

SEEKING THE BEST SOLUTION

1 Cor. 6:1-11

In recent years our society has been characterized by more and more lawsuits.

People sue for every imaginable cause!

Teachers are being sued by their students

Parents are being sued by their children.

Pastors are being sued by people in their congregation

Cartoon in popular religious magazine: Soloist stands to sing: I'd like to share a song the Lord gave me...

Even though He gave it to me, any reproduction in any form without written consent will constitute infringement of copyright law which allows me to sue your pants off!... Praise God!

Everything is covered with warning labels to protect manufacturer from law suits over every conceivable problem.

Professionals in every profession including pastors and church board members are being advised to have malpractice insurance, or directors insurance, in case someone decides to come after them.

Most revealing defense strategy I've seen: warning label. It is unlawful to use this product in any way except as instructed by the manufacturer!

Our litigious society has made taking other people to court a fundamental part of our American way of life!

What do you remember about the church at Corinth?
What was it like?

The church that had everything --EXCEPT LOVE

What happens when a church has everything except love?

First, most significant, problem of church without love:

Divisions and personality cults.

2nd problem:

They didn't care enough to go to a person whose lifestyle was destroying him and correct him.

Love won't let you just stay out of it and encourage destructive behavior.

Tolerance isn't the response of love

But, love won't cause you to *attack* the other person either!

Love ought to motivate us to go to people and speak to them in love, to correct them.

Right attitude: **we love each other too much to allow them to continue a destructive lifestyle.**

3rd problem:

Legal battles to solve conflicts

Each wanted their own way.

Each wanted his rights

They were willing to take each other to court to get it.

Self-centered attitudes of the Corinthians are still around today.

"I have my rights!" "They'll learn not to tangle with me!"

"I'm #1"

"You have to look out for #1!"

CONCERNING LAWSUITS 6:1-11

CIRCUMSTANCES DESCRIBED 6:1 *If any of you has a dispute with another, dare he take it before the*

ungodly for judgment instead of before the saints?

They were taking personal grievances against each other to civil courts.

Corinth was famous for its law suits.

Arbitrators representing each side

Public arbitrator was named to take charge of debate

Court (Juries frequently had 40 people, sometimes 201 to 401, up to 1000. even 6000 jurors!!)

Corinthians were following the spirit of the age.

They were following the Corinthian standard

But what about God's standards?

What about the church today?

Christian Conciliation Services

Trying to get believers to settle their disputes by arbitration-where possible before believers

To direct funds to the real causes and to ministry-rather than to lawyers.

To demonstrate that God's people can handle such affairs in an appropriate way.

To eliminate the "laughing stock" attitude created by our petty feuds!

We say we love each other and live for God.

Where does all this legal mess come from then?

Study in Albuquerque a few years ago-\$50 million dollars spent by *believers against one another* just in that city. What about some of the bigger, or crazier places?

Are we as God's people more like Him, or more like Californians (Corinthians)???

The problem *wasn't* criminal acts.

(Justice sought for crimes committed)

The problem *wasn't* an insurance claim.

Problem *wasn't* defense against accusations.

Paul defended himself against Jewish accusations against him.

The problem was PERSONAL DISPUTES.

(someone offended another)

CORRECTION SUGGESTED 6:2-8

Reason for correction 6:2-3 ESCHATOLOGY!!!

Problems between the saints should be resolved by the saints.

3 times in this passage he asks: *Don't you know ...*

There's something we *should* know, that the Corinthians have apparently overlooked (twice in 2 verses!)

Don't you know that we've been chosen by God as His instruments to judge the world?

If we can handle that responsibility, don't you think we can resolve our petty problems now without calling on pagan courts to bail us out?

(1) The saints will judge the world 2

"Do you not know that the saints will judge the world? And if you are to judge the world, are you not competent to judge trivial cases?"

Common knowledge since Enoch's time (just after Adam): [Jude 14:] Enoch prophesied: *"See, the Lord is coming with thousands upon thousands of his holy ones to judge everyone, and to convict all the ungodly of all the ungodly acts they have done in the ungodly way, and of all the harsh words ungodly sinners have spoken against him."*

If God's going to use us to judge the world, shouldn't we be able to judge the little things of this life?

He doesn't say this to belittle their causes.

He's merely observing that *ALL* lives offenses are small in the light of eternity and God's day of judgment!

(2) The saints will judge angels ³*Do you not know that we will judge angels? How much more the things of this life!*

(no article => points to their nature and character)

Points to angels as greatest of created beings

(above the others)

If we're to judge *angels*, shouldn't we be able to deal with ordinary things of daily living?

(*biotica* => ordinary things of common life)

Suggestions for correction 6:4-7

THREE ALTERNATIVES: *"If you have disputes about such matters, appoint as judges even men of little account in the church!*

⁵*I say this to shame you. Is it possible that there is nobody among you wise enough to judge a dispute between believers? ⁶But instead, one brother goes to law against another and this in front of unbelievers! ⁷The very fact that you have lawsuits among you means you have been completely defeated already. Why not rather be wronged? Why not rather be cheated?*

(1) Worst solution: Take them to court.

That's what they were doing.

It's not appropriate for God's people.

By taking the issue there, we've already lost the battle!

It doesn't really matter who wins; *we lose!*

(2) Better solution (6:4-6): Have the church settle it.

We ought to be able to settle differences between believers.

We'd be better off to have the worst judge the church could offer than the best of the world's.

We'd be ahead to choose least respected brother rather than unjust people of the world.

He already addressed their pride about their wisdom (1-4)-Now he asks if there isn't *someone* among them who is "wise" enough to deal with such issues. Why go outside to find an arbitrator?

How could it be that a church that brags so much about their gifts, doesn't have anyone capable of acting as arbitrator?

Two Main Problems with this Alternative:

(1) No *real* authority to do anything.

Person corrected will probably just go to another church

(2) It may not go *my* way!

Big problem with this solution: *it doesn't resolve real issue: lack of love for one another!*

(3) Best solution 6:7: Take the loss/write it off/forget it!

“The very fact that you have lawsuits among you means you have been completely defeated already. Why not rather be wronged? Why not rather be cheated?”

A better solution: to be cheated out of what is rightfully ours.

Absorb the loss rather than carry struggle to pagan courts.

Paul's point isn't just a legalistic rejection of court system.

That's how most people use this passage.

There's a lot more at stake here than that!

He's after real love!

Severity of problem 6:8 What are they doing?

“Instead, you yourselves cheat and do wrong, and you do this to your brothers.”

The *real* problem isn't the court system!

It isn't even in going to court though that's not the answer!

Rather than sacrifice their rights for the good of another, they are guilty of the offense-they are the offenders.

They are fighting for their rights, and even cheating each other!

Instead of giving up their rights and allowing themselves to be offended, *they* are the offenders.

Each offends the principle of love . . .

. . . by not watching out for his brother's welfare

. . . by cheating his brother

Lifestyle of world they're imitating described 6:9-11

=> Court officials *How do you expect to get justice from the unjust?*

They're manifesting spirit of world from which they'd been delivered (and to which the judges belong!)

To help them see what they're doing, he describes lifestyle of the world they're imitating, and of judges they've been taking problems to.

9-10 *"Do you not know that the wicked will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: Neither the sexually immoral nor idolaters nor adulterers nor male prostitutes nor homosexual offenders ¹⁰nor thieves nor the greedy nor drunkards nor slanderers nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God."*

Evil they're committing is dangerously close to the way of the world. This IS the lifestyle of those they're calling on to judge them.

Such people have little to offer Christians to help us resolve our conflicts.

The church is submitting itself to these unjust people
It is placing itself under that kind of authority.

We'd be better to take our problems to church, rather than to civil courts.

He compares these judges to those who have believed 6:11 *"that is what some of you were. But you*

were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God."

They're forgetting what God called us out of!

They're going back to the old lifestyle.

They're forgetting about God's grace in calling us out of it!

We used to live like that. That used to be our standard too.

By God's grace we're now *different!*

SO ACT LIKE IT!!!

We shouldn't be treating each other as *pagans* treat each other!

We ought to solve problems ourselves NOT take them to court!

If you have a conflict with a brother, take it to the church. (Matt. 18)

Privately ->before witnesses ->through elders to the church

Or, *better yet, best of all, just absorb the loss.*

I'm impressed by the fact that in our litigious society, of law suits and road rage, it never seems to occur to us that we could just forget it! *We actually could LET GO OF IT!!!!*

Don't fight for your rights! Let it GO!!!

IT IS BETTER TO ACCEPT THE WRONG OTHERS MAY DO TO US

THAN TO FIGHT IT OUT IN CIVIL COURTS!

But, **We don't like that idea.**

We want our rights.

We want to have our way.

We may not have the problem with the courts, but most of us do have the problem with the attitude!

We want our rights! We want to have our own way!

We've forgotten God's grace!

We've forgotten what we really deserve!

We need to learn a better way: the way of sacrificial love that gives up our rights for the good of others.

Phil. 2:1-5 (ff.)

*If you have any encouragement from being united with Christ,
(and you do!)*

if [you have] any comfort from his love,

if [you have] any fellowship with the Spirit,

if [you have received] any tenderness and compassion,

²*then make my joy complete by being like-minded,*

having the same love, being one in spirit and purpose.

³***Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit,***

but in humility consider others better than yourselves.

⁴*Each of you should look not only to your own interests,*

but also to the interests of others.

⁵***Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus***

Paul's prescription: 6:7-8

The world says: "Do unto others before they do unto you!"

"Stand up for your rights!"

"You can't do this to me and get away with it!"

Love says:

**It's better to accept the wrong others may do to you
than fight over it!**