

STUDY ON THE BOOK OF CORINTHIANS

First Corinthians – Chapter 6 & 7:1-7

Chapter 6

Do Not Take Your Fellow Believer to Court!

“Dare any of you, having a matter against another, go to law before the unrighteous, and not before the saints?” (v1)

Paul, in this chapter starts with dealing with another matter, the issue of taking fellow believers to court where the unrighteous and an unbeliever will judge however, he will still revisit the issue of sexual immorality that we ended with in Chapter 5.

He starts in this chapter:

How dare you take your fellow believer to court? How do you give an unbeliever the chance to judge between two brethren?

“It’s not right for a believer to sue a fellow believer—and especially to bring it before the unbelievers.” (v6 TPT)

Paul asks 2 vital questions:

- Why do you not rather accept wrong?
- Why do you not rather *let yourselves* be cheated? (v7)

Thoughts:

How would you respond to these questions that Paul raised here?

“Tolerate the weaknesses of those in the family of faith, forgiving one another in the same way you have been graciously forgiven by Jesus Christ. If you find fault with someone, release this same gift of forgiveness to them.” (Colossians 3:13 TPT)

The gift of forgiveness is not just in personal injury or sin but also forgiveness is to be released on emotional, financial and other types of fault. Jesus said:

“Later Peter approached Jesus and said, “How many times do I have to forgive my fellow believer who keeps offending me? Seven times?” Jesus answered, “Not seven times, Peter, but seventy times seven times!” (Matthew 18:21-22 TPT)

Other Reasons Paul Gave to Discourage Believers Taking Believers to Court

- Do you not know that the saints will judge the world? (v2)
- Do you not know that we shall judge angels? How much more, things that pertain to this life? (v3)
- Don’t you realize that you are bringing your issues before civil judges appointed by people who have no standing within the church? (v4 TPT)
- Don’t you realize that when you drag another believer into court, you’re providing the evidence that you are already defeated? (v7 TPT)

God has placed us as believers in an unbelievable high position in the spirit-realm with authority and therefore, expects that we can deal with disputes among ourselves without going to public court.

If we claim to have the wisdom of God and we claim to be seated together with Christ in the heavenly places, then we should be able to settle matters within ourselves or otherwise, take wrong or accept being cheated.

To the Cheats:

“But instead you keep cheating and doing wrong to your brothers and sisters, and then request that unbelievers render their judgment!” (v8 TPT)

Paul turns his attention to the cheats i.e. those who would want to take advantage of this instruction. They would rather an unbeliever make judgment probably because they are legally knowledgeable or have some wit etc. He goes on to say:

“Surely you must know that people who practice evil cannot possess God’s kingdom realm. Stop being deceived! People who continue to engage in sexual immorality, idolatry, adultery, sexual perversion, homosexuality, fraud, greed, drunkenness, verbal abuse, or extortion—these will not inherit God’s kingdom realm.” (vv9-10 TPT)

For the cheats, the kingdom of God is at stake. They will not inherit the kingdom of God – simple!

Thought:

What is the meaning of “will not inherit the kingdom of God”?

Clear Distinction Between Believer and Unbeliever:

“And such were some of you. But you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God.” (v11)

Once you have received Jesus as your Lord and Saviour, it is impossible to be the cheat (regularly) as the Spirit of the Lord will not permit you to be so.

Sexual Immorality!

“It’s true that our freedom allows us to do anything, but that doesn’t mean that everything we do is good for us. I’m free to do as I choose, but I choose to never be enslaved to anything.” (v12 TPT)

Paul is coming back to address the issue of illicit sex or immoral sexual behaviour. In verse 12, he is referring to how we guard our freedom and use it rightly.

“... The body was not created for illicit sex, but to serve and worship our Lord Jesus, who can fill the body with himself.” (v13 TPT)

That is the point right there. In verse 13, Paul said “Our body is not created for illicit sex” but to serve and worship our Lord Jesus. Sex is limited and only permitted within the context of biblical marriage.

The Sin of Marrying Christ’s Body with a Harlot’s Body!

The questions:

- Don’t you know that your bodies belong to Christ as his body parts?
- Should one presume to take the members of Christ’s body and make them into members of a harlot? Absolutely not!
- Aren’t you aware of the fact that when anyone sleeps with a prostitute, he becomes a part of her, and she becomes a part of him? For it has been declared: The two become a single body.

“But the one who joins himself to the Lord is mingled into one spirit with him. This is why you must keep running away from sexual immorality. For every other sin a person commits is external to the body, but immorality involves sinning against your own body. Have you forgotten that your body is now the sacred temple of the Spirit of Holiness, who lives in you? You don’t belong to yourself any longer, for the gift of God, the Holy Spirit, lives inside your sanctuary. You were God’s expensive purchase, paid for with tears of blood, so by all means, then, use your body to bring glory to God!” (vv17-20 TPT)

Paul emphasises even further that:

- Immorality is sin against your own body
- Your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit
- Since you have given your life to Christ, you don’t belong to yourself any longer as the Holy Spirit lives inside of you.
- You are God’s expensive purchase...paid with tears of blood therefore, use your body to bring glory to God.

As we wrap us this topic of sexual immorality, it might be useful to see some of what Proverbs has to say about it:

“Don’t be so stupid as to think you can get away with your adultery. It will destroy your life, and you’ll pay the price for the rest of your days. You’ll discover what humiliation, shame, and disgrace are all about, for no one will ever let you forget what you’ve done.” (Proverbs 6:32-33 TPT)

“So, listen to me, you young men. You’d better take my words seriously! Control your sexual urges and guard your hearts from lust. Don’t let your passions get out of hand and don’t lock your eyes onto a beautiful woman. Why would you want to even get close to temptation and seduction, to have an affair with her? She has pierced the souls of multitudes of men— many mighty ones have fallen and have been brought down by her. If you’re looking for the road to hell, just go looking for her house!” (Proverbs 7:24-27 TPT)

Chapter 7

Celibacy & Sexual Activity in Marriage

“Now for my response concerning the issues you’ve asked me to address. You wrote saying, “It is proper for a man to live in celibacy.” Perhaps. But because of the danger of immorality, each husband should have sexual intimacy with his wife and each wife should have sexual intimacy with her husband. A husband has the responsibility of meeting the sexual needs of his wife, and likewise a wife to her husband. Neither the husband nor the wife have exclusive rights to their own bodies, but those rights are to be surrendered to the other. So, don’t continue to refuse your spouse those rights, except perhaps by mutual agreement for a specified time so that you can both be devoted to prayer. And then you should resume your physical pleasure so that the Adversary cannot take advantage of you because of the desires of your body. I’m not giving you a divine command, but my godly advice. I would wish that all of you could live unmarried, just as I do. Yet I understand that we are all decidedly different, with each having a special grace for one thing or another.” (vv1-7 TPT)

At this point, it seems the complaints of the household of Chloe is over and Paul is starting to address the concerns of the church that they asked for themselves. Their main question is: Is it proper for a man to live in celibacy?

One would assume that this question might have arisen because of Paul’s lifestyle of celibacy and other sexual issues that have to deal with as a church considering they are living in a society that was very sexual and promiscuous.

Paul's answer in bullet points:

- Each husband should have sexual intimacy with his wife and each wife should have sexual intimacy with her husband. This explains why Christianity only supports monogamous marriage only.
- They have mutual responsibility to meet the sexual desires of each other.
- Neither have exclusive rights to each other's body for they have surrendered these rights to each other.
- They should not refuse each other except – WITH MUTUAL AGREEMENT – for a specified time so they can both be devoted to prayer.
- Paul's desire that all could live unmarried just as he does but this must be done according to the grace that each person carries.

We will continue with the rest of Chapter 7 next week.