

I Corinthians

Chapter 6:1-20

¹Does any one of you, when he has a **case** against his **neighbor**, **dare** to go to **law** before the **unrighteous** and not before the saints?

Case > (Strong's) *pragma* > a deed, a matter

Utlely > This (Greek word) is used in the Koine Greek Papyri found in Egypt for (1) "an action" or "a deed"; (2) "a lawsuit"; (3) "trouble" or "difficulty"; (4) "business" or "trade"

Neighbor > (Strong's) *other*

MacArthur > His neighbor is literally "another" and is probably best rendered that way.

Dare > (Strong's) *to have courage, to be bold*

Law > (Strong's) *krino* > to judge, to decide

Wiersbe > The Greeks in general, and the Athenians in particular, were known for their involvement in the courts. The Greek playwright Aristophanes has one of his characters look at a map and ask where Greece is located. When it is pointed out to him, he replies that there must be some mistake—because he cannot see any lawsuits going on!

Barclay > The Greeks were in fact famous, or notorious, for their love of going to law

Keener > Roman society was notoriously litigious, and Corinth, with its rising class of *nouveau riche*, was even more so

MacArthur > One ancient writer claimed that, in a manner of speaking, every Athenian was a lawyer. When a problem arose between two parties that they could not settle between themselves, the first recourse was private arbitration. Each party was assigned a disinterested private citizen as an arbitrator, and the two arbitrators, along with a neutral third person, would attempt to resolve the problem. If they failed, the case was turned over to a court of forty, who assigned a public arbitrator to each party.

Interestingly, every citizen had to serve as a public arbitrator during the sixtieth year of his life. If public arbitration failed, the case went to a jury court, composed of from several hundred to several thousand jurors. Every citizen over thirty years of age was subject to serving as a juror.

Unrighteous > (MacArthur) Unrighteous does not refer to the moral character but to the spiritual standing of those before whom the Christians were taking their cases. The public arbitrators and jurors were unsaved and therefore unjustified, or unrighteous.

Consider something ... from the very beginning of this book Paul has been contrasting the “world’s wisdom” with that of the Lord’s. Keep that thought in mind as you look at some of Paul’s arguments in these first eight verses.

²Or do you not know that the saints will judge the world? If the world is judged by you, are you not competent to constitute the smallest law courts? ³Do you not know that we will judge angels? How much more matters of this life?

Do you not know > (Constable) *Do you not know* appears six times in this chapter ... and in each case it introduces a subject that Corinthian Christians should have known.

Matthew 19:28 > *So Jesus said to them, “Assuredly I say to you, that in the regeneration, when the Son of Man sits on the throne of His glory, you who have followed Me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.*

Smallest > (Strong’s) least (in size, amount, dignity, etc.)

Swindoll > Because one day the saints will be entrusted with judging the weightiest matters of the future world, why are they having such trouble arbitrating the smallest issues of the present world (1 Cor. 6:2-3)? The language Paul uses to refer to lawsuits appropriate for “the smallest” courts (6:2) likely refers to trivial matters that never should have achieved such a pitch of fury.

Do you not know that we will judge angels? > (Constable) Evidently God had not revealed the fact that believers will play a role in judging angels earlier in Scripture. He apparently revealed that for the first time here through Paul

How much more > (Strong’s) *meta ge* > (Utlely) This reflects (Greek grammar) (i.e., *ge*), which is used to indicate emphasis

Wuest > *And in view of the fact that the world system is being judged by you, are you those who are unfit to sit on the tribunal of a judge where trifling affairs are judged? Do you not know that we shall sit in judgment upon angels, to say nothing at all of judging the affairs of this life?*

⁴*So if you have law courts dealing with matters of this life, do you appoint them as judges who are of no account in the church? I say this to your shame. Is it so, that there is not among you one wise man who will be able to decide between his brethren, ⁶but brother goes to law with brother, and that before unbelievers?*

Of no account > (Strong’s) to despise, treat with contempt

Barnes paraphrases this verse as > *“Since you are abundantly qualified yourselves to settle your own differences, do you employ the pagan magistrates, in whom the church can have little confidence for their integrity and justice?”*

I say this to your shame > Wuest translates this as > *I am saying this to you with a view to arousing your sense of shame.*

Bruce > "Every Jewish community throughout the Roman Empire and beyond its frontiers had its own *beit-din* *, its own competent machinery for the administration of civil justice within its own membership; the least that could be expected of a Christian church was that it should make similar arrangements if necessary, and not wash its dirty linen in public."

* **Jewish Virtual Library** > Literally translated as "house of judgement," Beit Din is the Hebrew term applied to a Jewish religious or civil court of law.

⁷**Actually**, then, it is already a **defeat** for you, that you have lawsuits with one another. Why not rather be wronged? Why not rather be defrauded? ⁸On the contrary, you yourselves wrong and defraud. You do this even to your brethren.

Actually > (Strong's) altogether, assuredly

Defeat > (Strong's) a deterioration, i.e. (objectively) failure or (subjectively) loss

Wuest > *Nay! It is already a total defeat for you, having lawsuits with one another. Why do you not permit yourselves rather to be wronged? Why do you not permit yourselves rather to be defrauded? But, as for yourselves, you are committing wrong, and you are defrauding, and doing this to brethren.*

⁹Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be **deceived**; neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor homosexuals, ¹⁰nor thieves, nor the covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers, will inherit the kingdom of God.

Deceived > (Strong's) to (properly, cause to) roam (from safety, truth, or virtue)

Utley > This (Greek grammar) usually means to stop an act in process

(**Utley**, on the subject of homosexuality, > "Christians have no right to act hatefully and arrogantly towards this particular sin, especially when it is obvious that all of us sin. Prayer, concern, testimony, and compassion do far more in this area than vehement condemnation. God's Word and His Spirit will do the condemning if we let them. All sexual sins, not just this one, are an abomination to God and lead to judgment.

Sexuality is a gift from God for mankind's well-being, joy, and a stable society. But this powerful, God-given urge is often turned into rebellious, self-centered, pleasure-seeking, "more-for-me-at-any-cost," living)

¹¹*Such were some of you; but you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God.*

But ... But ... But > (MacArthur) Paul uses *but* (*alla*, the strongest Greek adversative particle) three times to indicate the contrast of the Christian life with the worldly life he has just been describing. But you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified.

¹²All things are lawful for me, but not all things are profitable. All things are lawful for me, but I will not be mastered by anything.

All things are lawful for me ... > (Vincent) There is a play between this word and the (Greek word meaning) be brought under the power, which can hardly be accurately conveyed to the English reader. The nearest approach to it is: "*all things are in my power, but I shall not be brought under the power of any.*"

Robertson > Many things, harmless in themselves in the abstract, do harm to others in the concrete. We live in a world of social relations that circumscribe personal rights and liberties.

Constable > Paul was and is famous as the apostle of Christian liberty. He saw early in his Christian life and clearly that the Christian is not under the Mosaic Law. His Epistle to the Galatians is an exposition of this theme. He preached this freedom wherever he went. Unfortunately, he was always subject to misinterpretation. Some of his hearers concluded that he advocated no restraints whatsoever in Christian living.

Fee > "Freedom is not to be for self but for others. The real question is not whether an action is "lawful" or "right" or even "all right," but whether it is good, whether it benefits.... Truly Christian conduct is not predicated on whether I have the right to do something, but whether my conduct is helpful to those about me."

¹³Food is for the stomach and the stomach is for food, but God will do away with both of them. Yet the body is not for immorality, but for the Lord, and the Lord is for the body. ¹⁴*Now God has not only raised the Lord, but will also raise us up through His power.*

Food is for the stomach > Contrast the first two sentences and the thought becomes clear. If you think only upon the physical self (world's wisdom) ...then the first sentence is very clear. If you think rightly (God's wisdom) then the second sentence comes into play.

Look at the extension inferred by the world's wisdom between the first and second sentence. They have tied the Lord's giving of longings to their cravings.

Utley > In light of Greek thought (i.e., the physical body is evil) it needs to be emphasized that biblical thought does not depreciate the body. In this very context the body is

1. Made "for the Lord" (cf. v. 13)
2. "Members of Christ" (cf. v. 15)
3. A temple indwelt by the Spirit (cf. v. 19)
4. To glorify Christ (cf. v. 20)

The body is not evil. It will be resurrected and will be part of the eternal kingdom. However, it is also the realm of temptation and the moral battleground of sin. Jesus gave Himself physically for the church.

¹⁵*Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ? Shall I then take away the members of Christ and make them members of a prostitute? **May it never be!***

May it never be! (Strong's) not, lest, neither, never

¹⁶*Or do you not know that the one who **joins** himself to a prostitute is one body with her? For He says, "**The two shall become one flesh.**" ¹⁷*But the one who joins himself to the Lord is one spirit with Him.**

Joins > (Strong's) to glue, unite

(The following will take a bit ... but worth it)

The two shall become one flesh > Kneller > The entire chapter (Genesis chapter 2) is the expansion of **Genesis 1:27**. It reveals the details of the creation of man and woman and the physical relationship between them. We tend to focus on the translation, which points to marriage. Rightfully so, but this is only a minor aspect of the infinite Plan of God. Genesis 1 and 2 reveal the Bible plot, God's entire story of humankind; this is the first five minutes of the play, and God is setting the stage.

Genesis 1:27 > So God created **man** in His own image, in the image of God He created him; **male** and **female** He created them

Man > (Strong's) *adam* > ruddy i.e. A human being

Male > (Strong's) *zakar* > properly, *remembered*, i.e. A male

Female > (Strong's) *neqebah* > female (from the sexual form)

Kneller > The above verse teaches us that humans have God's image. God's image comprises BOTH male and female. When God created the male and the female, He took His UNIQUE Image and separated it into TWO parts, two separate, compatible human beings, male and female. Each with a different PART of His image. Together, they possessed the WHOLE image.

Genesis 2:21-23 > ²¹ So the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and he slept; then He took one of his ribs and closed up the flesh at that place. ²² And the LORD God fashioned into a woman the rib which He had taken from the man, and brought her to the man. ²³ Then the man said, "At last this is bone of my bones, And flesh of my flesh; She shall be called 'woman,' because she was taken out of man."

Woman > (Strong's) *ishshah* > Feminine of 'iysh or 'enowsh; a woman

Man > (Strong's) *ish* > a man as an individual or a male person

Kneller > *Bone of my bones, flesh of my flesh* has become such an idiomatic expression that many might not even realize what it's origin is. Even if they do, do they grasp the implication, or rather imbrication, of how they *fit together*? To describe this enmeshment, we have two couples of words: male + female, man + woman.

If you go back and re-read the explanation of *zachar* (male) and *nekava* (female) (another study) you'll see that this reveals two separate independent entities, each equal before God united with each other, let's say two meshed into one.

From the formation of the latter pair, we have, issuing from the one-man the second individual, one becoming two. When you put this together, male and female, man and woman are interwoven, interlaced, interlocked together, in a communal adventure. Mutually, in concert, man with woman, woman with man, they forge ahead as a single unit, as the overseeing human masterpieces of God's creation in the adventurous voyage their Creator has in store for this inseparable couple. Here are the unity and indivisible nature of the man and the woman.

Genesis 2:24 > ²⁴ For this reason a man shall leave his father and his mother, and be joined to his wife; and they shall become one flesh.

Kneller > Now, step back and look to the whole picture of Gen. 1:27 and Gen. 2:24. First, God separate His image into two (male and female). Then He brings the female to the male, and they are to cleave together and become one flesh.

I want you to see the order of events in the above three verses. God separates them only to combine them again. Why would you want to separate something and then combine it again? Outwardly, it doesn't make sense, leave it as it is, combined in one Image, the image of God.

Understanding the answer to that question tells us the entire plan of God. Why He created humankind. Why He created male and female, it goes far beyond the admirable institution of marriage, which, of course, it includes > Christ and the Church

Ephesians 5:31-32 > ³¹ *For this reason a man shall leave his father and his mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.* ³² *This mystery is great; but I am speaking with reference to Christ and the church*

¹⁸ **Flee immorality.** *Every other sin that a man commits is outside the body, but the **immoral** man sins against his own body.*

Flee > (Strong's) Apparently a primary verb; to run away

Robertson > (The Greek grammar indicates) Have the habit of fleeing without delay or parley.

Immorality > (Strong's) *porneia* > harlotry (including adultery and incest)

Immorality > (Strong's) *porneuo* > to commit fornication (to act the harlot)

¹⁹ *Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own?* ²⁰ **For you have been bought with a price: therefore, glorify God in your body.**

You have been bought with a price > (Uteley) This is an aorist (*once and done*) passive (*from the outside*) indicative (*a simple fact*). This metaphor comes from the slave market (cf. 7:22-23; Rom. 3:24; Gal. 3:13; 4:5). In the OT this was known as the *go'el* (cf. Ruth 3:9), which was a near relative who bought one back from slavery (cf. Lev. 25:25). This is a reference to Christ's substitutionary, vicarious atonement (cf. Isaiah 53; Mark 10:45; II Cor. 5:21). When one accepts Christ he/she relinquishes personal rights to his/her body and takes on the responsibility for the corporate health and vitality of the whole temple, the whole body

Therefore glorify God in your body > (Fee) "What Paul seems to be doing is taking over their own theological starting point, namely, that they are "spiritual" because they have the Spirit, and redirecting it to include the sanctity of the body. The reality of the indwelling Spirit is now turned against them. They thought the presence of the Spirit meant a negation of the body; Paul argues the exact opposite: The presence of the Spirit in their present bodily existence is God's affirmation of the body."