

1Cor. 6:1 Dare any of you, having a matter against another, go to law before the unjust, and not before the saints?

Paul asks many questions in this chapter. He is trying to provoke the believers to think; to reason with spiritual perspective. The subject in the previous chapter has been the importance of keeping the body of believers pure and using discernment and discipline as needed to protect the church. The importance of dealing with such serious sins as discussed in the previous section is followed by a discussion of dealing with matters of a much less serious nature in the body of believers.

The Greek for *matter* indicates a reference to business practices and transactions. The Greek for *dare* indicates “boldness, extreme conduct.”

I sense that Paul is saying, “If you (as believers) are responsible to discern and discipline regarding sins of such a serious nature, shouldn’t you be able to make judgments regarding fair and honest dealings with one another? Do you actually think unjust (heathen, wicked) judges will deal with you more fairly than the saints (those who are set apart as righteous before God)?”

The obvious answer should be that we would trust fellow members of the body to judge righteously.

When we air our dirty laundry in public, it provides fodder for the ridicule of our faith and our LORD.

1Cor. 6:2 Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world? and if the world shall be judged by you, are ye unworthy to judge the smallest matters? “saints shall judge the world” – This seems to be a reference to ruling with Christ in His millennial kingdom when He is on the throne of David. The disciples were specifically told that they would rule on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel.

Matt. 19:28 And Jesus said unto them, Verily I say unto you, That ye which have followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.

Believers have been promised a position of rulership in the kingdom.

Rev. 2:26 And he that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations:

Rev. 2:27 And he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers: even as I received of my Father.

Rev. 3:21 To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne.

Rev. 5:9 And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation;

Rev. 5:10 And hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth.

Rev. 20:6 Blessed and holy *is* he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years.

Since God is going to trust the saints with such great responsibility, shouldn't we be considered trustworthy in judging more trivial matters?

1Cor. 6:3 Know ye not that we shall judge angels? how much more things that pertain to this life?

"we shall judge angels" – As believers, we are children of God and joint-heirs with Christ.

Rom. 8:16 The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God:

Rom. 8:17 And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with *him*, that we may be also glorified together.

Our position as heirs is permanent. Christ is on the throne next to His Father. All creation is subject to Him. As joint-heirs with Christ, we are elevated to a position that is no longer "a little lower than the angels."

1Pet. 3:22 Who is gone into heaven, and is on the right hand of God; angels and authorities and powers being made subject unto him.

The question Paul poses in the second half of the verse makes it clear that our position in authority over the angels will be a part of our resurrected life. Just as Christ has had to wait to assume His full inheritance, so will we.

1Cor. 6:4 If then ye have judgments of things pertaining to this life, set them to judge who are least esteemed in the church.

This verse sure reads differently in all the translations. I'm not sure what Paul was saying, but I think he is saying that even those who seem to be least qualified in the body of believers would be a better judge than "the unjust" (cf verse 1). Every believer has the Holy Spirit available to give wisdom and instruction as needed. Paul established this ministry of the Spirit in chapter 2.

1Cor. 2:12 Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God.

1Cor. 2:13 Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual.

God has promised every believer that if we will but ask in faith (confidently), wisdom is ours.

James 1:5 If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all *men* liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him.

James 1:6 But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering.

1Cor. 6:5 I speak to your shame. Is it so, that there is not a wise man among you? no, not one that shall be able to judge between his brethren?

“shame” = consciousness of having done something which injures reputation... that which brings reproach, and degrades a person in the estimation of others; disgrace.

I think the *shame* being referenced is to the church as a whole more than just specific individuals. I thought the definition for *shame* was to the point. As members of the body of Christ, they should be able to recognize that their actions are affecting the reputation of the church, which in turn brings reproach to the name of Christ.

Paul is basically saying, “Is it really true that there is not one person in the church who is capable of making righteous judgment regarding problems that may arise between believers?”

The obvious answer—No, that is not true.

1Cor. 6:6 But brother goeth to law with brother, and that before the unbelievers.

Christians are supposed to be examples of love to the world, especially toward one another.

John 13:35 By this shall all *men* know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.

In fact, the Lord instructed His followers to love their enemies.

Luke 6:35 But love ye your enemies, and do good, and lend, hoping for nothing again; and your reward shall be great, and ye shall be the children of the Highest: for he is kind unto the unthankful and *to* the evil.

One of a Christian’s top priorities should be to guard his testimony before unbelievers.

1Cor. 6:7 Now therefore there is utterly a fault among you, because ye go to law one with another. Why do ye not rather take wrong? why do ye not rather suffer yourselves to be defrauded?

Paul states that for the believer to seek judgment from a fellow believer outside the jurisdiction of the church is a fault—defect, blemish, impairs excellence, a moral failing. It is much better to suffer wrong or unjust treatment from a brother in Christ than to air your dirty laundry before unbelievers so to speak.

1Cor. 6:8 Nay, ye do wrong, and defraud, and that *your* brethren.

Sad to say, the body of believers includes those who do wrong to fellow believers; those who *defraud* other believers.

“defraud” = To deprive of some right, interest, or property, by a deceitful device; to withhold from wrongfully; to injure by embezzlement; to cheat....

I feel the need to make a qualifying comment here. Believers can and do sin. But one who makes a practice of defrauding others as a way of life would not be giving evidence of belonging to the body of Christ. There would be a point that would require church discipline if one person was continually taking advantage of others through their association with the church. This would fall in the

category of not allowing leaven/sin to infiltrate the church and affect the whole body.

1Cor. 6:9 Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind,

1Cor. 6:10 Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God.

“the kingdom of God” = those who have accepted Jesus as LORD

There is a parable in Luke 19 that I think clarifies this truth.

Luke 19:11 And as they heard these things, he added and spake a parable, because he was nigh to Jerusalem, and because they thought that the kingdom of God should immediately appear.

Luke 19:12 He said therefore, A certain nobleman went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom, and to return.

Luke 19:13 And he called his ten servants, and delivered them ten pounds, and said unto them, Occupy till I come.

Luke 19:14 But his citizens hated him, and sent a message after him, saying, We will not have this *man* to reign over us.

Luke 19:15 And it came to pass, that when he was returned, having received the kingdom, then he commanded these servants to be called unto him, to whom he had given the money, that he might know how much every man had gained by trading.....

Luke 19:27 But those mine enemies, which would not that I should reign over them, bring hither, and slay *them* before me.

Paul goes on to make his own qualifying comment. He reminds the Corinthian church that the *unrighteous* will not inherit the kingdom of God? The *unrighteous* are those who have rejected Jesus and the righteousness He provides through salvation. Paul urges them not to be deceived; in other words, people who practice the following sins as a way of life without repentance are not joint-heirs with Christ and will not be part of the kingdom since they have rejected the King.

- Fornicators – those who practice sex outside of marriage
- Idolaters – those who worship false gods
- Adulterers – those who practice sex with someone other than their spouse
- Effeminate – catamite (a boy kept for unnatural purposes); a man acting like a woman
- Abusers of themselves with mankind – sodomite; homosexual
- Thieves
- Covetous – avaricious, greedy
- Drunkards
- Revilers – those who verbally abuse others
- Extortioners – those who take by force or through abuse of power/authority

1Cor. 6:11 And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.

Paul reminds the Corinthian believers that some of them had practiced the sins mentioned in verse 10 as a way of life before they became Christians. The important point is that this is part of their past; they are now new creations in Christ.

2Cor. 5:17 Therefore if any man *be* in Christ, *he is* a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.

They have been *washed*; they didn't wash themselves. They were washed by the Lamb, Jesus Christ, in His blood.

Rev. 1:5 And from Jesus Christ, *who is* the faithful witness, *and* the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loved us, **and washed us from our sins in his own blood...**

I thought it was interesting that the Greek for washed stated "to wash fully." One of the root words stated "it usually denotes separation, departure, cessation, completion, reversal, etc." This paints a clear word picture of what this complete washing does. It separates the believer from the old man of sin that he was; he has departed his old way of life and chosen to cease from practicing sin. He has made a complete reversal in his way of thinking by repenting of his sin and choosing to follow Jesus.

Not only is the believer washed, he is also *sanctified* (made holy, purified). Again, this is an act of Jesus on our behalf. On what is our sanctification based? According to Jesus when He was speaking to Saul on the road to Damascus, it is through faith in Jesus as the Savior.

Acts 26:18 To open their eyes, *and* to turn *them* from darkness to light, and *from* the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are **sanctified by faith that is in me.**

Not only is the believer washed and sanctified, he is also *justified* (regarded as innocent, righteous—just as if I'd never sinned). I thought it was interesting to note that it is the Spirit who recognizes our condition and position in the name of the "Lord Jesus." The Lord Jesus declares us completely washed, sanctified and justified. Through His declaration, the Holy Spirit, God's own Spirit, takes up residence in the believer as our seal of security.

2Cor. 1:21 Now he which stablisheth us with you in Christ, and hath anointed us, *is* God;

2Cor. 1:22 Who hath also sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts.

"sealed" = stamped for security or preservation

"earnest" = pledge or property given in advance as security for what is to come.

"by the Spirit" – The Greek for the word "by" stated "a primary preposition denoting (fixed) position (in place, time or state), and (by implication) **instrumentality** (medially or constructively), i.e. a relation of rest..." As I thought about this, it seems that the Spirit is our personal spiritual mentor. His

ministry includes teaching us, guiding us, convicting us, bringing us to repentance, and interceding for us according to the will of the Father.

Rom. 8:26 Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.

Rom. 8:27 And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what *is* the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to *the will of God*.

This makes me think of Philippians 1:6, "...He which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ."

We are washed, but we still get dirty; we sin. This was the point Jesus made when He washed the feet of the disciples.

John 13:10 Jesus saith to him, He that is washed needeth not save to wash *his* feet, but is clean every whit: and ye are clean, but not all.

We still need to confess our sins and ask for forgiveness to stay clean.

Regarding sanctification, we become more holy as we become more Christlike; it's a progressive process, a growth in spiritual maturity. It is through the ministry of the Spirit that we are made aware of our areas of weakness and encouraged to develop spiritual muscle and discipline that results in spiritual growth.

Justification is attained through faith based on the shed blood of Jesus because of His grace.

Rom. 5:1 Therefore being **justified by faith**, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ:

Rom. 5:8 But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

Rom. 5:9 Much more then, being now **justified by his blood**, we shall be saved from wrath through him.

Titus 3:7 That being **justified by his grace**, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.

It would seem that it is the Holy Spirit Who keeps the believer secure in this position.

1Pet. 1:5 Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

Because it is God working in and through us through the Spirit, our position is secure; however, our growth and level of success is directly proportionate to the degree that we yield to His working.

Rom. 6:13 Neither **yield** ye your members *as* instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but **yield** yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members *as* instruments of righteousness unto God.

Rom. 12:1 I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye **present your bodies a living sacrifice**, holy, acceptable unto God, *which is* your reasonable service.

James 4:7 **Submit** yourselves therefore to God.

1Cor. 6:12 **All things are lawful unto me, but all things are not expedient: all things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any.**

I like the wording of the NIV for this verse.

“Everything is permissible for me” — but not everything is beneficial.

“Everything is permissible for me” — but I will not be mastered by anything.

The main point being made is that the believer is no longer under the law. The law was necessary because of our sin nature. The believer is a new creation and technically should no longer need the law. Problem is, we are still connected to these physical bodies of sin until we are glorified through the rapture or resurrection. Because of that, the spirit will continually be at war with the flesh. The renewed spirit of the believer, through the ministry of the Holy Spirit, has the wisdom to recognize that not all things are beneficial or profitable or conducive to spiritual growth. To allow sin to have a place in our life is to set ourselves up for bondage again. That is the major point of warning in the book of Galatians. Scripture is clear that we can only serve one master. You cannot be in bondage to sin and live free in grace at the same time. You have to make a choice, just as Joshua did.

Josh. 24:15 And if it seem evil unto you to serve the LORD, choose you this day whom ye will serve; whether the gods which your fathers served that *were* on the other side of the flood, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell: but **as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD.**

The following quote from JFB was thought provoking: “Unlawful things ruin thousands; ‘lawful’ things (unlawfully used), ten thousands.”

1Cor. 6:13 **Meats for the belly, and the belly for meats: but God shall destroy both it and them. Now the body is not for fornication, but for the Lord; and the Lord for the body.**

“meats” = food

I am reminded that the Corinthians are surrounded by a culture in which basically anything goes. Paul is making a difference in this verse regarding things that affect the physical vs. those that affect the spiritual. When one becomes a Christian, the physical body still needs food to survive. That will one day change. We will still be able to enjoy food (as evidenced by the risen Lord before He went back to heaven to await His earthly throne), but we won’t need it. As Christians, our bodies are to be presented as living sacrifices to God; we are the temple of the indwelling Holy Spirit (which is the argument Paul is making as indicated in the upcoming verses).

Rom. 12:1 I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye **present your bodies a living sacrifice**, holy, acceptable unto God, *which is* your reasonable service.

1Cor. 3:16 Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and *that* the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?

Until God takes us home, we are to provide what is necessary for the body so that we may serve God as He so desires to use us while here in this body. Fornication fulfills the lust of the flesh and is associated with idolatry.

1Cor. 6:14 And God hath both raised up the Lord, and will also raise up us by his own power.

God the Father raised Jesus from the dead to a glorified body. He is just as surely going to raise up believers from the dead to a glorified body. He is the only Being that has that power and authority.

1Cor. 6:15 Know ye not that your bodies are the members of Christ? shall I then take the members of Christ, and make *them* the members of an harlot? God forbid.

Paul has evidently taught the Corinthian believers previously regarding the truth he is stating and is now reminding them of that truth. They are part of the body of Christ. He reiterates this truth in several of his epistles.

Rom. 12:4 For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office:

Rom. 12:5 So we, *being* many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another.

Eph. 1:22 And hath put all *things* under his feet, and gave him *to be* the head over all *things* to the church,

Eph. 1:23 Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all.

Col. 1:12 Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light:

Col. 1:13 Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated *us* into the kingdom of his dear Son....

Col. 1:18 And he is the head of the body, the church....

Since we are part of the body of Christ, we should not do anything that would dishonor God or go against His word.

1Cor. 3:17 If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which *temple* ye are.

This is a principle that has really helped me in making better decisions regarding how to use my time in particular and in making choices regarding the things that I allow to “entertain” me. I want the Lord in His Spirit to be at home and find pleasure in the temple of my body.

1Cor. 6:16 What? know ye not that he which is joined to an harlot is one body? for two, saith he, shall be one flesh.

1Cor. 6:17 But he that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit.

Paul continues to hammer home the difference in physical and spiritual perspectives. When God looks at a man and woman in physical union, He sees one body—a physical connection that completes the intent of the Creator for man and woman in the flesh. When God looks at the person who has accepted the gift of salvation through the Son, He sees the spiritual connection that was

intended between the Creator and man/woman in the spirit. The huge difference is that the spiritual union with the Lord includes our physical body, but the physical union between man and woman does not include the spirit. This continues to emphasize the importance of decisions made by the believer; they should be made with priority given to the benefit to the spirit vs. the benefit to the flesh.

Paul makes no mention of God-ordained physical union between a married man and woman. Why? Because it is just that—God-ordained, God’s provision for the physical and emotional needs between men and women and to enhance their enjoyment of the creation He made for them. Decisions made according to God’s word are beneficial to our spiritual well-being; decisions made contrary to God’s word are detrimental to spiritual well-being.

1Cor. 6:18 Flee fornication. Every sin that a man doeth is without the body; but he that committeth fornication sinneth against his own body.

What is the obvious conclusion? Flee fornication. (Joseph is a good example of using this wisdom when he fled from Potiphar’s wife, Genesis 39.) When a believer connects sexually with another person outside the confines of marriage, he is using a body that is joined to the Lord in spirit.

I’m having a hard time with this verse. Basically, any sin that we do as believers in essence is using a body that is connected to the Lord in spirit. I guess the difference is in the perspective from God. No other sin connects the body in the flesh so closely to the sin as that of fornication. Jesus taught that if your eye offend thee, it would be better to pluck it out and if your hand offend thee, to cut it off.

Matt. 5:29 And if thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast *it* from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not *that* thy whole body should be cast into hell.

Matt. 5:30 And if thy right hand offend thee, cut it off, and cast *it* from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not *that* thy whole body should be cast into hell.

You can’t use that reasoning when it comes to fornication; it involves the whole body.

1Cor. 6:19 What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?

1Cor. 6:20 For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God’s.

Paul continues to drive his point home. As believers, our body is the temple of the indwelling Spirit of God, the Holy Ghost. Our body no longer belongs to us. We have been bought with a price—the precious blood of the Son of God. If we truly understand and appreciate the price that was paid, we know that we can do no less than glorify God in body and spirit. He has redeemed both. The Holy Spirit is our earnest for the rest to come—which includes our glorified bodies—to enable us to enjoy our relationship to the Lord to the fullest for eternity. To glorify God in our body we must make choices based on spiritual understanding and spiritual priorities as established by God in His word.