

1. Chapter 5 – sexual sin and church disciple. Paul was rebuking them for overlooking a problem that couldn't be ignored.
2. Now in Chapter 6 Corinthian Christians were fighting over things they should be letting go of.

Read 1 Cor 6:1-8 and Pray ¹

1. Did you know that 3/4 of the world's lawyers are in the United States.

Unusual Court Case in Nashville: A seven-year old boy was at the center of a Davidson County courtroom drama yesterday, when he challenged a court ruling about who should have custody of him. The boy has a history of being beaten by his parents. The judge initially awarded custody to his aunt, in keeping with child custody laws which require family unity be maintained to the highest degree possible.

The boy surprised the court when he proclaimed that his aunt beat him even more than his parents, and he adamantly refused to live with her. When the judge then suggested that he live with his grandparents, the boy cried and said that they also beat him.

After considering the remainder of the boy's immediate family, the judge concluded that domestic violence was apparently a way of life for this family. He then took the unprecedented step of allowing the boy to propose who should have custody of him.

After two recesses to confer with child welfare officials and to review Tennessee State law, the judge granted temporary custody to the Vanderbilt University Commodores, whom the boy firmly believes are not capable of beating anyone.

- a. Sorry, that was a bad SEC - Southern Conference joke!
2. Real cases:
 - a. Early on the morning of July 7, 2001, a prankster dumped detergent into a public park fountain in Duluth, Minnesota, creating a mountain of bubbles. A few hours later, passerby Kathy Kelly fell down and suffered several injuries. She sued the city because it had not cleaned up the suds (on Saturday morning) or posted warnings to citizens urging them not to walk through the slippery wall of bubbles. A jury in March 2004 found the city 70 percent responsible for Kelly's injuries -- leaving her with only 30 percent of the blame -- and thus awarded her \$125,000.

¹ Unless otherwise marked, all scriptures taken from the New King James Version. © 1982 by Thomas Nelson, Inc.

- b. In July 2004, two teenage girls in Colorado baked cookies and delivered them to their neighbors. But the door-knocking apparently scared Wanita Young, who had an anxiety attack, went to the hospital, and sued the girls' families. A local judge awarded Wanita Young almost \$900 for medical expenses.
- 3. Something has happened in the U.S. where you can sue just about anyone for just about any reason.
 - a. Things weren't all that different in ancient Greece. The Greeks in general were known for their involvement in courts.
 - b. Because lawsuits and court cases were so common, both then and now, Christians began to turn to the courts to solve all their problems.

Let's see what Paul has to say about that...

1 Corinthians 6:1 (NLT) **When one of you has a dispute with another believer, how dare you file a lawsuit and ask a secular court to decide the matter instead of taking it to other believers!**

1 Corinthians 6:6 (NLT) **But instead, one believer sues another—right in front of unbelievers!**

- 1. Paul's intent is clear! Disputes and divisions among believers should be settled within the church and not outside it.
- 2. Paul was dismayed by their actions, not only because it further divided the church, but also because it hindered the work of God among the non-Christians in Corinth.
- 3. Those related by faith needed to settle their disputes like brothers, not adversaries.
- 4. Ever heard this phrase, "*Don't air out your dirty laundry*"?
 - a. It means don't talk about your family problems in public.
 - b. What goes on between family stays between family.
 - c. The reality is that there is no perfect family!
 - i. Leave it to Beaver - Theodore Beaver Cleaver and his adventures at home, in school and around the neighborhood.
 - ii. June and Ward Cleaver just seemed like the perfect parents of the perfect family.
 - iii. The 'Leave it to Beaver' family does not exist.

- d. We all have our own problems, difficulties and issues we have to work through, but we've learned that we are not supposed to go around advertizing what those problems are, right?
 - e. But keeping our family difficulties private does not mean we are being hypocritical; unless you act like you have no problems, then you might be a hypocrite.
5. The church should operate in the same way.
- a. There is no perfect church. We should not go around advertizing what all our problems are, but we don't go around acting all perfect either.
 - b. My Senior Pastor: a church is like a hospital.
 - c. You have people in here will all kinds of problems, but they've come to get bandaged and fixed up in order to get back on track again.
 - d. So when issues arise in the church, we shouldn't go airing out our dirty laundry, we take care of things between us without showing it to the world.
6. Jesus said in Matthew 5:16, "*Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.*"
- a. How can we shine for Jesus if we are rolling around on the ground getting all dirty fighting with one another?
 - b. We are not shining for Jesus; all we're doing is giving one another a shiner to our own shame.

1 Corinthians 6:5 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?

- 1. Christian, please understand, no secular judge or jury is equipped to make spiritual decisions because they do not comprehend spiritual principles.
 - a. That is why court cases that pertain to churches and Christians go haywire the minute they hit the secular court case log.
 - b. A secular judge may know the material in the law books, but he knows nothing about spiritual decisions. He has no spiritual discernment.

2. Paul also understood that the actions of the Corinthian Christians created two problems; two things that brought shame upon the believers in Corinth:
 - a. First, *the believers were presenting a poor testimony to the lost.*
 - i. Even the unbelieving Jews dealt with their civil cases in their own synagogue courts.
 - ii. Taking their problems before “unbelievers” was to weaken the testimony of the Gospel.
 - iii. When people look at you, what do they see?
 1. Wake up, lay down... My 1stSgt.
 - b. Second, *the congregation had failed to live up to its full position in Christ.*
 - i. They lacked eternal foresight because of their pettiness.
 - ii. These Christians had become shortsighted, occupied with their own strife and troubles.
 - iii. They couldn’t see God’s big picture b/c they were focused on little problems.
 1. What’s your focus?
 - c. Paul is appealing to these believers to get their eyes up and off of these petty matters and onto things that have spiritual significance.

There’s an amazing spiritual reality here; Paul says...

1 Corinthians 6:2-4 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?

1. When Paul says “Do you not know” he’s really saying these are things you should know.
 - a. Those in Christ will judge the world and angels.
 - b. This I believe will occur during the millennial reign of Christ.

- c. Jude 14–15 “Behold, the Lord comes with ten thousands of His saints,
¹⁵ to execute judgment on all, to convict all who are ungodly among them of
all their ungodly deeds which they have committed in an ungodly way, and of
all the harsh things which ungodly sinners have spoken against Him.”
- d. In 2 Timothy it says that because He is faithful we will live with Him and we
will reign with Him.

2. What angels is Paul talking about?

- a. Not Charlie’s Angels; Not the LA Angels (last 3 years they have made it to the
American League Championship series and not advanced).
- b. My guardian angel? No.
- c. I believe this speaks of the angels that rebelled against God. We will judge the
1/3 of the angels that followed Satan and became his demons.

3. Paul’s point... If you are going to judge the world and angels, can’t you take care of
these little, insignificant, temporal matters without it being an issue?!

1 Corinthians 6:7 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?

- 1. In other words, Paul’s saying, “It is already a complete defeat for you.”
 - a. **Listen:** I know this is going to be hard for some of you to accept: It’s better
to lose money or possessions than to lose a brother or worse, to lose your
Christian testimony.
- 2. But there’s something in us that loves a good fight, especially when we think we’ve
been wronged or when we feel like we’ve done no wrong.
 - a. “I’ll go down swinging before I get cheated! You won’t get the best of me!”
- 3. Here’s what happens: A quarrel within the church begins; an offense is committed.
 - a. It does not get settled privately; it leaves the church and becomes public.
Everyone knows about it, everyone’s sees the disunity and dysfunction.
 - b. And we wonder why people on the outside are repulsed by the church.
 - c. These things ought not be so.

4. It certainly does not take into account what Jesus said, “*By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.*” - John 13:35
 - a. Later in this letter Paul writes, “*And now abide faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love*” – 1 Cor 13:13
5. Basically, Paul is saying that the loving thing to do is to accept wrong rather than going before unbelievers to resolve a dispute.

But the problem was that the Corinthian Christians selfishly pursued their own gain...

1 Corinthians 6:8 ⁸ **No, you yourselves do wrong and cheat, and *you do* these things *to your* brethren!**

1. Christians should treat one another this way.

Can Christians sue non-Christians?

1. Interesting question. Paul’s letter only addresses issues between believers within the church; so then it’s okay for a Christian to sue a non-Christian?
 - a. Can... Should?
2. Let me share some verses with you that might help you make that decision for yourself.
 - a. Micah 6:8 *He has shown you, O man, what is good; And what does the Lord require of you But to do justly, To love mercy, And to walk humbly with your God?*
 - i. Doing Right Withholding Punishment Being Unselfish
 - b. Romans 12:18 *If it is possible, as much as depends on you, live peaceably with all men.*
3. What does Jesus have to say? **READ Luke 6:27-38**
 - a. Mark those verse and mediate on that message.
 - b. What is Jesus saying?
 - i. Love your enemies, do good, lend hoping for nothing in return
 - ii. Be merciful, don’t judge, don’t condemn, **forgive.**

2. John MacArthur said, *“we are guilty from time to time of offending. It then becomes essential to the ongoing life of the church, the ongoing joy of believers that we be able to deal with those offenses with an attitude of forgiveness. In the end, what finally destroys every relationship is an inability to forgive. It isn’t the offense that destroys the relationship, it is the inability to forgive that destroys the relationship... the inability to forgive not only destroys relationships, it destroys the people who don’t forgive. It is not only destructive of relationships, it is self-destructive. And Scripture makes it very, very clear that where there is a lack of forgiveness, there will develop bitterness and out of bitterness come hatred... anger and... the pursuit of vengeance.”*
 - a. Courtroom cases rarely foster forgiveness.
3. If you win your court case, is everything all better? Probably not, bitterness and resentment remain.
 - a. Do you imagine you’ll have any success in inviting that person to church?
 - b. Instead of witnessing you were at war.
4. The Principle of the Matter
 - a. Question concerning principle is this: Does it bring Glory to God?
 - b. If it doesn’t bring glory to God, then Christian, you’re principally wrong.

What’s the ideal?

1. If your issue is with a Christian, then you follow the process outlined in Matthew 18.
 - a. You try to resolve your matter within the church while maintaining your love for one another and your Christian witness before the world.
 - b. If you can’t work it out yourself, talk to a mature Christian, seek out a church leader.
 - c. Come have a pastor help you come to a Christ-honoring resolution.
2. If your issue is with a non-Christian, then you need to pray!
 - a. My encouragement to you: don’t lose sight of eternal matters by looking at temporal earthly things.

- b. Jesus said in Matthew 6:19–21, “*Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal; but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.*”

Conclusion:

1. Where is your heart this morning?
2. If you want to experience the power of God...
 - a. If you want to know and fulfill the purposes of God in your life...
 - b. You've got to get your focus off of yourself and your things and move your focus up and onto Him!