

The Sin Unto Death

1 John 5:16

1. When we (born-again believers) follow after the lusts of the flesh, we experience operational death [Rom 8:5-8].
2. God's initial response to believers who are operationally dead is to administer discipline [Heb 12:4-11] to bring about repentance [Rev 3:19].
3. Believers can choose to ignore God's hand of discipline, become enslaved to sin, return to their vomit and wallow in the mire [2 Pet 2:19-22].
4. Even in this terrible condition, the human spirit is still alive and able to respond to a convicting message.
5. If we (born-again believers) continue in our sin, in spite of His attempts to correct our behavior through divine discipline, God may eventually give us over to the lusts of the flesh, perhaps even to the point of our own physical death [Pr 11:19; 19:16; 1 Cor 11:30].
6. God wants us to experience living grace and dying grace, but some believers stray so far from the path that their lives end in darkness.
7. If someone is truly facing the sin unto death, then God knows that he will not repent before dying.
8. We are commanded to pray for believers we see who are mired in sin not leading to physical death.
9. Since we cannot know whether or not God has given someone over, we should pray for all believers we see who are enslaved to sin.

10. Through prayer and admonishment, the spiritual believer can help restore the one who has been caught up in sin [Gal 6:1-2; 1 Th 5:14; 2 Th 3:15].
11. God does the restoring, raising up the believer and forgiving his sins [James 5:14-16].
12. The restored believer will once again be sowing to the Spirit and reaping eternal life [Gal 6:7-8].
13. Sowing and reaping in this passage refers to the believer's production, not a mechanism for unbelievers to receive salvation [Eph 2:8-9].
14. Reaping eternal life taking hold of the eternal life to which we have been called [1 Tim 6:12] and refers to a mode of living for believers here on this earth.
15. This is the "life" that God grants to those we pray for [1 John 5:16].
16. In regard to our own dealings with sin, just knowing that it is possible to die the sin unto death should motivate us to recognize sin in our lives as soon as possible and be restored to fellowship with God thru repentance and confession [1 John 1:9].
17. We must never try to rationalize our own behavior...
 - a. Everything we do that violates God's standard of righteousness constitutes sin.
 - b. This takes place when we reject God's authority as Lawgiver [Jas 4:12] and insert our own law in place of what God's word clearly spells out for us.