

1 Corinthians 6

Verses 1-3:

--Paul has been writing to these believers about judgment inside the church. He had made the point that they were to judge matters *inside* the church and not those *outside*, but now he has to tell them they were not to go *outside* the church to have *inside* matters judged.

--The problem: Christians suing each other!

--(1) ***Dare any of you?*** could also be translated *Have you the courage?* Paul is somewhat shocked that they would have the boldness to proceed on such a course of action.

--***Having a matter*** was something of a technical term for a legal lawsuit.

--Paul cannot believe they are taking fellow brothers and sisters in Christ to court.

--(2) He begins his reproof here with ***Do you not know.*** . . which he will repeat six times in this chapter: **2, 3, 9, 15, 16, 19.** Again, the emphasis is that these are things they should have known on their own at this point and not to have needed instruction or reproof on.

--Paul points to their future as saints and reminds them that they will ***judge the world.*** The Bible clearly teaches that we will be part of the rule and reign over this world along with Jesus Christ (**Ps. 37:13; Dan. 7:22; Mt. 12:42; Jn. 5:45-47; Jude 14-15, etc.**).

2 Timothy 2:12: *If we endure, we shall also reign with Him.*

--He then says, if that is true, how come you cannot deal with ***the smallest matters*** here and now? These things were trivial in the light of God's return and coming kingdom. *Yeah but. . . I have the right to. . . just about everything that we would sue one another for is a trivial thing!*

--(3) Then Paul takes it even a step further and says that they will also judge things in the spiritual realm such as angels.

--The Scriptures show man—as created in the image of God—ruling and reigning with Him even over the good angels and condemning fallen angels. This is our purpose. (**Hebrews 1:14; 2 Peter 2:4; Jude 6**)

--Paul then again argues from the greater to the lesser. If we are going to be a part of the rule and reign of spiritual and eternal things then are we not in the position to faithfully deal with temporal and natural things?

Verses 4-6:

--Here Paul says it would be better if they stood before even the least esteemed saint than an unsaved judge. And speaks to their shame—especially as a fellowship proud of their wisdom!—that they cannot find a wise man in the congregation to help deal with situations.

--The ultimate problem is that ***brother goes to law against brother!*** Again, this is not saying we cannot ever be in a court of law or use the local governments of the day. Certainly we know that Paul did so. Sometimes we have to as others are taking us there and the choice is not our own—or must legally for marriage or child custody or divorce etc.

--That said. Paul is making the point that a trial between two believers in unsaved courts is no *innocent* matter. Paul would be just as shocked today at any Christian thinking that it is.

Verses 7-8:

--Here Paul lays down his reasoning and gives the needed rebuke.

--Any Christian who takes another Christian to court to sue over something has already lost! Even if the legal issue gets settled, and you get your money or property or “fair share,” you don’t actually win. *You have accepted a win for yourself at the cost of a loss for Christ.*

--Some might say: *What would you have me to do?* Paul says very clearly—Take the financial loss! **Accept wrong. Be cheated.** Be a witness for Christ and lose physical goods.

--Now, if suffering wrong was evil, Christ would not have given us that example nor would He have commanded us to follow that example as He clearly did.

--(I will simply add here that even in this scenario the believer is not totally run-over because if the church is involved both parties will be held accountable *in the church*. So church discipline is still on the table for the wrongful party who refuses to agree to the church’s judgment.)

--The reality for Paul is that our place in God’s kingdom—our identity in Christ—is more important than our immediate comfort or identity in this world that we are strangers and pilgrims in. *We are to be more than saved. We are to be salt and light.*

Verses 9-11:

--This may seem like a strange transition but it is both perspective and warning for these Christians. They are to identify with their life in Christ and not as what they used to be outside of Christ. Doing so would change the way they look at everything—especially suing fellow believers before unsaved judges.

--Paul makes it clear that ***the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God***. Paul is clearly stating who will and who will not get to heaven.

--Then he adds: ***Do not be deceived!*** Why? Because people are always being deceived about this! There will always be a legion of excuses as to why a person can live in these immoral categories and still go to heaven.

-Religious ritual on Saturday or Sunday will exempt me from how I live godless and ungodly the rest of the week; having sex outside of marriage or as a drunkard at the bar and at home.

-I have some justifiable right to my theft, covetousness, or extortion of others. Some even go so far as to claim it is a proof of God’s blessing!

-Cultural morals have changed and God is so loving that He is good with my adulterous relationship.

-I am happy in my adultery or my homosexual relationships so God must be too.

--If you believe anything like that you are deceived! Paul is making it clear that Christianity is not a set of rules for life—it is in fact a type of life with its own quality and character.

--My life and mindset should not identify me with any unrighteousness. *This is especially important with the terms **homosexual & sodomite** as they are very particular Greek words referring to the passive (feminine) and active (male) partners.*

--I am not a “Gay” Christian. Neither am I an “Adultery” Christian; or “Drunk” Christian. There is only one Bible answer for sin and that is—Conversion. Not “conversion therapy” but New Birth/New Creation.

--**Do not be deceived!** Anyone living in these sins will not inherit the kingdom of God. *How many are being deceived right now. Do not be a partaker in their sins!*

--It is not shocking that there is sin in any church body; even very heartbreaking sins. But it is shocking that the church can get tricked into embracing godless standards. **Do not be deceived!**

--Notice the clear change: **And such were some of you!**

--You know who should definitely not be deceived about adultery, homosexuality, theft, drunkenness, or idolatry? Ex. Sexual sinners, thieves, drunks, and idolaters!

--We have been **washed** from the filthiness of sin. *We don’t live with stain.*

--We have been **sanctified** from the shame of our sin. *We have purpose.*

--We have been **justified** from the penalty of our sin. *No punishment hanging over us.*

Verses 12-14:

--There is some scholarly argument as to whether these are Corinthian sayings or Paul’s sayings—I would lean Paul’s per **10:2**—but either way it seems like the church had misunderstood or willingly abused them.

--We have great freedom and liberty in Christ with permissible things. Even so, Paul warns that it is possible to turn that freedom into something *unhelpful* or *enslaving*.

--We have freedom to eat and put food into our belly. They were made for each other. But if I eat in a way that is unhelpful (to my actually calling and identity in Christ) then I can become given over to appetite and even enslaved by it. *Insert diet joke here!*

Philippians 3:19: whose god is their belly!

--We are free in Christ but not free to deny Him, His purposes in our lives, or to make ourselves slaves to another master. This is especially true in sexual matters and that is why Paul says:

Now the body is not for sexual immorality but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body.

--My relation to food is going to change but the relation of my body to the Lord and His service will not. The purpose of our lives is greater than sexual expression. *Sadly, how many are enslaved to sexual sin and no longer serve the Lord!*

Verses 15-18:

--Our bodies are part of our connection and identity in Christ. They are not worthless or inconsequential in Christ.

--So should I take what is the Lord’s and has specific purpose in Him, and willingly connect it with a harlot and her purposes? The answer is simple: **Certainly not!**

--Paul references the unique connection that takes place with human intimacy and shows that God's purpose is being ignored and abused when a Christian willingly takes a prostitute.

--We are supposed to be joined with Him and be of one Spirit with Him.

--So Paul tells them instead to **flee sexual immorality!** To **flee** is more than to *abstain*. It is leaving with zeal. Run like Joseph!

--Paul also makes the point that the "one flesh" nature of the sexual relationship has different consequences than other sins. Again, all sins will keep us out of the kingdom of God but not all sins have the same effects upon us or the others involved.

*Lewis (The Screwtape Letters): *"The truth is that wherever a man lies with a woman, there, whether they like it or not, a transcendental relation is set up between them which must be eternally enjoyed or eternally endured."**

--An act that is meant to bind two committed people together physically, emotionally, and spiritually can only cause physical, emotional, and spiritual harm if it is used out of God's prescribed order.

--Paul is simply saying what everyone actually knows. Sexual life is not okay "as long as no one gets hurt". All the pain and brokenness of ungodly sexual life cannot be seen on an X-Ray. *Just think of what it has caused in the world: Child abuse, rape, incest, things unmentionable—adultery, pornography—as well as all connected issues such as murder, divorce, abortion, sex trade, insecurity, grief, shattered trust, suicide: how many kids have cried themselves to sleep at night or how many daughters have cried when they discovered their father's porn habit? No one actually believes sexual activity it is okay as long as no one gets hurt because the world is hurting all around us! Yes the world would be better if every man took a woman and they remained faithful to each other till death. That is God's command.*

--So Paul warns that sins of sexual immorality have unique effects. I can't explain it all. I can only say that this is what the Bible teaches.

Verses 19-20:

--The presence of God's Spirit in our body does not negate the body but in fact elevates it. Our body is the very **temple of the Holy Spirit!** *Naos—or holy of holies Vs. Outer temple.*

*Tozer (That Incredible Christian): *"Without question, the teaching of the New Testament is that the very God Himself inhabits the nature of His true children. How this can be I do not know, but neither do I know how my soul inhabits my body."**

--What does the Bible tells us about the God that dwells in us? Does He dwell passively? No!

--He lives!

Galatians 2:20: It is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me.

--He works! He wills!

Philippians 2:13: For it is God who works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure.

--And so the promised gift of the Holy Spirit in us—in us never to leave—is the unique privilege we live in as true believers. Notice Paul's emphasis: ***whom you have from God!***

--You and I have been gifted and incredible deposit, a treasure held in these earthen vessels, a promise given at great cost. Do we realize it? Do we guard it? Do we treasure it?

--So the temple of our body is God's as was Christ's before us.

John 2:21: He was speaking of the temple of His body.

--Think of the various conditions we find the temple of the OT in; sometimes in a God honoring condition and other times totally overrun or forsaken.

--Now, what is the condition of our temple? Is it a cold, neglected, broken down temple? Has it been desecrated and given over to idols? It is under the power of another? Or is it in the right condition for what it was erected—or created—for?

--Paul's final point is a simple fact. *We are not our own*. If that bothers us then we must look at the true position of our identity. If Jesus Christ did not buy me then I have no claim upon salvation. Then I am outside of the kingdom of God! I am still filthy, unholy, and under the wrath of God.

--But if I am not my own, if God owns me fully, if I am bought with a price, then I am also washed, sanctified, and justified in Christ Jesus and by the Spirit of God.

--What is the best life? To think I am my own and live in rebellion to God as His enemy and use my body to glorify myself? To live free enough to be enslaved by my own passions? To be the slave of sin? Is this the best life?

--Or to know I am not my own, that I am bought with an incredible price, and my body is a literal dwelling place for God Almighty? To be a slave to God so that I glorify Him in a way that is unique to me over everything else in creation? Is this the best life?

--Ha! Trick question. To live as a Christian that glorifies God is the *only* thing worth calling *life*.