

# Ezekiel 3:21

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Nevertheless if thou warn the righteous man, that the righteous sin not, and he doth not sin, he shall surely live, because he is warned; also thou hast delivered thy soul.

## Analysis

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God promises blessing for warning even the righteous: "if thou warn the righteous man, that the righteous sin not, and he doth not sin, he shall surely live...also thou hast delivered thy soul." This emphasizes ongoing pastoral care, not just evangelism to the lost. The phrase "warn the righteous man, that the righteous sin not" recognizes that even believers need exhortation to persevere in holiness. The Reformed emphasis on progressive sanctification appears here—justification is immediate, but sanctification requires continual growth through the means of grace including faithful preaching, admonition, and warning. The minister's calling includes feeding sheep, not just seeking lost lambs.

## Historical Context

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Among the exiles (593 BC), some genuinely feared God despite the majority's rebellion. These righteous remnant needed strengthening to resist peer pressure, discouragement, and temptation to compromise. Ezekiel's ministry included pastoral encouragement alongside prophetic warning. Jewish tradition emphasized communal accountability, with rabbis responsible for congregational spiritual health. This pattern continued in New Testament church discipline (Matthew 18:15-17) and pastoral oversight (Hebrews 13:17). The principle that ministers must warn even believers against sin reflects the ongoing battle with remaining corruption in this life.

## Related Passages

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**John 15:13** — Greatest form of love

**1 John 4:8** — God is love

## Study Questions

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1. How does this verse emphasize the importance of ongoing exhortation and accountability even for mature believers?
2. What is the pastor's responsibility to warn God's people against specific sins threatening their communities?

## Interlinear Text

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לְבִלְתִּי      צַדִּיק      אַתָּה      רָאַתָּה

H859

H3588

Nevertheless if thou warn

H2094

צַדִּיק

H6662

לְבִלְתִּי

H1115

אַתָּה      צַדִּיק

not and he doth not sin

H2398

צַדִּיק

man that the righteous

H6662

לֹא      אַתָּה      וְ

H1931

H3808

אַתָּה      צַדִּיק

H2398

אַתָּה      צַדִּיק

he shall surely

H2421

אַתָּה      צַדִּיק

he shall surely

H2421

אַתָּה      צַדִּיק

H3588

Nevertheless if thou warn

H2094

אַתָּה      צַדִּיק

H859

H853

נֶפֶשׁ

thy soul

H5315

הַצְלָתָה

also thou hast delivered

H5337

## Additional Cross-References

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**1 Timothy 4:16** (Parallel theme): Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee.

**Proverbs 9:9** (Righteousness): Give instruction to a wise man, and he will be yet wiser: teach a just man, and he will increase in learning.

**1 Corinthians 4:14** (Parallel theme): I write not these things to shame you, but as my beloved sons I warn you.

**James 5:20** (Sin): Let him know, that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins.

**Titus 2:15** (Parallel theme): These things speak, and exhort, and rebuke with all authority. Let no man despise thee.

**Acts 20:31** (Parallel theme): Therefore watch, and remember, that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears.

**Psalms 19:11** (Parallel theme): Moreover by them is thy servant warned: and in keeping of them there is great reward.