

# 1 Corinthians

## Bible Study

### The Proper Grace Life

#### 1 Corinthians 6:9–20

Paul was making a case that the members of the Corinthian church should have been spiritually mature enough to be able to judge disputes within the church instead of using unbelieving government officials. If we can't judge matters within the Body of Christ then how are we ever going to properly judge angels in our eternal life. This seems to indicate that what we learn here will be useful in eternity. It fits in with Israel's program that those who are faithful with things in this life will be given more authority in the Millennial Kingdom (Luke 19:11–27). I believe we can assume that the members of the Body of Christ will similarly be given different levels of responsibilities according to how faithful we have been in applying Grace doctrine. Believers bringing spiritual matters before a court is a poor testimony to the unbelieving world.

Is it always wrong to bring another believer to court? In 1 Corinthians Paul seems to have in mind church issues. In this case, there were many quarrels within the church (1 Corinthians 11:11) and there was a man who was publicly sinning. They were unwilling to deal with that sin. It would be wrong to get the civil authorities involved in such matters. However, suppose it involved an uninsured Christian who caused a car accident with another Christian. It may be necessary to sue them to be compensated for damage or injures, although another "worldly" institution (insurance) may take care of that. It may be necessary to evict a Christian tenant for none payment of rent, or use a lawyer to get a divorce if one party decides to separate. These types of things fall under (divinely appointed) governmental authority, and I believe it is perfectly fine to pursue legal action on such civil matters. It seems obvious that if two believers are walking in the Spirit that they would do the right thing making it unnecessary to bring in governmental authorities to resolve differences. I believe this was Paul's point.

#### **Inheritors of the Kingdom** (verse 6–11)

The unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God. This makes absolute sense with the understanding that only the righteous will inherit the kingdom. It helps to understand that the kingdom of God is a generic term which refers to the realm that all believers from all time become members of. The Little Flock of Jewish believers were part of a kingdom (Colossians 4:11) as we are (Colossians 1:13). By comparing Matthew 13:11 with Mark 4:11 it should be plain that the kingdom of Heaven is also called the kingdom of God. Also notice how Paul was preaching the kingdom of God at Ephesus in Acts 19:8 while in Ephesians 5:5 it is spoken of as the kingdom of Christ and God. The different uses of kingdom are very often lumped together to have only one meaning, and by doing so it muddles Israel's Prophetic program with the Church's Mystery program. Understanding that there are specific kingdoms for each program helps to clarify the meaning. The kingdom of God reference can refer to the kingdom of heaven (Israel) or the kingdom of Christ (Body of Christ). Context will determine which it should be. Those who were saved before Israel also have the hope of an eternal earthly existence. We have the hope of a heavenly existence and are already seen in the heavenly places because we have already been declared righteous (Ephesians 2:6; Philippians 3:20).

Some take this passage to show that we need to do works to be able to become a part of the kingdom. They believe if we are sinning then we will have turned against God and are living for ourselves. They say once the sinner repents of that sin then they will be back in God's good graces. They think that as long as we are trying to live a godly life that we will have eternal life. The Bible makes it clear that righteousness is not something we work for, but something given to those who believe in the Person and work of Jesus Christ (Romans 4:5; 8:30, 33).

Paul writes to the church at Corinth saying that those who are sinners by nature will not inherit the Kingdom. Those who are unrighteous are by nature sinners (fornicators, idolaters, adulterers, effeminate, abusers of themselves with mankind, thieves, covetous, drunkards, revilers, extortioners). Their sin does not make them unrighteous, they sin because they are unrighteous. There are those in the church who are practicing some of these sins, but instead of calling them unrighteous, Paul says that they have been washed, sanctified and justified (declared righteous). They are carnal, but still righteous because they are not held in their position of being in Christ through works, and they are then incapable of losing that position through any unrighteous act. Their spiritual position, as well as ours, is absolutely secure.

### **Our freedom in Christ** (verses 12–18)

Paul had just written that their position in Christ is secure even if they act like the world. Now he continues to expand upon our freedom that we have in Christ. Although we are eternally secure does not mean that we should feel free to do anything our heart desires. It may be lawful for me to do certain things, but Paul makes the point that it may not be spiritually advantageous or beneficial for me to do it.

The “all things are lawful” statement is tempered by Paul’s warnings about sinning in verses 9–10. Obviously there are certain things that are not morally right for a believer to do. In today’s world, there are many things that are lawful (abortion, homosexual relationships) but biblically wrong. Paul was showing them that they were not under law and that they were to live by grace. We are not bound by such things as the eating restrictions or sacrificial system of the Law. I have been given a great amount of freedom in what I do. The Corinthian church had been harboring a sinful man within their church. Paul told them it was wrong for them to do that. They did not have the freedom to do what they were doing. This statement of all things being lawful cannot be carried too far.

Our freedom in Christ needs to be limited when others could be hurt by us exercising our freedom. For instance, if I skip going to church and go to the fair, it could lead others to do the same against their own conscience. If someone sees me drinking alcohol, it may cause them to go against their conscience and take a drink. In either case, the action is not a sin, but it may cause another believer to fall, or may hurt your testimony in front of an unbeliever. We must always think about how our actions will be perceived by others.

### **Temples** (verses 19–20)

The temple was the place where God resided and where Israel could communicate with Him. Paul compares Israel’s temple with our body being the temple of God. God is dwelling within every believer and therefore we need to keep ourselves holy by staying away from sin. We now no longer belong to ourselves, but we were bought with the price of Jesus Christ’s death. As a believer, we are to put off the old way of living, renew the mind, and put on the new man that was created at the point of our salvation (Ephesians 4:17–24).

Since we have given ourselves to Christ, we are not to use the body for our own purposes and pleasure. We have been made one with the Lord. Since we are one with the Lord, we have to control our body, using it to please to the Lord. This is why we are to continually renew our mind, since it is the mind that gives the body direction (Romans 12:1–2; Colossians 1:9–10). In everything we do we are to bring glory to God, and we do that by changing our thinking from a worldly standpoint to a spiritual one. As we take in God’s word, the indwelling Holy Spirit uses that to transform our lives to be useful to the Lord.

For previous notes and additional mid-Acts materials please visit [www.MidActsTruths.com](http://www.MidActsTruths.com)