

1 Corinthians 6

What point is Paul making about judging a dispute between believers (v. 1)? He questions how a true believer could think of taking a brother to court before ungodly judges. Shame on the church! This issue was great, not only because it further divided the church, but also because it affected the testimony of the church which in turn hindered the work of God among the non-Christians in Corinth (10:32). Those related by faith needed to settle their disputes like brothers, not adversaries.¹

What will be one role of believers in the future (v. 2)? We will one day judge the world (and angels, v. 3) (Matthew 19:28; Revelation 20:4). Note the repetition of the expression “*Do you not know*” (vv. 2, 3, 9, 15, 16, 19). The implication is that they should have known these things.....which must have painfully hit home to a church that thought so highly of its own wisdom and knowledge.²

What point is Paul trying to make in v. 2? If Christians are going to judge the world in the future, they should be fully capable of judging trivial matters that come up among themselves right now. After all, they have the help and wisdom of the indwelling Holy Spirit.

What does “judging the world” include (v. 3)? Paul reminds the Corinthians that they will also judge angels. Again, his point is -- If we are considered qualified to judge angels, we should be able to handle life’s everyday disputes.

What does Paul say about appointing judges (v. 4)? He is asking ironically, if believers should submit their cases to secular judges, who really are not qualified to decide on cases between Christians. Paul was speaking here of Christians resolving their differences in the church by appointing their own judges rather than in the civil law courts.

Why did Paul give them that advice (v. 5)? To move them to shame. By going into secular courts to settle their church problems, they seemed to be saying that there was no one in their church wise enough to settle these matters.

What is at stake when they choose to pursue their disagreements in a civil court vs. a court of believers (v. 6)? Their actions compromise the church’s witness to the unbelieving world.

What is Paul’s proposed remedy to settle these disputes (v. 7-8)? It would be better to “*be wronged*” or “*be cheated*” than to fight back in such an unchristian way (Mathew. 5:39-41; 1 Peter 2:19-24). The shame of people who professed to love one another, and who supposedly put the welfare of others before their own, to be suing each other, meant that that they had been “*completely defeated already*” even before the judge gave his verdict. Defeated by greed, retaliation and hatred instead of practicing unselfishness, forgiveness and love.

What will be true of the wicked who persist in their unbelief (vv. 9-10)? They “*will not inherit the kingdom of God.*” Paul warns them not to be deceived. The wicked will not go to heaven. Jesus explained who will inherit the kingdom of God (Matthew 5:3, 10; Mark 10:14), whereas Paul explained who will not and he provides them a list of sinners who will have no part in God’s kingdom.

How does Paul contrast their lives before and after becoming Christians (v. 11)? Some of the Corinthian Christians had practiced the sins Paul just listed, before they trusted in Christ. However, they had been washed by the blood of Christ, i.e. they were forgiven; they had been sanctified or set apart to be God’s people and to live a life of holiness; they had been justified or saved by faith in Christ through the work of the Holy Spirit who lived within them. He had made them saints. Consequently, they needed to live like saints.

What does Paul have to say about Christian liberty (v. 12)? When Paul says, “*Everything is permissible for me,*” he does not mean all things in an absolute sense – certainly not any of the sins previously mentioned. He is speaking only about those things that are morally neutral such as dietary issues. However, not everything is beneficial if it causes a brother to stumble even if it’s permissible to me. Additionally, some things might be permissible and yet they might be enslaving, e.g. the abuse of liquor, tobacco, and drugs can lead to enslavement and bondage.

¹ Lowery, D. K. (1985). 1 Corinthians. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary*, (Vol. 2, p. 515).

² Ibid.

What are Paul's continuing thoughts on Christian liberty (13)? The first part of this verse says that "food" is not a matter of spiritual significance for the Christian, (except that gluttony is a sin). As far as what we eat goes, we may eat anything and still be pleasing to God (Mark 7:18-19). He has not forbidden any foods for spiritual reasons.

Some things are perfectly lawful for the believer and yet their value is temporary. Paul says: we should not live for foods, because they are only of temporary value. They should not be given an undue place in the life of the believer. Don't live as if the greatest thing in life is to gratify your appetites.

God never intended that the human body should be used for vile or impure purposes such as sexual immorality. Rather He planned that it should be used for the glory of the Lord.

How does Paul further illustrate God's high regard for the body (v. 14)? God has not only raised up the Lord Jesus from among the dead, but He will also raise us up by His power. His interest in our body does not end at the time of death. He is going to raise the body of every believer to fashion it like the glorious body of the Lord Jesus.³ A body destined for resurrection should not be used for immorality.

How does Paul give further dignity to the body (v. 15)? He reminds us that our bodies are "*members of Christ Himself*." We are spiritually united with Christ....one in heart, mind, spirit and body. When a Christian has sexual relations with a prostitute, he takes what belongs to God (his body) and gives it to someone else. This is stealing from God.

How does Paul further elaborate on illicit sexual intercourse (v. 16)? Sexual intercourse is not simply a physical linking of two people for the duration of their act. God views intercourse as the most intimate sharing that human beings experience. Sexual relations very deeply affect the emotional and spiritual conditions of the individuals involved. This is what is in view in the reference to two people becoming "one flesh" in Genesis 2:24.

How does Paul describe the union of the believer with Christ (v. 17)? Just as in the sexual act there is a union of two into one, so when a person believes in Jesus Christ and is joined to Him, the believer and Christ become united as one spirit. This is the most perfect merging of two persons that is possible. Those who are thus joined to the Lord should never tolerate any type of union that would be in conflict with this spiritual wedlock.⁴

What warning does Paul give (v. 18)? "*Flee from sexual immorality*." They are not to dabble with it, trifle with it, study it, even talk about it. They are to flee from it! A beautiful Bible illustration of this is found in the account of Joseph when he was tempted to sin by Potiphar's wife (Genesis 39).

Most sins have no direct effect on one's body, but sexual immorality is unique in the sense that it does *directly* affect one's body: the effect is physical, but it is also moral and spiritual. A person reaps the consequences of this sin in his own body.

Of what does Paul remind the Corinthians (v. 19)? Not only is our body the temple of the Holy Spirit, but also, we are not our own. It is not for us to take our bodies and use them the way we want. If we do so, we are acting as a thief, taking that which does not belong to us. In the final analysis, our bodies do not belong to us; they belong to the Lord

What is Paul's final reminder and exhortation (v. 20)? We belong to the Lord because He has redeemed us. His ownership of us dates back to Calvary. We were bought at the price of His own precious blood. Therefore, we must use our bodies to glorify God, the One to whom it belongs.

³ MacDonald, W. (1995). *Believer's Bible Commentary: Old and New Testaments*. (A. Farstad, Ed.) (p. 1763). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Ibid. p. 1765