

08





1 Corinthians 6:1-11

WISDOM IN CONFLICT

WEEK 8

Wisdom in Conflict

Paul brings up another example of embarrassing behavior among the Corinthians. This stands in contrast to the situation described in chapter 5. Paul has heard that the Corinthians are going to courts of law to settle their disputes rather than working it out amongst themselves. Today, some have pointed to 1 Corinthians 6 to argue that Christians should not go to the police or the courts in cases of violence or lawbreaking. This is not Paul's point. In Romans 13, Paul affirms the role of government in punishing lawbreakers. The situation Paul is addressing in this case is that of a civil court—a petty disagreement in which one party sues the other. The irony here is that the Corinthians are willing to overlook blatant sexual sin in the community but are not willing to overlook being wronged in some smaller matter.

The problem, once again, comes down to how the church represents Christ to the outside world. Paul declares in verse 7, “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?” In the earlier chapters, Paul has argued that spiritual wisdom is shaped by the way of the cross—the willingness to lay one's life down for another. This sort of wisdom should be guiding how the church handles conflict. Even if some members lack this wisdom, the larger community should recognize this and settle the disputes. Two Christians going to non-believers arguing for their rights and privileges proves that the way of Christ is not being practiced in the church. Even if they “win” their case, they “lose” for the cause of Christ.

Daily Readings

- 01 1 Corinthians 6:1-11
- 02 Matthew 18:15-17
- 03 1 Thessalonians 4:1-12
- 04 Galatians 5:13-25
- 05 Genesis 13:7-9
- 06 Romans 8:31-39
- 07 Titus 3:3-7

LAWSUITS AMONG BELIEVERS

If any of you has a dispute with another, do you dare to take it before the ungodly for judgment instead of before the Lord's people? ² Or do you not know that the Lord's people will judge the world? And if you are to judge the world, are you not competent to judge trivial cases? ³ Do you not know that we will judge angels? How much more the things of this life! ⁴ Therefore, if you have disputes about such matters, do you ask for a ruling from those whose way of life is scorned 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? ⁶ But instead, one brother takes another to court—and this in front of unbelievers!

⁷ 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? ⁸ Instead, you yourselves cheat and do wrong, and you do this to your brothers and sisters. ⁹ Or do you not know that wrongdoers will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: Neither the sexually immoral nor idolaters nor adulterers nor men who have sex with men ¹⁰ nor thieves nor the greedy nor drunkards nor slanderers nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God. ¹¹ And 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.

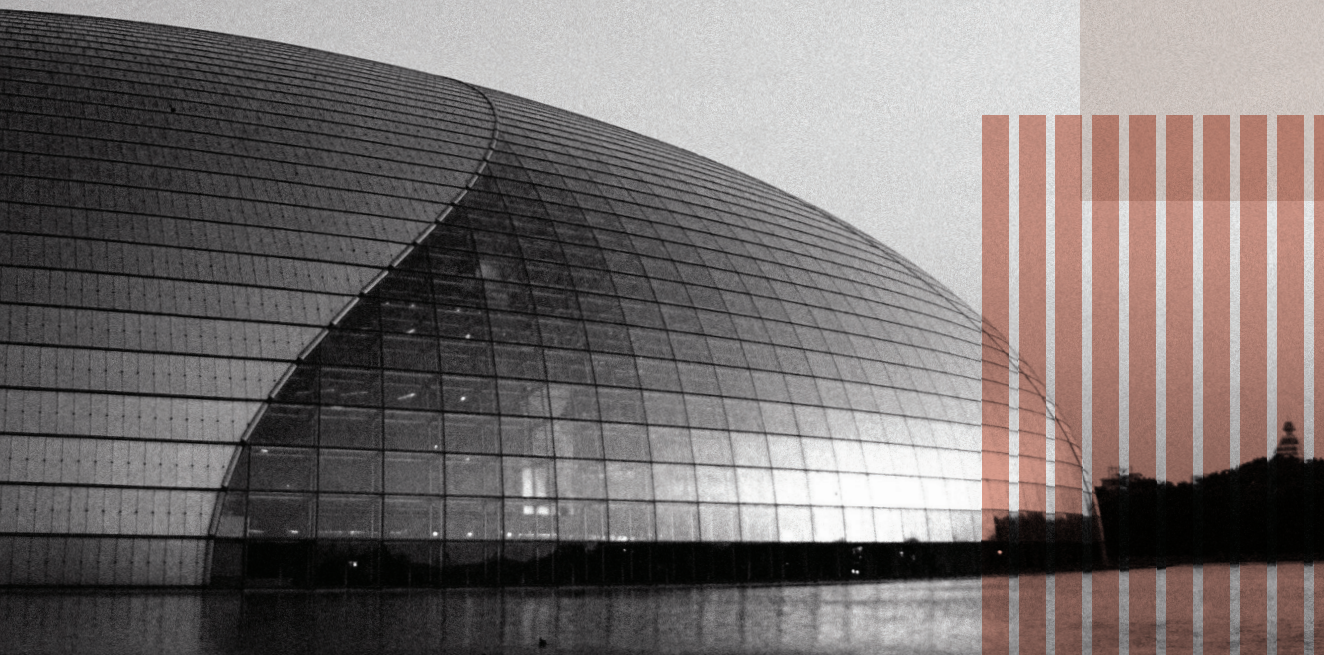


1 Corinthians 6:1-11

Discussion Guide

Anger is an acid that does more harm to the vessel in which it is stored, than to anything onto which it is poured.

ANONYMOUS



WARM UP

Recall a dispute you had with a classmate in elementary school. Does it seem as significant to you now as it did back then? Why? Are there disagreements that cause you to lose sleep today that might seem trivial twenty years from now?

What are practical ways you have found to let go of differences and repair relationships with others?

EXPLORING 1 CORINTHIANS 6:1-11

Discuss the circumstances in verses 1-6. Notice Paul's series of rhetorical questions. He seems *really* frustrated with the Corinthians over this issue. Why?

How is our Christian witness diminished when there are lawsuits among believers? How does this affect the reputation of Christ's church in our community?

What is Paul's conclusion in verse 7? Is Paul suggesting that it would be better to be wronged than to discredit our witness publicly? Considering this, should we not pursue every avenue possible before taking disputes with other believers to civil courts?

What do verses 9-11 tell us concerning the amazing grace of God? How do these verses connect with the previous rebuke (5:1-2)?

What is the significance of the three words listed in verse 11—washed, sanctified, and justified?

Why is it important to be washed, sanctified, and justified in the name of Jesus and by the Holy Spirit? Is there another name or spirit who can declare us righteous before God? (Note: We are not “made” righteous, but “declared” righteous through the atoning work of Christ.)

APPLICATION

Spend time this week considering how God, the Righteous and Holy Judge, has imparted His grace, and mercy to you. Contemplate Romans 8.

PRAYER

List one or two prayer concerns to share with your group.

Is there a believer who has wronged you to whom you need to extend forgiveness?