

Does the Bible Say That?

I John 5:16-19

The Issue: I John 5:16 – “sin [leading] to death”

Questions & Definitions

1. What is sin? (*harmartia*, #266)
 - Why “sin” and not “a sin”?
2. What is sin that does not lead to death?
3. What is sin leading to death?
4. Do verses 17-19 shed any light on the question?
5. What other teachings in I John might help us determine the meaning of these categories of sin?
6. Practically speaking, how do we distinguish between “sin leading to death” and “sin not leading to death”?

Application

- This is a passage about praying for others. How can one person pray for another person that he sees sinning and God will give him life? Does this alter the instructions Jesus gives in Matthew 18:15-18?
- Is there there personal value in knowing that there is sin that does not led to death? What do we do with that knowledge?

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.

Lit., v. 16 — if anyone sees the brother of him sinning sin not to death he will ask and he will give to him life to the ones sinning not to death. There is sin to death not about that do I say that you should ask.

*Lit., “does not sin” (see I John 3:9, NASB)