119 MINISTRIES

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Does Hebrews 10:26 Mean What it Says? (Responding to Matt McMillen)

"Hebrews 10:26—the deliberately keep on sinning passage—is not describing a Christian. You could literally sin every second of the day until the day you die as a Christian, and you are still forgiven."

Hey, thanks for the video. I'd like to pushback on a couple of things you said. First, you said that Hebrews 10:26 is not describing a Christian—that is, a follower of Christ. But the text itself makes it clear that the warning in this verse is directed toward believers. Let's take a look:

Hebrews 10:26-27

> For if **we** go on sinning deliberately **after receiving the knowledge of the truth**, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, but a fearful expectation of judgment, and a fury of fire that will consume the adversaries.

There are two things we should notice here. First, the author uses the pronoun "we," meaning he includes himself in the warning. He's saying that if we—including himself—go on sinning deliberately, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins. Obviously, the author of Hebrews is himself a follower of the Messiah. So it makes no sense for this verse to be addressing unbelievers when the author includes himself in the warning.

Second, this warning is directed toward those who go on sinning deliberately "*after* receiving the knowledge of the truth." In other words, after they have become Christians. Elsewhere in Scripture, receiving the knowledge of the truth is associated with believing the "gospel" and being "saved":

Ephesians 1:13

> In him you also, when **you heard the word of truth**, **the gospel of your salvation**, and believed in him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit.

1 Timothy 2:3-4

> This is good, and it is pleasing in the sight of God our Savior, who desires all people to be **saved** and to **come to the knowledge of the truth**.

Beyond this, the immediate context confirms that the author is addressing believers. Just a few verses earlier, the author addresses his readers as "brothers" who have confidence to enter the holy place through the Messiah's blood (Hebrews 10:19). He exhorts them to "draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith" (Hebrews 10:22). He also says, "Let us hold fast the confession of our hope" (Hebrews 10:23), "Let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works" (Hebrews 10:24), and then urges his readers not to neglect meeting together (Hebrews 10:25). These exhortations in the previous verses are clearly directed toward believers, and the text gives no indication that the author suddenly shifts from addressing believers to addressing unbelievers.

So again, the text is clear that the author's warning is directed toward followers of the Messiah. He says, "If we keep on sinning deliberately after receiving the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, but a fearful expectation of judgment" (Hebrews 10:26).

This is a serious warning for believers, and we must take it seriously. We shouldn't dismiss it as irrelevant or explain it away. That's why your second statement—that we can "literally sin every second of the day"—is so concerning. That is precisely what this passage warns against.

The text says, "if we go on sinning deliberately…" This points to a way of life characterized by deliberate sin. So the warning is not about an isolated act of sin or the daily battle against temptation, where believers stumble, repent, and continue following God. It's about a deliberate, willful decision to persist in sin as a pattern of life. As the author goes on to say, a person who goes on sinning deliberately is trampling underfoot the Son of God, profaning his blood, and insulting the Spirit of grace (Hebrews 10:29). If someone has received the knowledge of the truth and yet continues living in willful rebellion against God, they are in serious danger. They need to repent. So why are you reassuring people that they can "literally sin every second of the day" when Scripture warns against precisely that?

And it's not just this passage in Hebrews. Scripture is consistent on this point:

Romans 6:1-2

> What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin that grace may abound? By no means! How can we who died to sin still live in it?
>
> (See also 1 John 2:1-2)

"…because only blood forgives. That's why Hebrews 9:22 says, without the shedding of blood, there is no forgiveness."

Yes, we are forgiven on the basis of Christ's shed blood on the cross. But the author of Hebrews goes on to say that we can profane that blood:

Hebrews 10:28-29

> Anyone who has set aside the law of Moses dies without mercy on the evidence of two or three witnesses. How much worse punishment, do you think, will be deserved by the one who has trampled underfoot the Son of God, and has **profaned the blood of the covenant** by which he was sanctified, and has outraged the Spirit of grace?

As we can see, the author says that those who continue sinning deliberately "profane the blood of the covenant by which [they were] sanctified." This is significant because, just a few verses earlier, he declares that we have been sanctified through Messiah's sacrifice (Hebrews 10:10, 14). Once again, the

warning is clearly directed toward believers. The author is warning those who have been sanctified by the blood of the Messiah not to continue living in deliberate sin and thereby profane the very blood by which they were sanctified.

"Well, Jesus is no longer shedding his blood for any more of your sins, so you're completely forgiven."

Yes, we are forgiven on the basis of the Messiah's once-for-all sacrifice. The author of Hebrews says that the Messiah "had offered for all time a single sacrifice for sins" (Hebrews 10:12) and that we have been sanctified through this sacrifice (Hebrews 10:10, 14). But notice that he does not then say, "Therefore it doesn't matter if you literally sin every second of the day; you are still forgiven."

No. He warns us not to go on sinning deliberately and profaning the Messiah's blood.

"In Hebrews chapter ten, the Hebrews did not believe that, and they continued to go to the temple to receive forgiveness by way of animal blood. You are not doing that."

It is a popular interpretation that the author's concern was that Jewish believers were participating in the temple sacrificial system, and that this is the specific sin he is warning against in this passage. However, recent scholarship has shown that this is very unlikely to be the author's concern.

Madison N. Pierce, "Relapsing, Reverting, or Rejecting? The Purpose of Hebrews and Early Jewish Religion," *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* (2026): 1-29.

Matthew Thiessen, "Hebrews and the Jewish Law," in *So Great a Salvation: A Dialogue on the Atonement in Hebrews*, ed. Jon C. Laansma, George H. Guthrie, and Cynthia Long Westfall (New York, NY: T&T Clark, 2019), 183-194.

David M. Moffitt, "Weak and Useless? Purity, the Mosaic Law, and Perfection in Hebrews," in *Law and Lawlessness in Early Judaism and Early Christianity*, ed. David Lincicum, Ruth Sheridan, and Charles Stang (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2019), 89-103.

For one thing, the apostles themselves continued worshiping at the temple every day (Luke 24:53; Acts 2:46; 3:1; 5:42), and Paul even participated in temple rituals that included sacrifices (Acts 21:26; cf. 24:17). Now, as the author of Hebrews makes clear, it is impossible for animal sacrifices to take away sin (Hebrews 10:4, 11). None of the apostles were looking to the sacrificial system as their means of taking away their sin. Only the Messiah's sacrifice could do that. Yet that did not prevent them from continuing to worship at the temple. As Jesper Svartvik writes:

> Jewish Christ-believers continued to worship in the temple up to the very end of the book of Acts. This participation in the cult existed alongside their thinking of and describing Jesus' death as a sacrifice, so the two do not seem to have been understood as mutually exclusive.
>
> —Jesper Svartvik, *Reconciliation & Transformation: Reconsidering Christian Theologies of the Cross* (Eugene, OR: Cascade, 2021), 32-33

If the author of Hebrews were warning believers not to participate in temple worship, he would be at odds with what we see the apostles themselves doing throughout the book of Acts. Moreover, the passage itself does not read like a warning against temple worship. The author doesn't tell his readers to

stop bringing offerings or participating in temple rituals. He tells them to stop sinning deliberately.

For more on this topic, see the teaching, "**Christ's Sacrifice Once For All: Is the Levitical Priesthood Replaced?**"

"You have already trusted in Jesus once in your lifetime by grace. So you are completely forgiven of all your sins. You do not need to be afraid of Hebrews ten twenty six because you are completely forgiven forever."

Actually we *do* need to fear the warning of Hebrews 10:26. That is the entire point of the passage. Just a few verses later, the author declares, "It is a **fearful** thing to fall into the hands of the living God" (Hebrews 10:31).

The author is warning believers not to forsake the Messiah by persisting in deliberate sin, because those who do will face judgment. He says there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins. In other words, persistent, willful rebellion reveals that a person has rejected the Messiah himself, who is the only means of forgiveness. Apart from faith in him, there is no other sacrifice for sins. Grace is not opposed to obedience; it is through grace that we are called to remain faithful to the Messiah rather than reject him.

That should be taken seriously. Yes, God is merciful, and forgiveness is available when we sin. But we must not go on sinning deliberately. We are called to repent, turn away from sin, and pursue holiness. The Christian life is not, "You trusted Jesus once, so you're good." We are called to resist sin and remain faithful to the end. The author of Hebrews says this explicitly:

Hebrews 3:13-14

> But exhort one another every day, as long as it is called "today," that none of you may be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin. For we have come to share in Christ, if indeed we hold our original confidence firm to the end.

So we, likewise, exhort you today not to be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin. This warning in Hebrews 10:26 is not something to be taken lightly.

Hey, thanks again for the video, and I hope you found this response helpful.

We pray you have been blessed by this teaching.
Remember, continue to test everything.
Shalom!

For more on this and other teachings, please visit us at www.testeverything.net

Shalom, and may Yahweh bless you in walking in the whole Word of God.

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