

CHRISTIAN AND CIVIL LAW

1 Corinthians 6: 1-11

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INTRODUCTION

Those who come to Christ have many adjustments to make in addition to embracing new ideas about nature and follow the new faith in Christ. They are required to learn how to deal with one another as God's people. The instruction of Paul in this passage of the book of Corinthians shows the wrongdoing of some brethren dealing with others in an unjustifiable manner as followers of Christ. Thereby bringing the name of Christ into disrepute allowing unbelievers to settle their cases instead of Brethren in the Church. This situation faced by the Corinthian Church unlikely to develop in any other Church in ancient or now. Paul instruction at that time is still relevant to us now, for us to deal with ethical issues whatever they may be. God has given Christians the responsibility to deal with specific issues whatever they may be and maintain the Christian faith as true follower of Jesus Christ.

THE SAINTS WILL JUDGE THE WORLD [*1 Cor. 6. 1-3*]

Paul was astonished to hear of a brother living with his father's wife and was proud of doing such, and shamelessly instituting lawsuit between brethren. To address such immorality, prompted Paul in addressing the Corinthian Church in this manner to restore the image of Christ - [*1 Cor. 5:1, 6:1*]. Christians will miss the fundamentals to live that communal life in the Church if they do not settle issues internally than exposing themselves in the public, thereby bringing the name Christ to disrepute. The members have the responsibility and owe each other the duty to judge between right and wrong and exercise Church discipline no matter the problem.

With respect to Christians judging the world, Paul was clearly appealing to Christians to settle disputes within the Church and avoid going to circular courts and to stop giving room to outsiders to make mockery of the Church. [*1 Cor. 6:2*]. Two observations may be helpful here.

- First apostle Paul appears to be appealing in respect of what happened to Daniel in [**Dan. 7:22**]
- Second, if God will look to Christians when He judges the world, surely, they are capable of rendering judgment in lesser matters. Christians have no responsibility for judging outsiders in this present age, they are judge to those who are within the Church [**2 Cor. 5:12**].

When the Lord returns and all humanity stands before God in judgement [**2 Cor. 5:10**], the godly ways of Christian will judge people in the same way that Noah righteousness indicted the world at that time [**Heb. 11:7**].

This clearly shows that the godly lives of believers would bear final judgement of human race and even sinful angels [**1 Cor. 6:3**]. Both [**2 Pet. 2:4** and **Jude 6**] speaks of angels who sinned.

Precisely God will not delegate His function to humans to seat on judgement to pass verdict. The reasonable conclusion here, is that the faithful lives of Christians will pass judgement on the sin of angels in the same way that their good lives will pass judgement on the ungodly world [**Matt. 19:28, Heb. 11:7**]. The Corinthian brethren were qualified to sit in judgement when their members had disputes over matters of this life. They were found in effective here.

LAWSUIT ARE FOR UNBELIEVERS AND NOT CHRISTIANS

Paul was visibly not happy with the Corinthian brethren with report of their going to worldly courts to decide their disputes. [**1 Cort. 6:4-8**]. The issues were purely to do with matters of this life, to do with may be, providing necessities for family or interpersonal relationship. Could be disputes as a result of properties or an assigned stall in the marketplace, the settlement of debt, or agreed on wages disputes that would have caused the conflicts. No matter the dispute, the Church would do better in settling their differences instead of allowing worldly judges to come between Christians. Apostle Paul found it disturbing for Christian to expose themselves to this level in the Christian family.

He would not take the excuse of not having wise and knowledgeable brethren in the Church to decide matters between believers instead of having a Lawsuit outside the Church [**1 Cor. 6:5**].

By presenting their cases before unbelievers, Christians were publicly proclaiming that they had no one among them who was wise or trusted enough to judge such matters. [**1Cor. 6:7**]

CHRIST EXAMPLE WHEN FACED WITH A DISPUTE

Jesus had set an example that they would follow in situation like this. [**2 Cor. 8:9**]. Although He had been rich, for their sake, Jesus had become poor so that they could be rich. If an enemy were to sue a follower of Christ for his shirt, Jesus said His follower should give the enemy his coat too [**Matt. 5:40-42**].

When a Christian is convinced that a brother or a sister has done an injustice, an option for any strong believer is to dismiss the matter and forgive the offence. If any individual insists to get more wages after performing a piece of work whether a Christian or unbeliever, the most Christian thing to do is to pay him the extra amount. If it is to do with properties going beyond some feet on calculated boundary, Jesus would say let him have the land instead of insisting on strict justice we believe is due us. Paul asked, why not rather be wrong? why not rather be defrauded? [**1 Cor. 6:7**]

This calls for wise and faithful brethren in the Church to step up for claimed injustices to be resolved among brethren instead of going to the law court. [**1 Cort. 6:8**]

THE KINGDOM IS FOR THE RIGHTEOUS AND NOT FOR UNBELIEVERS [1 Cort. 6:9-11]

Every one of us will agree with the passage quoted that, whatever we do within the household of faith is to guide those of us who are real believers and not the outsiders. [**Rom. 10:17-18**]. That is why we need to be extra careful and watch our actions and in actions in the brotherhood [**1 Cor. 6:9**]. The outsiders are watching and taking details of whatever, we do and use such noted abnormalities against the Church when they have the opportunity to do so. It could be an individual out of a carefree attitude that would have done the act but the backlash would come to the Church and bring shame to the entire body of Christ. [**Col. 1:13, 18**]. This should appeal to our conscience to be mindful of whatever we do as believers not to think of ourselves alone in any situation. But think of the after effect to the Church and Christ who has called us into His

Church. Any wrong behavior we portray similar to the listed in this text cut off such individual from the Kingdom of God [**1 Cor. 6:11-12**].

CONCLUSION

Two well-intentioned people may see the same situation differently. Both may be convinced that they are right. If both parties are Christians, Paul's admonition would be that they talk to one another as reasonable men, each being ready to yield. It is better to be wronged Paul said [**1Cor. 6:7b**] than to allow such dispute to be barriers between brothers. If mutual agreement cannot be reached, the apostle insisted that brothers present their case before wise men in the Church. In the spirit of Christ, both parties should accept their judgment.

Only in extreme cases would a believer be justified in taking a brother before a circular court. This should be a last resort, when one party in dispute refuses to bargain in good faith and rejects the judgment of fellow Christians. This should be considered a defeat to the brethren. A congregation might need to consider disciplinary action against any brother who would show such greed and disrespect for the good name of the Lords Church.