

Teachings about Lawsuits and The Temple of the Holy Spirit

1 Corinthians 6

1 Corinthians 6: *"Dare any of you, having a matter against another, go to law before the unrighteous, and not before the saints? 2 Do you not know that the saints will judge the world? And if the world will be judged by you, are you unworthy to judge the smallest matters? 3 Do you not know that we shall judge angels? How much more, things that pertain to this life? 4 If then you have judgments concerning things pertaining to this life, do you appoint those who are least esteemed by the church to judge? 5 I say this to your shame. Is it so, that there is not a wise man among you, not even one, who will be able to judge between his brethren? 6 But brother goes to law against brother, and that before unbelievers! 7 Now therefore, it is already an utter failure for you that you go to law against one another. Why do you not rather accept wrong? Why do you not rather let yourselves be cheated? 8 No, you yourselves do wrong and cheat, and you do these things to your brethren! 9 Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived. Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor sodomites, 10 nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners will inherit the kingdom of God. 11 And such were some of you. But you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God. 12 All things are lawful for me, but all things are not helpful. All things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any. 13 Foods for the stomach and the stomach for foods, but God will destroy both it and them. Now the body is not for sexual immorality but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body. 14 And God both raised up the Lord and will also raise us up by His power. 15 Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ? Shall I then take the members of Christ and make them members of a harlot? Certainly not! 16 Or do you not know that he who is joined to a harlot is one body with her? For "the two," He says, "shall become one flesh." 17 But he who is joined to the Lord is one spirit with Him. 18 Flee sexual immorality. Every sin that a man does is outside the body, but he who commits sexual immorality sins against his own body. 19 Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own? 20 For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's.*

Background Notes

The theme of 1 Corinthians is Christian conduct. In this letter, the apostle Paul addressed certain problems in the church at Corinth, and offered solutions. In doing so, he taught the Corinthian believers, and us as well, how to live for Christ. We've covered the problem of divisions in the church in chapters 1-4, and the case of incest in the church in chapter 5. In chapter 6 we have two more problems – the problem of litigation and the problem of moral laxity.

In the first half of the chapter dealing with litigation, Paul made two statements in passing that need some explanation. What did the apostle Paul mean when he said that saints will judge the world (v2)? And what did he mean when he said that saints will judge angels (v3)?

In reference to the truth that “the saints will judge the world” - the Bible teaches that Christ is coming back to this earth to set up His long awaited and promised earthly kingdom. This is known as the Millennial Kingdom of Christ because it will last for a thousand years (Revelation 20). At that time, Christ will reign over the nations and there will be world peace for one thousand years.

And here’s the point: **believers will reign with Him.** 2 Timothy 2:11-12 says, “*This is a faithful saying: For if we died with Him, we shall also live with Him. If we endure, we shall also reign with Him. If we deny Him, He also will deny us.*” Revelation 5:10 says that Christ has made us kings and priests to our God and we shall reign on this earth. So believers in their glorified bodies will reign with Christ over this world. This reign will obviously include government, and thus judgment. So believers will judge the world at that time.

What about the teaching that “the saints will judge angels” (v3)? We know from 2 Peter 2 and the Book of Jude that there is a group of fallen angels that are awaiting judgment. Jude 6: “*And the angels who did not keep their proper domain, but left their own abode, He has reserved in everlasting chains under darkness for the judgment of the great day.*” Most likely the fallen angels mentioned here are the angels of Genesis 6 that left the angelic ranks and in some improper and sinful way cohabited with women.

John 5:22 says that the Father has given all judgment to the Son. Because we are united with Christ, and as members of the Church we are the Body of Christ, we will be involved with Christ in the judgment of these fallen angels, probably after the Millennium. So the saints will judge fallen angels.

Doctrinal Points

1. Because believers will judge the world, they should not sue fellow believers.

The apostle Paul mentioned the fact that Christians will judge the world and judge angels to emphasize how inconsistent it would be for Christians to go to court against one another - then and today. Apparently some believers in the church were taking other believers to court, and there may have been more than one case (v 7).

Whatever the cases may have been, Paul rebuked the Corinthian believers for not settling their differences “in-house” – within the church fellowship. For believers to resort to lawsuits in the courts of this world, and have unbelievers decide who’s right and who’s wrong, is inconsistent and shameful. How much better it would be to ask a wise Christian in the church help settle mundane cases, or maybe even set up a small “law court” with wise and godly Christians within the church? And - as a last resort - it would be far better to be wronged, and be defrauded and stepped on, than to sue a fellow-believer in a worldly court and bring dishonor on the name of Jesus Christ. So don’t bring lawsuits against other believers!

In application for today: let’s say, for example, there is a car accident between two Christians – an accident that causes major damage and incurs hospital bills. Obviously in a case like this, the police and the insurance company are going to be involved, and they will handle the case. The two Christians are not disobeying the Scripture when they let the insurance company settle the case.

But now let's take another example - and this is an actual case of people whom I know. A Christian couple contracted with a Christian builder to build a house for them. The Christian builder did not fulfill his full obligation, and the couple was left with an unfinished house. Rather than go to court, both parties agreed to have a third party composed of Christians within the church decide the case. First, both sides agreed on a certain number of godly Christians to judge the situation, and both sides agreed to live by the judgment of these godly believers. And it worked! They followed the decision of the Christian "judges," the situation was settled, and God was glorified!

So settling problems within the church can work - even though it may not be easy. Because Christians will judge the world, they should not sue fellow believers.

2. Because believers are the Temple of the Holy Spirit, they should glorify God with their bodies.

Verses 9-20, "Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived. Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor sodomites, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners will inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you. But you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God.

All things are lawful for me, but all things are not helpful. All things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any. Foods for the stomach and the stomach for foods, but God will destroy both it and them. Now the body is not for sexual immorality but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body. And God both raised up the Lord and will also raise us up by His power.

Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ? Shall I then take the members of Christ and make them members of a harlot? Certainly not! Or do you not know that he who is joined to a harlot is one body with her? For "the two," He says, "shall become one flesh." But he who is joined to the Lord is one spirit with Him.

Flee sexual immorality. Every sin that a man does is outside the body, but he who commits sexual immorality sins against his own body. Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own? For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's."

In 1 Corinthians 3:16 we read, "Do you not know that you are the temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you." Here in 1 Corinthians 6:19 we read, "Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own?" We have two important truths contained in these two Scriptures.

1 Corinthians 3 teaches the truth that the Church, composed of all believers, is the "Temple of the Holy Spirit." The Holy Spirit dwells in the midst of the Church, which is the body of Christ. 1 Corinthians 6 teaches the truth that the body of each individual believer is the Temple of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit dwells in our individual bodies. For this reason, believers should glorify God in their bodies.

How do we glorify God with our bodies? First, we certainly should not be living a life that is characterized by sin. In fact, verses 9 and 10 indicate that if a person is continually living a life of sin, that he or she is not a Christian.

The list of sins in verses 9 and 10 does not mean that a person who has ever committed one of these sins can't be (or

become) a Christian. This list is speaking of the lifestyle and habitual practice of these sins. These sins characterized some of the Corinthian believers ***before they were saved***. “Such ***were*** some of you” means that believers should ***no longer*** be living lives characterized by sin. “*And such were some of you. But you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God*” (v11).

Another way in which we glorify God with our bodies is how we deal with things of “moral indifference.” Verse 12: “*All things are lawful for me, but all things are not helpful. All things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any.*” Obviously Paul didn’t mean the sinful activities that he has just condemned in the previous verses. What is in view here are those “questionable” activities that are not sinful in themselves, but may not be “*helpful*” to practice them. Why not? Because they might stumble weaker believers, or might offend some folks, or might even become addictive for us. For example, Christians should seriously think through their position on social drinking. They may feel it is “lawful” for them to engage in social drinking or an occasional glass of wine with dinner - but what about the problem of stumbling younger or weaker believers, and what about the possibility of addiction?

A third way in which Christians glorify God with their bodies is by having the right view of sex. Some of the false teachers at Corinth may have been teaching that the soul and spirit were important but the body was not, so they could do anything they wanted with their bodies. But Paul said that the “body and sex” is not parallel to the “stomach and food” (v13). Sexual sin is very serious sin. In the sin of fornication, a believer (as a member of the body of Christ and in union with Christ) joins with and becomes one with a prostitute. May it never be (v15)!

Furthermore, sexual sin involves the body and the soul (v17). It has devastating effects on both the body and your soul. Verse 18: “*Flee sexual immorality. Every sin that a man does is outside the body, but he who commits sexual immorality sins against his own body.*” We’ve been bought with a price - the precious blood of Christ. This **God owns our bodies** - so let’s glorify God with our bodies. Because believers are the Temple of the Holy Spirit, they should glorify God with their bodies.

Practical Application

Don’t let people say in a negative way, “There goes the temple of the Holy Spirit.”

Suppose someone said that about you. Would it be a positive or negative statement? Let’s hope it would be positive!

Verse 14 says that we will have resurrected bodies some day. Those resurrected bodies will be sinless and perfect, and they will glorify God. But right now we can glorify God in our present bodies. The question is, do we? Don’t let people say in a negative way, “There goes the temple of the Holy Spirit.”