fact, we don't know it, but we have already lost them. Jesus said: *"For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it. For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul? For the Son of Man will come in the glory of His Father with His angels, and then He will reward each according to his works."* (Mat. 16:25-27)

What are the desires of your heart? You can participate in the blessings of Christ and anticipate heavenly joy when this world comes to an end. Serve God faithfully now. Blessings will come. Fellowship now with God is a foretaste of glory to come. That should be our consuming desire.

"What is a Sin unto Death?"

by Wayne Greeson

1 John 5:14-17 is an often discussed and debated passage. What is a sin unto death? The simple answer to the question is: a sin of which one will not repent. (And likewise, a sin not unto death, is a sin of which one does repent.)

This answer is based upon interpreting this text in light of the rest of the scripture. The best way to understand one text is to understand it's immediate context and then look at the rest of the scriptures. The immediate context does not define a "sin unto death." John is discussing intercessory prayer and assumes his reader knows what he means. So we must go to the rest of the scriptures.

The subject of **1 John 5:14-17** is prayer (see, vss. **14-15**). The subject of verses sixteen and seventeen is praying for a brother in sin. One is to pray (a pray of intercession) for a brother who sins a "sin not unto death" and God will "give him life." If a brother sins a "sin unto death," John says "I do not say that he shall pray for it." John is not promising prayer for a brother's "sin unto death" will "give him life."

What makes the difference in God answering my prayer on behalf of my brother in sin? The attitude of my brother in sin. God will not forgive my brother's sin without his repentance. This is exactly what James says, *"Brethren, if anyone among you wanders from the truth, and someone turns him back, 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"* (Jas. 5:19-20). The word "repent" simply means "to turn." John's warning about not interceding in prayer for those in "sin

unto death" is also found in the prophets: *"Therefore pray not thou for this people, neither lift up cry nor prayer for them, neither make intercession to me: for I will not hear thee"* (Jer. 7:16). *"Then said the Lord unto me, Though Moses and Samuel stood before me, yet my mind could not be toward this people: cast them out of my sight, and let them go forth"* (Jer. 15:1). God had called his people to repentance and they refused. Thus, he tells his prophet that intercessory prayer will not bring forgiveness to these people.

The scriptures teach that the consequence of sin is "death," that is separation from God (**Rom. 6:23; Eph. 2:1; 1 Tim. 5:6**). When one repents in "godly sorrow," he "turns from" of his sin and comes out of "death," and into life. *"Now I rejoice, not that you were made sorry, but that your sorrow led to repentance. For you were made sorry in a godly manner, that you might suffer loss from us in nothing. For godly sorrow produces repentance to salvation, not to be regretted; but the sorrow of the world produces death"* (2 Cor. 7:9-10).

The best passage to illustrate that a "sin unto death" is a sin one will not repent of is **Ezekiel 18 and 33**. *"Behold, all souls are Mine; the soul of the father as well as the soul of the son is Mine; the soul who sins shall die"* (Ezk. 18:4). *"Therefore you, O son of man, say to the children of your people: 'The righteousness of the righteous man shall not deliver him in the day of his transgression; as for the wickedness of the wicked, he shall not fall because of it in the day that he turns from his wickedness; nor shall the righteous be able to live because of his righteousness in the day that he sins.' When I say to the righteous that he shall surely live, but he trusts in his own righteousness and commits iniquity, none of his righteous works shall be remembered; but because of the iniquity that he has committed, he shall die. Again, when I say to the wicked, 'You shall surely die,' if he turns from his sin and does what is lawful and right, if the wicked restores the pledge, gives back what he has stolen, and walks in the statutes of life without committing iniquity, he shall surely live; he shall not die. None of his sins which he has committed shall be remembered against him; he has done what is lawful and right; he shall surely live"* (Ezk. 33:12-16).

I believe one can see a "sin unto death" and a "sin not unto death" herein without further comment.

Where you are on the road is not as important as which way you are headed.

If you will listen to some incessant talkers you will decide that practice does not make perfect.

Straight living cannot come out of crooked thinking.

If no one ever abused you because he could not use you, I fear you let him use you.

R.L. Whiteside

Eph. 2:19 So then ye are no more strangers and sojourners, but ye are fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God, 20 being built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the chief corner stone; 21 in whom each several building, fitly framed together, groweth into a holy temple in the Lord;

1Pet. 2:9 But ye are an elect race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession, that ye may show forth the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvellous light:

Psa. 1:1 Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the wicked, Nor standeth in the way of sinners, Nor sitteth in the seat of scoffers: 2 But his delight is in the law of Jehovah; And on his law doth he meditate day and night. 3 And he shall be like a tree planted by the streams of water, That bringeth forth its fruit in its season, Whose leaf also doth not wither; And whatsoever he doeth shall prosper. 4 The wicked are not so, But are like the chaff which the wind driveth away. 5 Therefore the wicked shall not stand in the judgment, Nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous. 6 For Jehovah knoweth the way of the righteous; But the way of the wicked shall perish.

HOURS OF WORSHIP

Sunday A.M. 9:30 Bible Study

Sunday A.M. 10:20 Assembled Worship

Sunday P.M. 5:00 Assembled Worship

Wednesday P.M. 7:00 Bible Study and Worship

Visitors welcome

We conduct in home Bible Studies

We offer Correspondence Courses

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SICK IN NEED OF PRAYERS:

J.R. DANIEL, PAT CLOTHIER AND LILLIE KEECH CONTINUE THEIR RESPECTIVE RECOVERIES. JAN PATRICK AND IRENE HURD CONTINUE TO SUFFER POOR HEALTH. LINDA FOSTER AND MARY CZIRR ARE BOTH AT SWEET LIFE ASSISTED LIVING. PLEASE REMEMBER OUR BELOVED FRIEND, LORETTA TAPP IN YOUR PRAYERS AS SHE UNDERGOES CHEMOTHERAPY.

LET US PREPARE OUR SCHEDULES AND EFFORTS TO BRING OTHERS TO OUR GOSPEL MEETING, SEPT. 21-24



What Must I Do To Be Saved?

Hear the gospel - Romans 10:17

Believe in Jesus Christ - Hebrews 11:6

Repent of sins - Acts 17:30

Confess Christ as Lord - Romans 10:9,10

Be Baptized for remission of sins

Acts 2:38

Be Faithful unto death - Revelation 2:10