

LEAVE THEM ALONE

1 John 5:16-17

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1 John 5:16-17 Ἐάν τις ἴδῃ τὸν ἀδελφὸν αὐτοῦ ἁμαρτάνοντα ἁμαρτίαν μὴ πρὸς θάνατον, αἰτήσῃ καὶ δώσει αὐτῷ ζωὴν, τοῖς ἁμαρτάνουσιν μὴ πρὸς θάνατον. ἔστιν ἁμαρτία πρὸς θάνατον· οὐ περὶ ἐκείνης λέγω ἵνα ἐρωτήσῃ. ¹⁷ πᾶσα ἀδικία ἁμαρτία ἐστίν, καὶ ἔστιν ἁμαρτία οὐ πρὸς θάνατον.

1 John 5:16-17 If anyone sees his brother committing a sin not leading to death, he shall ask, and God¹ 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.

0. INTRODUCTION: THE PLACE FOR WARNINGS

In 1 John we read that some sins lead to death. We need to be led by the Spirit in discernment. On one hand – let them alone, on the other hand, don't have a judgmental attitude. E.g. – the Pharisees – Jesus let them alone (didn't wait till they were all His disciples...), but with tears, not with judgment.

It's important to realize that when someone doesn't follow Christ it may not be my fault (I haven't witnessed enough, I haven't prayed enough, etc. etc.).

0.1. THE NEED FOR SERIOUSNESS

- life seen as "having fun"
- the highest place for "happiness" - no suffering!
 - We need to take the questions of faith seriously – sin is a very real and serious part of Christian living
 - Jesus carried our sins away – we can hope for eternity with God, but sin still influences our lives, relationships, can influence our future

0.2. THE NEED FOR DEPENDENCE ON GOD

- evangelism as "science" - faith in *methods* instead of waiting on God
- → "science" of church growth
- "magic wand" faith in miraculous
 - Let us not depend on what we've learned (on a method) – it will become our idol
 - We need to depend on God and His guidance (in the context of 1 John: when working and serving other people)

1. FAITH: ITS BEGINNING IN REPENTANCE

- **Matthew 15:12-14** Then the disciples came and said to him, "Do you know that the Pharisees were offended when they heard this saying?" ¹³ He answered, "Every plant that my heavenly Father has not planted will be rooted up. ¹⁴ **Let them alone**; they are blind guides.¹ And if the blind lead the blind, both will fall into a pit."

1.1. MEN-PLEASERS

- cover up: **Lk 12:1** "Beware of the **leaven** of the **Pharisees**, which is hypocrisy.
- **John 5:44** How can you believe, when you receive glory from one another and do not seek the glory that comes from the only God?

1.2. MEN'S RULES IN WORSHIP

- **Mark 7:7** in vain do they worship me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men

1.3. REAL FAITH:

- Uncovering your sin: **Psalms 32:3-5** ...when *I kept silent*, my bones wasted away through my groaning all day long. ⁴ For day and night your hand was heavy upon me; my strength was dried up¹ as by the heat

of summer. Selah ⁵ I acknowledged my sin to you, and I did not cover my iniquity; I said, "I will confess my transgressions to the LORD," and you forgave the iniquity of my sin. Selah

- pleasing God: **Acts 5:29** We must obey God rather than men.
 - If praise and glory are my primary motives (or finances etc.) I can't be a godly person
 - If my faith hasn't grown from God's seed in my heart (or someone's), it's useless to "water it" (e.g. we might spend hours and hours doing discipleship with someone who hasn't been rooted in God and can't believe (like the Pharisees).

2. FAITH: ITS "FUEL"

- **Hos 4:17** Ephraim (*northern Israel*) is *joined to idols*; leave him alone. (חִבּוּר עֲצָבִים אֲפָרִים הִנְחִילוּ)
- **Gal 5:6** For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision counts for anything, but only *faith working through love*.
 - "joined" – term used also for marriage
 - Idolatry always consists of admiration, sacrifice or both:

2.1. IDOLS: ADMIRATION

- **Revelation 13:3-4** One of its heads seemed to have a mortal wound, but its mortal wound was healed, and the whole earth marveled as they followed the beast. ⁴ And they worshiped the dragon, for he had given his authority to the beast, and they worshiped the beast, saying, "Who is like the beast, and who can fight against it?"

2.2. IDOLS: SACRIFICE

- **Matthew 23:15** Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you travel across sea and land to make a single proselyte, and when he becomes a proselyte, you make him twice as much a child of hell¹ as yourselves.

2.3. WORSHIPPING THE REAL GOD

- **2 Thess 1:10** when he comes on that day to be *glorified* in his saints, and to be *marveled at* among all who have believed
- **Phil 3:8** I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ
- **Phil 3:17-19** Brothers, join in imitating me, and keep your eyes on those who walk according to the example you have in us. ¹⁸ For many, of whom I have often told you and now tell you even with tears, walk as *enemies of the cross of Christ*. ¹⁹ Their end is destruction, *their god is their belly*, and they glory in their shame, *with minds set on earthly things*.
 - what idols do to us: PSALM 115,4-8 ...those who make them will be like them... (deaf, blind...) = unable to hear God
 - Jesus says (Matt 5:16): ...they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven = God alone is worthy of praise and glory and sacrifice

3. FAITH: ITS GOAL

- **2 Thes 3:6** Now we command you, brothers, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you keep away from any brother who is *walking in idleness* and not in accord with the tradition that you received from us.
- **2 Tim 3:5** having the appearance of godliness, but denying its power. Avoid such people.
- **1 Tim 6:5** useless wranglings of men of *corrupt minds* and *destitute of the truth*, who suppose that godliness is a *means of gain*. *From such withdraw yourself*.
 - Faith is looking for eternity and not for a present gain
 - We're here to wait and prepare for Jesus' perfect world

3.1. ETERNITY PAST AND FUTURE

- **Eph 1:4** as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world,
- **2 Peter 1:10** Therefore, brothers, be all the more diligent to make your *calling* and *election* sure, for if you practice these qualities you will never fall.

3.2. FAITH IS WAITING

- **1 Thes 1:9-10** For they themselves report concerning us the kind of reception we had among you, and how you turned to God from idols to *serve* the living and true God, ¹⁰ and *to wait for his Son* from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, Jesus who delivers us from the wrath to come.

4. CONCLUSIONS

- Check up the foundations of the faith you are trying to build up in yourself or in others.
- Make sure the motives and the empowering comes from the right source: love of God and complete commitment to Jesus.
- Direct your faith towards eternity – count this life as preparation for something much greater.