

First Corinthians 6

Introduction:

1. Having dealt with the church judgment of large, scandalous sins against God, Paul turns to church judgment of small private offences.
2. How does church judgment in chapters 5 and 6 relate together? http://www.letgodbetrue.com/Sermons/pdf/Church_Discipline.pdf.
3. Many considerations taught about the body are available: http://www.letgodbetrue.com/Sermons/pdf/Your_Body_Is_the_Lords.pdf.

Outline of Chapter 6:

1. Settling small private differences (1-8)
2. Reminder of legal position in Christ (9-11)
3. Duty to keep physical bodies holy (12-20).

6:1 Paul condemned and ridiculed settling differences before the world and not the church.

- A. Paul said rather plainly, “How dare you do something so ridiculous in handling offences?”
- B. It did not matter which member or situation was considered, not “any” of them should do so.
- C. These are private offences between one member, “one of you,” and another member.
- D. These are very small offences of this life, as we shall discover by reading ahead (6:2-3).
- E. There is an enormous difference between the wicked and the saints (Genesis 4:26; 6:1-8).
- F. But note Paul’s descriptor of the wicked: he calls them unjust – unable to judge rightly!
- G. The saints of God, armed with the wisdom of the Spirit and His Word, are far superior!
- H. It is totally wrong for saints of the Most High God to stoop to the unjust courts of this world.
- I. If you have a problem with any brother, including a wife or family member, bring the matter to the church for righteous and wise judgment, before you go to the profane pagans outside.
- J. If saints are known by love to one another, how in the world can they sue one another at law!
- K. Please consider and understand why we settle this issue when anyone joins our congregation.
- L. Jesus taught a very simple procedure for settling disputes between brothers (Matt 18:15-18).

6:2 Since saints shall participate in eternal judgment of sinners, they can handle small matters.

- A. Paul assumed the Corinthians knew they would participate in judging the world in the future.
- B. This judgment is by approval and participation of the final judgment of the Lord Jesus Christ.
 1. Consider the martyrs are calling for the judgment of their murderers now (Rev 6:9-11).
 2. Enoch testified long ago that the saints will come with Christ in judgment (Jude 1:14-15).
 3. David alluded to saints having dominion over the wicked in the resurrection (Ps 49:14).
 4. Daniel told of a day in which the saints would judge in Christ’s kingdom (Daniel 7:22).
 5. Overcomers, the faithful in Jesus, will reign with Christ in heaven (Rev 2:26-27; 3:21).
 6. Never forget there are many saints on white horses behind the Lord (Rev 19:11-16).
 7. Our union with Jesus Christ is such we even seated with Him now (Eph 1:19-23 cp 2:6).
 8. The purchase of Jesus Christ has made us one as His brethren (Heb 2:10-11 cp 12:22-24).
- C. If we have such a great position in Christ, we can easily judge minor offences here and now.
- D. Paul ridiculed the problem at Corinth by mocking the controversies as the “smallest matters.”

6:3 Since saints shall participate in eternal judgment of angels, they can handle small matters.

- A. Paul takes his argument one step further and reminds them that the saints shall judge angels.
 1. Consider the verses above (6:2) to see the position and relation of saints with their King.
 2. God gave sentence against the angels, but formal judgment waits (II Peter 2:4; Jude 1:6).
 3. The devils dread the coming day of judgment at the hands of our Prince (Mark 1:24; 5:7).
 4. Paul ended his letter to Rome alluding to the coming destruction of Satan (Rom 16:20).
- B. If we have such a great position in Christ, we can easily judge minor offences here and now.
- C. Paul ridiculed the problem at Corinth by mocking the controversies by “how much more.”

- 6:4 **Since saints have position to adjudicate matters in this life, the simplest saints should work.**
- Paul continued to ridicule their carnal controversies by suggesting they use the least esteemed and most incompetent among their membership to settle these smallest matters!
 - Since all saints will judge the world and angels, the least are superior to the world's judges.
 - Why would any members go to the world, when they have such exalted judges in the church?
 - What would effeminate compromisers of today's "Christianity" think of this harsh sarcasm?
 - He has just established by arguing from the greater to the lesser (6:2-3) that they do indeed have the ability, position, privilege, and duty to judge the minor matters of this life.
 - If such smallest matters of this life needed adjudication, the least members would be enough.
 - Love a pinch of irony! Paul did not intend what he wrote, but he rebuked foolish Corinth.
 - We know Paul used irony from the next sentence and the direction for seeking out wise men.
- 6:5 **Paul shamed the Corinthians for inability to find a wise man capable of simple judgment.**
- He admitted he was ridiculing their incompetence and speaking ironically in the verse before.
 - He mocked this great and haughty church for inability to settle private disputes internally.
 - He mocked this great and haughty church for lacking even a single man able to adjudicate.
 - We are our brothers' keepers, and we should never neglect our duty for any foolish reason.
- 6:6 **The members at Corinth were suing each other at law before the unbelieving pagans.**
- Jesus taught a very simple procedure for settling disputes between brothers (Matt 18:15-18).
 - Private matters should be settled quietly between the two parties, if at all possible.
 - If that does not work, then two or three witnesses should be used to settle the matter.
 - If that does not work, then the church should adjudicate the matter by simple vote; which majority vote the church will then hold as its unanimous position against the offender.
 - If that does not work, then the scorner should be thrown to the world, as in I Cor 5:5.
 - The blessed Lord Jesus Christ condemns scornors by confirming the church's judgment.
 - Please consider and understand why we settle this issue when anyone joins our congregation.
 - Here is apostolic tradition: brothers suing at law will be excluded immediately (II Thess 3:6).
- 6:7 **Suing brothers at law for the minor matters of this life is hatred unbefitting saints of God.**
- Suing brothers at law before the world was a terrible fault of this church, which Paul stated.
 - They were sinning against the doctrine of Jesus Christ (Matt 18:15-18) and their mutual position and authority in Christ (6:1-6). And yet show I unto you a more excellent way!
 - But there is even a simpler method for solving such matters than applying Matthew 18:15-18.
 - A glorious man can defer his anger and pass over the transgressions of others (Pr 19:11).
 - True love does not look for revenge for such insignificant and minor matters of this life.
 - It is hatred, and therefore murder, to seek to punish a brother for such things (Matt 5:22).
 - True peacemakers taught by the Spirit will happily overlook such things (James 3:18).
 - Why cannot some people overlook others' faults? Because they have a black heart!
 - The love of Christ in our hearts will overlook, forgive, and forget offences by brothers.
 - If we loved the family of God, we would allow ourselves to be defrauded in such things.
 - We must follow the forgiving, forbearing, and tender spirit Paul espoused (Eph 4:31-32).
 - There is a more excellent way to handle such things – the way of charity: "Beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things" (I Cor 13:7).
- 6:8 **Paul summarized their error and sin by describing it as defrauding their own brethren.**
- Paul played off "defrauded" in the previous verse by pointing out their very opposite choice.
 - To go the ungodly world to get revenge or compensation, you defraud your dear brothers.
 - Have you got the point yet? It is absolutely wrong to fight with brethren over minor matters.

6:9 **The future kingdom of God is forever closed to the unrighteous men of this sinful world.**

- A. Paul is transitioning from judging private matters to the other great subject following.
 - 1. Why would the church go to the unrighteous for judgment, when God will reject them?
 - 2. Why would the church behave in such a way, when such conduct will close heaven?
- B. The Corinthians, living in a very lascivious city indeed, needed plain reminders about sin.
 - 1. The future inheritance of the kingdom of God – heaven – is closed to the unrighteous.
 - 2. Paul began by reminding them to avoid deception that God ever accepts such sinners.
 - 3. In a carnal and lascivious culture approving these sins, it is hard to keep holy judgment.
 - 4. Fornicators are those sinning sexually with anyone or anything outside godly marriage.
 - 5. Idolaters are those sinning in worship by honoring false gods or any images to them.
 - 6. Adulterers are those sinning sexually by breaking either their or another's marital bond.
 - 7. Effeminate are those men that are womanly, cross-dressers, or anything related in kind.
 - 8. Abusers of themselves with mankind are faggots not properly using the opposite sex.

6:10 **The future kingdom of God is forever closed to the unrighteous men of this sinful world.**

- A. Paul is transitioning from judging private matters to the other great subject following.
- B. He stated again the impossibility of such sinners entering into eternal glory after death.
- C. The Corinthians, living in a very lascivious city indeed, needed plain reminders about sin.
 - 1. The future inheritance of the kingdom of God – heaven – is closed to the unrighteous.
 - 2. Thieves are those violating property rights of others and taking things not rightly theirs.
 - 3. Covetous are those discontent with their possessions and envious of what others have.
 - 4. Drunkards are those using alcohol in excess to where they lose judgment due their role.
 - 5. Revilers are those who despise and scorn others with opprobrious language and railing.
 - 6. Extortioners are those applying excessive force by any means to accomplish their will.
- D. Heaven is open to the righteous, not to those with a glib tongue and hypocritical covering.
 - 1. Jesus will condemn many religious pretenders to accept only the righteous (Mat 7:21-23).
 - 2. Outside the gate of the holy city are all sort of sinners, according to Jesus (Rev 21:8,27).
 - 3. Therefore, we read strong exhortations to good works (I Tim 6:17-19; II Pet 1:10-11).

6:11 **It is only by the grace of God through the salvation in Christ Jesus sinners are accepted.**

- A. There were in the Corinthian church sinners of every sort just listed by the apostle Paul.
- B. A true Christian has such sins only in the past, "were" some of you (II Cor 5:17; I Pet 4:1-5).
- C. But ye are washed by the blood of Christ and regeneration of the Spirit (Rev 1:5; Titus 3:5).
- D. But ye are sanctified by the death of Christ and birth of the Spirit (Heb 10:10-14; John 3:8).
- E. But ye are justified by the death of Christ and the new man of the Spirit (Rom 4:25; Ep 4:24).
- F. Remember, the apostle has already combined several terms of their salvation (I Cor 1:30).

6:12 **Paul went so far in pursuit of righteousness he would strictly rule even matters of liberty.**

- A. "All things are lawful unto me" must be limited to things indifferent as matters of liberty.
- B. "All things are lawful unto me" must be limited to things God had not specifically prohibited.
- C. The Corinthians lived in a very lascivious city and time, in which all things were lawful.
- D. They were a carnal church and took much pride (5:2) and excess (8:1) in lawful things.
- E. Jesus taught sacrificing an eye or hand to avoid the horrible sin of adultery (Matt 5:29-30).
- F. Saints must rule all appetites, lusts, and passions for the glory of God, even allowable ones.
- G. Saints do not allow bodily desires or needs to become binding, controlling, or ruling.
- H. There are things indifferent, matters of liberty, such as food, yet they are also to be ruled.
- I. By looking ahead to the next verse, we see the apostle considering the use of food for eating.
- J. The rule guides meat offered to idols (10:23); here it condemns carnal excesses of Corinth.
- K. We are in a context between effeminate fornicators (9-11) and the sin of fornication (13-20).

- 6:13 **Each body belongs to God; and while it needs food to survive, it does not need fornication.**
- A. Here is a carnal mantra or proverb used to justify a lascivious and luxurious use of food.
 - B. The natural use of a thing should never be taken to excess without sober prudence limiting it.
 - C. The present relationship of food and our body will end, for God will destroy both of them.
 - D. The temporary functions and pleasures of eating begin to disappear even before we die!
 - E. While eating may be a matter of liberty to be ruled, fornication is absolutely not tolerated.
 - F. But fornication is not at all a thing indifferent, for it is not something the body must have.
 - G. But fornication is not at all a thing indifferent, for it is condemned as a work of the flesh.
 - H. Fornication is forbidden, as our bodies are for the Lord, and He has saved our bodies.
 - I. The Lord is for our body: He created, redeemed, preserves, inhabits, and will resurrect it.
 - J. The ultimate use of your body is for the glory of God, as are others things as well (10:31).
 - K. The first argument against fornication is the body's dedication rather to the service of God.
- 6:14 **God raised up the body of the Lord Jesus, and He will also raise up the bodies of the saints.**
- A. The body is an integral part of our being, and God saved our Lord's body from corruption.
 - B. God is not through with our bodies; He will raise them up again by His own mighty power.
 - C. He will change and glorify our bodies, just as He did the body of the Lord Jesus (Phil 3:21).
 - D. Before this epistle ends, Paul spent a whole chapter analyzing the resurrection (I Cor 15).
 - E. The second argument against fornication is God's plan for spiritual use of your body.
- 6:15 **Since our physical bodies belong to Christ, it is a heinous sin to use them with a harlot.**
- A. Know ye not? Basic knowledge follows – Jesus Christ has purchased your physical body.
 - B. Know ye not? Basic knowledge follows – your body is part of Christ's mystical body.
 - C. It is a heinous thing to take a member of Christ and join it to a wicked, profane harlot.
 - D. The third argument against fornication is our body's mystical union with Jesus Christ.
 - E. Fornication is a very heinous thing viewed this way – joining Christ to a profane whore.
- 6:16 **In case they forgot the full nature of sexual intercourse, Paul reminded them of it.**
- A. Know ye not? Basic knowledge follows – sexual intercourse makes two bodies into one.
 - B. For the ignorant and rebellious, let it be understood that sex does not make a marriage.
 - C. Marriage is more than sex – it is first and foremost a covenant of companionship before God.
- 6:17 **Our relationship with Jesus Christ is a connection and union by spirit in our new man.**
- A. By regeneration we partake of a vital union with Jesus Christ through the Holy Spirit.
 - B. There is a vital participation and relationship to Jesus Christ in our new man (Eph 2:6).
 - C. Our spiritual union with Christ is precious and permanent, not to be violated with a whore.
- 6:18 **Fornication is a great sin in this context, for it is a sin against your blood-purchased body.**
- A. Flee fornication. Some temptations you fight; this one is defeated by flight (II Tim 2:22).
 - B. Fornication is unique in that involves a sin involving the actual body, unlike others.
 - C. If this distinction of sins is obscure to you, it was plain enough for God to inspire it.
 - D. The fourth argument against fornication is the unique nature of sex sins involving the body, which looks back at being joined to Christ (15) and looks forward at housing the Spirit (19).
- 6:19 **Your physical body is the temple dwelling place of the Holy Spirit and it is not your own.**
- A. Know ye not? Basic knowledge follows – God lives in His saints' bodies by His Holy Spirit.
 - B. God sent the Holy Spirit to live inside your body, so your body is not simply yours to use.
 - C. You do not have right or reason to use your body in any way you think; it is God's body.

- D. The context makes fornication the primary thought here, not cigarettes or beer or red meat.
- E. Not only did God create your body, making it His; He also purchased it by Christ's sacrifice.

6:20 **You were bought with a price – body, soul, and spirit – so you must glorify God with them.**

- A. Your body is not yours by lawful purchase; Jesus Christ bought it with His precious blood.
- B. You do not have the right to do with your body or to you body whatever you wish or think.
- C. We are waiting for final and formal adoption of our bodies – their redemption (Rom 8:23).
- D. Therefore, we are duty bound to glorify God in both body and spirit, as they are both His.
- E. So our bodies are doubly His, for He has created us and purchased us for Himself. Amen!

Conclusion:

- 1. It is a first rule to recognize that you were created by God and for God; therefore you must live for Him only.
- 2. It is a second rule to recognize you were purchased by Christ for Christ; therefore you must live for Him only.

Additional study:

- 1. Sermon outline detailing all aspects of church discipline: http://www.letgodbettrue.com/Sermons/pdf/Church_Discipline.pdf.
- 2. Sermon detailing Jesus Christ's ownership of your body: http://www.letgodbettrue.com/Sermons/pdf/Your_Body_Is_the_Lords.pdf.