

# I CORINTHIANS 6

## WHEN CHURCH PROBLEMS WON'T GO AWAY

### STUDENT GUIDE

#### DAILY BIBLE READING

DAY 1	I CORINTHIANS 6: 1-11
DAY 2	I CORINTHIANS 6: 12-20
DAY 3	I CORINTHIANS 6: 1-11
DAY 4	I CORINTHIANS 6: 12-20
DAY 5	I CORINTHIANS 6: 1-20
DAY 6	I CORINTHIANS 6: 1-20
DAY 7	I CORINTHIANS 6: 1-20

*Few would doubt a litigious society has unfortunately engulfed our country. Not long ago, a study showed that more civil lawsuits are filed in the state of Massachusetts than in the entire nation of Japan! With a 1,000+ percent increase in lawsuits since 1975, we spend in excess of \$30 billion a year suing each other. As we will soon see, this sounds a lot like ancient Corinth.*

*In Chapter 6, the Apostle zeros in on two costly mistakes the Corinthians made. First, they accepted instruction by misguided counsel. Second, they allowed indoctrination of mistaken conviction. The Corinthians completely misunderstood the nature of the physical body, and therefore Paul had to straighten out some false convictions.*

#### OUTLINE

- 1. The Misguided Counsel (vv.1-11)** - While Jews routinely settled disputes among themselves, Greeks were known for exploiting the courts. Paul confronts Corinth's practice of going to court like unbelievers. Paul had no intention of teaching Christians should never go to court. Our justice system has its proper place and authority, and Christians as much as non-Christians can exercise their rights under established law. Nevertheless, when Christian brothers and sisters have a disagreement, the first place to head is not the Areopagus (*court*). Instead, the loving fellowship of the family of God should be able to assist them in coming to suitable terms. To resort to civil courts before the unsaved, therefore, ruins the church's testimony.

*A.) Lawsuits between Christians are a disgrace for the church.* Christians of all people should not be exercising this "right." Why? Initially because civil lawsuits between Christians disgrace the dignity of the church. In addition, litigation disgraces the policy of the church (v.4). Unconverted judges knew nothing of the grace of God. God's assemblies should handle their own inside disagreements. The Word of God should play a primary role. The misguided counsel of the unbelieving world is no match for the Wisdom of God.

*B.) Lawsuits between Christians are a defeat for the church.* Paul mentions there was among them "utterly a fault." Even though legal victories happen when Christian sues Christian, moral defeats inevitably result. Additionally, the church's leadership was defeated. Boast as they did about having "wisdom," why was there not someone among them wise enough to judge between these matters?

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Moreover, the church's fellowship was defeated. We are to "suffer" one another, forgiving each other since God in Christ has forgiven all our faults (Col. 3:13).

C.) *Lawsuits between Christians are a defection for the church.* The grace of God brought a brought a miracle to the lost sinner. However, lawsuits were defection to their past corruption. The catalog of sins Paul creates astounds us. If any of these characterize a person's life, Christ is absent from the heart. Hence, lawsuits defected from a present conversion. A shout of triumph comes from Paul — "And such were some of you!" The greatest proof of Christian reality is the proof of a changed life.

**Question:** Do you think the church takes seriously her duty to judge matters between Christians? Why or why not?

**2. The Mistaken Conviction (vv.12-20)** - Paul shifts into another gear in the second half of the chapter. He begins with personal disputes between believers and ends with problematic doctrines about the body. While the two issues have seemingly little in common, both come from the same source — Greek culture. The Greeks had a tendency to look negatively toward the physical body. Contrarily, they believed the soul had value.

A.) *Paul speaks of the body's elevation.* Christ suffered for our sins in His own body. Consequently, our body is now joined to Him! When Jesus saved us, our bodies were raised to a new level of liberty and sanctity. This does not mean, however, there are no limits to the elevation Christ has given (v.12). The Corinthians were taking Paul's philosophy in Christ much to literally, however. They were going to the extreme. In essence, they were saying, "If I am saved, I can do anything I want."

B.) *Paul speaks of the body's desecration.* For the believer to use his or her body for sexual sin is a desecration of our Savior. Our bodies are the limbs of Christ. How then can one be joined to a prostitute? Also, to use our body for sexual sin is a desecration of our selves. Of all sins, sexual sin seems the worst.

C.) *Paul speaks of the body's consecration.* God the Son consecrates our body in redemption (v.20). We are literally "bought with a price." In the marketplace of sin, Christ purchased us, cleansed us, and saved us for all eternity. For this reason, God the Spirit resides in us. Indeed our body is the "temple of the Holy Spirit." How is it possible to allow the temple of God to become a moral trash heap?

**Question:** How prominent is evolution in your public schools? What does your church do to offset the teaching of evolution to children? What do parents personally do to balance the teaching their children receive?

**Wrap Up:** The church at Corinth appeared to have unending problems, all stemming from an absence of Jesus Christ's Lordship. They possessed no unity in their assembly. Hence, they turned to outsiders to settle their disputes and indoctrinate them in mistaken convictions. Only as they turned to the Word of God given through the Apostle could their fellowship receive a clean bill of health.