

# OpenTheo

## 1 Corinthians 6:1-18



### 1 Corinthians - Steve Gregg

In this exposition, Steve Gregg examines the first half of 1 Corinthians 6, in which Paul advises against Christians taking disputes to secular courts or seeking personal vengeance. Paul emphasizes the importance of living a holy life, avoiding sinful behavior, and trusting in God's ultimate justice. Gregg delves into Paul's references to sexual immorality, homosexuality, and the need for moral responsibility, as well as the historical context of certain phrases and beliefs. Ultimately, Gregg emphasizes the importance of walking in the Spirit and relying on the power of Christ to overcome sin.

### Transcript

Let's turn now to 1 Corinthians chapter 6. In chapters 5 and 6, as I mentioned last time, Paul is registering his outrage at a couple of reports that he has heard about the Corinthian church. One was that there was a notable case of fornication being tolerated in the church, and the other was that there was a case of sexual abuse. And the other is that there were Christians who were going before non-Christians with lawsuits.

Now both of these passages indicate that Paul had a view of a strict separation of the way that things would work within society at large, on the one hand, and the way they should be functioning in the church. At the end of chapter 5, after he had told the church that they should discipline the party who is guilty and put him out of the church because he was not measuring up to the standards that Christianity calls a person to, he mentions that he would not endeavor to do such a thing to non-Christians. That's not his field.

That's not what he's interested in doing, nor is it his calling. As an apostle of Jesus Christ, he is called not to judge those who are outside the church in the sense of disciplinary action being taken against their behavior. But he is called to do that with reference to those in the church.

And when I made the qualification just now with respect to disciplinary action, of course it is impossible to avoid making judgments of behaviors of those outside the church, but there is certainly a difference between, on the one hand, saying to a sinner that his

behavior is wrong, which we must do. That's simply part of evangelism, is to allow people to know that their behavior is unlawful in the sight of God and that they need to get right with God about that. That's one thing.

That's making a judgment of their behavior. The other thing is to actually consider ourselves in the position to enforce our standards upon them. This can be done within the church and must be.

Not our standards, but God's standards. The church is God's people, is God's temple, is Christ's body and bride, and therefore to enforce Christ's standards upon the community of Christians is not only appropriate but necessary. But to enforce those standards on those who are not Christians is something that Paul does not favor in the sense of putting himself in the position to bring disciplinary action and correction to the moral behavior of people outside the church.

Now, whereas the church had been neglectful to judge things going on inside the church, some of them were actually going to judges outside the church to deal with problems that were intramural, things where two Christians would have a dispute of a legal sort, where one party believed themselves to have been wronged by the other in a way that should be redressed by the court or by some arbitration. And they were, instead of going to someone in-house to decide the matter for them and to settle it and make peace, they were going through the regular channels of litigation outside the church through the secular courts. Paul made it clear that this was wrong for two reasons.

One, because if you've got problems to solve of a matter that had to do with deciding what's right and wrong, why would you go to pagans whose whole concept of right and wrong is not informed by the word of God? It makes more sense to go to people who know something about righteousness if you're going to have them make a decision about what's righteous. And therefore, if such arbitration needs to be done at all, it should be done by Christians, not by the non-Christians outside. I mean, to take the church's dirty laundry out and display it in the public, as would be done when two Christians are battling out a court dispute, is bad testimony and it's simply bad thinking to think that the judges in the secular courts would have as clear a view of what is right and wrong, when they themselves are pagans and idol worshippers, as Christians would have.

And therefore, going to Christians would make far more sense. But a second reason it's wrong, he indicates, is that really there shouldn't be any of these kinds of cases even arising among Christians. On the one hand, Christians should not be doing things to each other that would be punishable by law.

They shouldn't be doing unjust things to each other. And secondly, Christians, if they are victims of injustice, should be willing to absorb it, as Jesus did and as Jesus taught and as Paul clearly modelled in his own life. So, in other words, the highest thing is that there

shouldn't be any such disputes at all.

Christians should not be wronging other Christians and the ones, if they find themselves wrong, should be willing to take it graciously rather than battle it out in court. And demand their rights. And then if there isn't that level of maturity and grace on their part, and they do feel like they need to seek redress, then they should at least do so among Christians, not non-Christians.

That's what Paul says here, and we're talking now about the first 11 verses, which I'd like to read. We'll talk about them as individual verses after we've read the whole section. Dare any of you having a matter against another go to law before the unrighteous and not before the saints? Do you not know that the saints will judge the world? And if the world will be judged by you, are you unworthy to judge the smallest matters? Do you not know that we shall judge angels? How much more, then, things that pertain to this life? If, then, you have judgments concerning things pertaining to this life, do you appoint those who are least esteemed by the church to judge? I say this to your shame.

Is it so that there is not a wise man among you, no, not even one, who will be able to judge between his brethren? But brother goes to law against brother, and that before unbelievers. Now, therefore, it is already an utter failure for you that go to law against another. Why do you not rather accept wrong? Why do you not rather let yourself be defrauded? No, you yourselves do wrong and defraud, and you do these things to your brethren.

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 homosexuals, nor sodomites, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners will inherit the kingdom of God. 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. I already told you before we read the material essentially what Paul's complaint was and what he felt would be better.

We'll go through just to make some points from each verse that requires some elucidation. He indicates that the Christians should be shocked. I mean, how dare they, he asks, go to court before unbelievers.

I wish that there was that kind of shock and indignation on the same point in our own society, in the church. It is not unheard of for Christians to go to court to defend their rights. Now, of course, sometimes, probably most times when Christians do this, they could justify themselves by saying, well, Paul said not to go to court against a brother, and the person I'm suing is an insurance company or is a corporation or is a non-Christian person.

But, to me, this misses the point. Jesus said that if someone wants to sue you and take

away your coat, give them your cloak also. He said you should agree with your adversary quickly while you're in the way and not go before a judge.

Now, how can you be sure that you can do that? Well, you can do that by giving the person what they want or not insisting on what you want. Now, someone's going to say, but that's simply setting yourself up to be walked all over. That's setting yourself up to be a doormat.

That's making yourself vulnerable to being exploited. If people would learn that Christians don't go to the courts to seek justice for themselves, then people would just take advantage of Christians. Maybe.

If that happened, that would be what happened to Jesus, that would be what happened to the Apostles, and to respond in the sense of absorbing the injury and allowing ourselves to be defrauded is to do exactly what Jesus and the Apostles did in like situations. But it's not the case that if you do not defend yourself, you will not be defended at all. At least it's not a given.

Because if you do not defend yourself, you leave God open to defend you. Paul said that in Romans chapter 12. In fact, in a sense, you bring God into the picture as your defender if you do not defend yourself.

In Romans 12, 17, Paul said, Repay no one evil for evil. Have regard for good things in the sight of all men, if it is possible. As much as depends on you, live peaceably with all men.

Beloved, do not avenge yourselves. Now, to avenge yourself means that someone does you wrong, and you go and get yourself vindicated. You go and get yourself, have it made right, so that you are not wronged anymore.

But the party that has wronged you has had to pay for the injury done to you. Now, that's the very thing that Paul says not to do. Don't avenge yourselves.

If you've been wronged, don't avenge yourself. But rather, give place to wrath. For it is written, Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord.

Now, vengeance is justice. There should be justice, and we should have a passion for justice. Certainly God does.

There's hardly anything that comes out more clearly in the prophets than that God is a God who demands justice and is appalled when courts of law, for example, skew justice by judges taking bribes and therefore the rich always prevail in court against the poor because the poor can't bribe. This is something that is a repeated refrain and complaint of God in the Old Testament. He wants justice to be done.

And if we do not go to court, that doesn't mean that we do not believe in justice. It doesn't mean that we don't think that sinners should be repaid for their evil. It simply means that we don't see ourselves as the ones who are called to do the repaying.

Because God said, Vengeance is mine. That's His. It's His to avenge, and Paul makes it clear that means it's not ours to avenge.

God says He will repay. Now, Paul also indicates that by not avenging ourselves, we are giving place or giving room for God to avenge. If we avenge ourselves, there's nothing left for God to do.

If justice is worked out by us, it leaves no room for God to do anything. We take His task into our hands. Now, if we do not take it into our hands, we leave it in His.

And therefore, to say, I will not avenge myself, I will not defend myself, is not another way of saying, I will have no defense. It is a way of saying, I will leave my defense in the hands of God. And I will live with His decision on the matter.

Whether He defends me speedily and vindicates me now, or whether He does so in the day of judgment. That will be His decision. And His decisions can only be right.

Mine can frequently be wrong. Therefore, I am to leave the matter with God. To allow myself to be defrauded by people is simply to follow the path that Jesus Himself followed and taught.

When He was reviled, He threatened not. But He committed Himself to Him that judges righteously. It says in 1 Peter 2, around verse 23, somewhere like that.

And we are told to do the same in 1 Peter 4, 19, where it says, Therefore, let those who suffer according to the will of God, commit the keeping of their souls to Him by doing good, as unto a faithful Creator. So, you know, it does not follow that if you have a reputation for not defending yourself, that you will necessarily become the perpetual victim and never be avenged or vindicated. You may, in fact, Christians have been walked all over, sometimes for their entire lifetime, sometimes for centuries on end, before vindication came.

But eventually it does. And Christians are those who are looking to the long view of things, the eternal view of things, the settling of scores in the final analysis. And we know for certain that if we are never avenged in this life, then there is vengeance awaiting the parties that deserve it in the next life.

In fact, we pity them. We don't begrudge it that they weren't avenged. I'd rather see them avenged in this life to tell you the truth, than to think that the punishment they'll receive is going to have eternal ramifications.

But I'd rather see them judged in this life by God, not by me, because that's what we're told to do. So why would Christians go against other Christians to court and seek retribution and vengeance and so forth? Now, the main point of indignation in verse one is the emphasis on the unrighteous before the unrighteous. Now, as we will see a little later on, he says, why defend yourself at all? He begins that line in verse seven.

But in the first six verses, his principal concern is that when they do have matters that they feel they can't let it rest, they're going to the wrong parties, which means they're going to get judgment from people who are unenlightened, and they're also going to bring the church's scandals into the light of day, which is, you know, not that we have so much to hide, but if these things can be settled in house, then it doesn't have to bring a reproach on the community. Because whenever a Christian is caught having done something illegal or something, you know, nasty to someone else, it always is exploited by the enemies of Christianity to say, you see, that's what Christians do. And the fact is, Christians sometimes do do those things, but they shouldn't.

And if those things can be covered over by settling it righteously within the church, then there's no reason to trade that kind of stuff out for the world to exploit and scandal. So the emphasis in verse one is that they're doing it before the unrighteous rather than before the saints. And then in the next two verses, he tries to point out to them what they ought to know and the implication that they ought to know that they, as Christians, are called to be judges.

Not to go to the heathen for assessments and discernment about what's right and wrong. We, of all people, should know those things because our destiny is to judge the world. Our destiny, he says, is even to judge angels in verse three.

Now, there's no other place in the Bible that speaks of the saints judging angels, and it's not entirely clear how he means that. I guess the assumption is usually made, and probably is the only one we can reach, that the angels in question are the fallen angels. We know there are angels that did not keep their first estate and that sinned.

And we are told in Jude and in 2 Peter that these angels are currently being kept in chains under darkness, awaiting the judgment of the great day. That judgment will occur after the resurrection and the second coming of Christ, at which we will be with him, seated on his throne. And I guess the judgment to which they will be subjected will include our participation.

In the book of Revelation, in the 20th chapter, John sees saints and martyrs who are sitting on thrones in heaven. Daniel sees the same thing in Daniel chapter 7. He sees thrones set up and judgment was given to the saints, it says. So, not only is Jesus going to judge the world, but we, having been resurrected and glorified by that point in time, will be seated on thrones with him.

Jesus told the disciples, the twelve, that they would sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. But apparently, Christians in general will share in that. Now, I personally want to say this.

I don't know if we're supposed to really have a mental picture of zillions of thrones, an actual courtroom with a platform and a bar and a bench. And a throne for each Christian, which through the years, there must have been billions of them, or at least millions of them. The language may be figurative, as far as each one sitting on a throne.

The passages in which such language is used are books like Daniel and Revelation, which are fond of using imagery that cannot be pressed, literally, in many cases. But the point that's being made is we will rule and we will judge. We will share in the responsibility of the ruling of the universe with Christ, whether on literal thrones or not.

It will be our place to have to pass judgment, as in God's place, as it were, or alongside him, on the world itself and on angels. Now, if that is the case, if we are destined to make such judgments, shouldn't we be exercising the faculty of judgment already? Shouldn't we consider that in this life, the application of truth that God has given us in what he's revealed in the scriptures should be applied and used and we should be utilizing this knowledge to judge right and wrong matters that occur every day? If we're going to judge angels in the world, ultimately, why can't we trust ourselves to judge matters that come up intramurally among Christians? And, of course, that's what Paul asks. He says in verse 4, If you then have judgments concerning things pertaining to this life, this is in contrast to judging the world and judging angels, which obviously are pertaining to the next life, but if we have judgments about mundane things that pertain to this worldly life of ours, do you appoint those who are the least esteemed by the church to judge? Now, this last line of verse 4, in different translations, has rendered different ways.

Obviously, in the New King James here, it ends with a question mark. In the King James, it does not. And I'm not sure, because I haven't consulted all the other new translations, how translators prefer it.

Commentators have pointed out that it can be taken either way. The punctuation is not in the Greek. There is no punctuation in the Greek.

Therefore, whether it is a question or whether it is a statement or whether it's a command is not always evident. Sometimes context alone is what guides us. In this case, context could lead to one conclusion or another.

What it actually says in the Greek is, if you then have judgments concerning things pertaining to this life, appoint those who are least esteemed in the church to judge. And that's how it reads in the King James, just as a statement. And other new translations have sometimes followed that too.

But others, like the New King James, have felt like it shouldn't be seen that way, because it sounds like he's commanding them to set people who are least esteemed in the church to judge. It doesn't make much sense. So they feel he's asking the question rhetorically.

Do you dare to take people and set them in the position to judge who are least esteemed in the church, meaning the pagan judges that he's referred to in verse 1? This is the possible meaning. There's other possible meanings, however, too. If it is a question, as here, then what he's saying is those who are least esteemed in the church are the judges of the pagan courts.

To say they're the least esteemed, in this case, would be not esteemed at all. They're not even in the church. They don't have any rank in the church.

They may have rank in secular society, but God has made foolish the wisdom of the world, and they may be wise men in the world's eyes, but foolish inside of God, because they don't acknowledge the gospel. And so why should those who are so little esteemed by the church be given the high responsibility of making judgments that affect the settlement of just and unjust matters in the church? That's what he'd be asking if this question is put this way. Now, it is possible for it to be not so much in the interrogative form as it is here.

It could be simply making a statement or even giving a command. That when they... it could be a command. That when you have judgments pertaining to this life, set those to judge who are least esteemed in the church.

But if it is a command, it is ironic. It's a sarcastic statement of sorts. What he would be saying then is it'd be better to place those, even those who are the least esteemed in the church, to judge these matters than someone who's not even in the church at all.

Rather than going to the unrighteous with these matters, you know, set up someone who's even the least esteemed Christian would be a better choice. And he may be saying it to shame them because he says that in verse 5. I say this to your shame. And he asked the question, isn't there one wise man among you? The idea being, okay, you guys are acting like there's no one wise in the church.

No one highly esteemed in the church who can settle these matters. That must be the case or else you wouldn't be going to these pagan judges. So you have no one highly esteemed? Then set those who are low esteem to judge.

As long as they're in the church, it's better than those who are outside the church. So he could be making it as a statement with an ironical sort of a twist to it. Or as it is here, it could be a question.

Do you set those to judge who are least esteemed in the church, meaning those who aren't in the church at all? We don't have to settle the question of how Paul meant it. It's



obvious that he was suggesting that those who are not in the church have no business making judgments about affairs that need to be settled between Christians. Verse six, but brother goes to law against brother and that before unbelievers.

Unfortunately, this still happens. I mentioned that some Christians who go to law against others justify themselves even in face of this scripture by saying, well, the person I'm going against isn't a Christian. When my wife was killed, I was advised by some to sue because in a wrongful death kind of a case like that, really the sky's the limit, I guess, to what you could try to get out of a guy who was guilty.

And it was fully, you know, all the fault was on one side. She was walking on a part of the road that was not for traffic and the truck that hit her was where it shouldn't have been, driving recklessly and speeding and so forth. And a 16-year-old boy driving, you know, you can throw the book at him.

I, but I knew that the truck wasn't insured for much. In fact, the insurance company gave me the full amount without my asking that it was insured for, but that wasn't much. They had a minimum amount of insurance and had I wished to go to court and sue them, you know, I could have been awarded a million bucks, maybe or more, in which case they would have to go beyond the insurance that the truck was insured for.

They, you know, have to sell his house and, you know, guy would have to liquidate everything he had to pay me, but the court could award it to me. That didn't make any sense. I mean, the guy was not a Christian and people were saying, well, he's not a Christian and go ahead and sue him.

But to me, I don't understand that mentality. Our role in the world is certainly to be separate from the world, but not to be adversarial in the sense of being mean to them or trying to, you know, take from them whatever we can get from them. It seems to me the world is more easily won by kindness and by forgiveness and grace.

And I don't see that going to court against unbelievers is really any more charitable than going to court against believers. I'm not saying that in this place, Paul would forbid going to court against unbelievers, but I would say the whole spirit of what Jesus teaches about our relationship to other people in general would suggest that going to court against them isn't a very good thing. Now, I realize that things are a little different now in the sense that insurance companies cover an awful lot of these kinds of things and it costs very little to the party who actually did the damage, but their premiums may go up a bit because there was a claim against them.

But I don't know. I really think Christians need to strive to get back to having that primitive Christian spirit of being willing to be wrong without feeling like we need to use every recourse available to us to get righted, to get vindicated, and so forth. It's very tempting, of course.

Greed and other sinful motivations can enter in to make one want to make sure you get what's coming to you. But frankly, I think that whole idea would be foreign to Paul. I don't think Paul would sue a non-Christian.

Now, Paul was not afraid to use his legal rights where it wouldn't hurt anyone else. It didn't hurt anyone else when he said, listen, you can't beat me. I'm a Roman citizen.

I haven't had a trial. And my rights are, according to law, that you can't beat a Roman citizen without a trial. Well, he didn't wrong anyone else by appealing to his rights in that case.

But had he said, now, since you did beat me without a trial, I'm going to sue you and have your job. In fact, I'll probably have your neck. I'm going to report this to Caesar and you'll be lucky if you get out of it with your head.

I mean, Paul didn't do that. Where they had already beaten him without a trial and where he could have gotten retribution, we're talking about Philippi, he never required anything except that they take him out publicly and vindicate him. That is, release him publicly rather than sneak him out of town secretly.

But when they had not yet beat him and they were going to, it wouldn't hurt them any for him to appeal to his rights and say, listen, I don't think I need to take this because I've got rights here, legal rights. And they didn't beat him because of that. That didn't hurt them.

It was no skin off their nose. It's not unloving to use your rights if using your rights doesn't injure somebody else. But the whole reason for not going to court against someone is because when you do so, you're doing so usually to injure another party.

Or, I mean, maybe they've injured you first. That may be. Maybe they deserved to be injured.

But again, Christians aren't so concerned, at least aren't supposed to be so concerned, about making sure that those who deserve to be injured get injured. But rather that we are Christ-like toward them and we'll leave it up to God to decide how much injury they should sustain as the result of their wrongdoings. But I even know of Christians who do sue other Christians.

A notable case that just made my blood boil when I heard about it a few years ago was a case of a Christian music publisher that publishes worship music. And therefore, of course, holds the copyright on a lot of the worship choruses that are sung. And there was a church in Orange County, in fact, it was a church my sister and her husband were going to, that were taken to court because they were using some of these songs in worship at their church without paying royalties to the publisher.

Now, I think all of you are aware of this phenomenon because it's been in the papers and stuff that whoever holds the copyright to something, you're not supposed to use their material without paying them a royalty if they feel they have it coming. And that is the case with these Christian publishers and so forth that they hold the copyright on these songs. You're not allowed to print up their music even on a mimeograph sheet or even to write it on transparency.

I suppose probably some of our old transparencies that we wrote up years ago would be technically in violation. I don't know. I'm not looking into it.

I don't know who holds the copyright to any of those things. But as far as I'm concerned, Jesus says to them, freely you've received, freely give. And, you know, if God gives you a song, I don't see how you can charge other people to sing it.

You know, it seems to be really, really bizarre. But I heard of at least two cases, two different cases of Christian music publishers suing in court, secular court, churches, small churches that had sung their songs without paying them a royalty. And I just would say I'd hate to be in their shoes on the day of judgment.

I mean, how God must have been irate at that kind of behavior on their part. I mean, Paul himself was angry. I'm sure that his anger was no less than that of God in the matter.

And especially when it comes to something like suing someone because they're worshiping the Lord with this particular song. You know, how terrible can Christians get? How far can they fall from the whole spirit of what Christianity is? I don't remember the outcome. I remember hearing of the suit, but I didn't follow the outcome.

I imagine the publisher won because the law was on their side. And technically, you know, argued. I mean, they argued properly.

We own this song and Christians shouldn't take advantage of us just because we're brothers. They should pay us what they owe us. I mean, both sides can argue their point, but it seems to me that either would argue publicly over such an issue as that and make a litigation over that is an abomination.

Verse seven. Now, therefore, it's already another failure for you that you go to law against one another. In other words, it's not just that you do it before on believers, as he emphasized in verse six, but that you just go to law against each other at all.

Why do you not rather accept the wrong? Why do you not rather let yourself be defrauded? Now, Paul acts as if they should already know this. Now, what he's calling them to is radically contrary to nature. I don't know anyone who by nature would say, well, I just ought to let myself be defrauded.

I mean, that is the kind of thing you have to be taught. That's part of Christian discipleship. People by nature assume that if they've been defrauded, they should do everything in their power to get what's coming to them back and to punish the person who defrauded them.

But that's not what Christians are supposed to be taught. And Paul assumes the Christians should know that. So I guess he also assumes, well, he'd spent time with them 18 months previous to this and had been their principal discipler.

I assume he taught them the things Jesus said. And among them are those things in Matthew 5, verses 38 through 42, where Jesus said, you've heard that it was said an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth. That's what the courts of law were to exact in the Jewish society.

But I tell you not to resist the evil person. But whoever slaps you on your right cheek, turn to him the other also. If anyone wants to sue you and take away your tunic, let him have your cloak also.

Whoever compels you to go one mile, go with him too. And give to him who asks you and from him who wants to borrow from you. Do not turn away.

It's quite obvious that if the Corinthians had heard this teaching, they had not taken it very seriously. It's also quite obvious that if modern American Christians have heard this teaching, they have not taken it very seriously. It would appear, judging from the average behavior of Christians in the modern church.

But certainly if we do take seriously what Jesus said, and it seems to be incumbent on Christians to do just that. Then it means that if somebody injures us, our recourse is not to injure them back. Nor even to prevent them from further injuring us.

But to welcome further injury. That's really what it means. Someone hits you once, that's an injury.

You offer from the other cheek. Why? It gives them the opportunity to injure you again. They want to sue you and take your coat.

Well, let them have it and give them that which they might, you know, let them injure you further. Give them your cloak also. Go two miles instead of the one that they anticipated.

Now, as I said when we were studying this passage in the Sermon on the Mount. Actually, we're in the midst of this portion in our studies of the life of Christ. There is a certain element of hyperbole here.

It's not as if those are the only technically right things to do. If someone hits you, turning

the other cheek is the only recourse. But it is certainly, if the only option is to turn the other cheek or strike back, then turn the other cheek is the only recourse.

Because striking back is not an option to the believer. To injure the other party is not something we're entitled to do. To avoid injury is at times justified and even recommended in the New Testament.

There are situations where, as I mentioned, Paul appealed to his Roman citizenship to avoid an unnecessary beating. Jesus said, when they persecute you in one city, flee to the next. You don't have to literally stand there and invite punishment.

But if flight is impossible, if escape is impossible, the only way to avoid further injury is to injure the other party. Then invite further injury. Welcome it.

Absorb it, rather than fight back. That's what Jesus taught. And so Paul takes it for granted that Christians ought to know this.

Now, I wouldn't take it for granted that people in general would know this unless they were disciples, unless they were taught the things Jesus said. Because what Paul is asking them to do is astonishing to the natural mind. Why don't you just let yourself be wronged? I mean, isn't it obvious? Just let yourself be defrauded.

Well, it's not at all obvious to anyone who isn't schooled in the teaching of Christ. But it's supposed to be to those who are. And I think when we read that verse, if we just dwell on what Paul said there, why don't you rather accept the wrong? Why not let yourself be defrauded? If most Christians would look at that and see what that says and just think about it, I think they'd be kind of amazed that Paul would recommend this.

Because it isn't part of the mental furniture of most people who have been in churches today to fully imbibe the spirit of Christ at this level. And yet that's not some exceptional form of saintliness. Paul kind of talks about, well, why wouldn't every Christian do this? Isn't this how Christians think? Isn't this how Christians are instructed to react? He says, no, you yourselves do wrong and defraud, and that you do to your brethren.

Now, verse 8 sounds initially as if he's talking to those who should let themselves be defrauded, that he's addressed that way in verse 7. And those who are not letting themselves be defrauded, but going to court against those who have defrauded them, are themselves injuring them, their parties. Now, this either means that in seeking retaliation for an injury that they've sustained at the hands of another person, they are injuring the other party, and maybe even overdoing it, because they're reacting in the flesh. They may be going for the throat.

I mean, someone tapped your rear bumper, and you're suing for \$4 million because you're claiming a whiplash. You know, I mean, that is overdoing it. There is a sense in which people delight in suffering an injury that they can go and redress in court.

It's people who wish someone would tap their rear bumper, you know, because they've got some bills they'd like to pay off, and they'd like to take advantage. And I don't know, maybe some of the Christians were even doing this, not only going to court, but saying, and while I've got you here, I'm going to take twice as much from you. And that could be what Paul's referring to, that those who should be allowing themselves to be defrauded and just absorbing the injustice upon themselves, they themselves turn around, they do wrong and defraud their brothers.

It's also possible that in verse 8, however, he's turning to the other Christians. In verse 7, he speaks to the ones who are injured and should absorb it. In verse 8, he turns to those who are injuring them and says, now look what you're doing.

You're defrauding your brother. He tells the one in verse 7, let yourself be defrauded. But he turns to the one who's doing the defrauding and says, you shouldn't be doing that to your brother.

So it's hard to know whether Paul is speaking to the same party, although it's you in every case. Remember that you means the church as a whole and both sides of the dispute were in the church. So, it hardly matters for us to resolve this question as to whether he's got both sides of the dispute in mind in the two verses, or whether he's saying both verses to the same parties.

In any case, what he's saying is you shouldn't be interested in hurting your brother, whether in retaliation or not. Now, verse 9 says, do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Now, why is this put in here? He says, do not be deceived, neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor sodomites, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners will inherit the kingdom of God. Most of the things that are listed here, fornication, idolatry, adultery, homosexuality, sodomy, covetousness, drunkenness, and so forth.

Most of those things are not things where someone would take someone else to court about it. Thieves, yeah, thieves mentioned. Extortioners, maybe.

There are a few things listed there that are the kinds of unrighteous behaviors that one might sue another person about, but most of them are things that are just offenses against God. I mean, they're not so much offenses against an individual other party, or at least not of the type that a person would seek redress in the court of law. So, it raises the question, why does Paul turn at this point and say this particular thing? He has twice before in the same chapter said, do you not know, do you not know, verses 2 and 3. He's speaking to what they're doing wrong.

What they're doing wrong is going to court before unbelievers. And he says, that's crazy. Don't you know this? Don't you know this? You're going to judge the world.

You're going to judge angels. Now he says in verse 9, don't you know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? One possibility here is that by unrighteous, he's referring to the judges before whom they are going. Now, in favor of this identification, the list of sins that are given there in verse 9 and 10 are the very kinds of sins that ordinary people in the Greek world did.

Probably the judges were no exception. Now, if the judges were doing outright criminal activity, they probably wouldn't be allowed to be judges for very long. Of course, they could be thieves and covetous under the table as it were, taking bribes and such.

But most of those things are just plain debauchery by Christian standards, but ordinary behavior by Greek standards. And he could be just describing the lifestyles of these judges and say, these are the kind of people that you want to be making moral decisions for you about justice and righteousness and so forth. Now, one thing that makes me think that he could be referring back to the judges is that he referred to such pagan judges in verse 1 as the unrighteous.

This particular Greek word, unrighteous, the unrighteous, it's of course unrighteous is an adjective, but it's used here in what they call a substantive sense as a noun, people who are unrighteous. The unrighteous, this word is used only three times in Paul's writings. Once is in Romans chapter 3, verse 5, and the other two times are in this chapter in verse 1 and in verse 9. In other words, when he says the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God, it's the same word and rarely used by Paul that he used a few verses earlier in referring to the pagan judges, the unrighteous.

Therefore, I suggest the possibility that he is saying, he's making yet another argument here. See, what made him so upset was what he referred to in verse 1. You're going to court before the unrighteous. And then there's three things he does to shame him.

Don't you know this, that what every Christian should know? Don't you know this? And don't you know this? These are three arguments for not going to the unrighteous to solve your problems. Two of them are that it's the saints, not the unrighteous, who are going to judge the world and the angels. Therefore, that's an argument in favor to go before the saints.

If God trusts the saints with the judgment of angels and of the world, then we should trust them with the judgment of these kinds of matters. But the other point is, why would you want to judge, why would you want to trust the unrighteous with this kind of thing? Don't you know that they, unlike us, unlike us who will judge angels and judge the world, these people, they're not even going to inherit the kingdom of God. They're not even going to be in it.

They're going to hold no status there whatsoever. They're outsiders altogether and look at the way they live. Now, this is, I think, probably what Paul's doing.

Now, many commentators would disagree with this. In fact, I've never, I don't recall I've ever met a commentator that agrees with me on this. But I think most commentators would say Paul brings up the material in verse 9 as a rebuke to those who are wronging other Christians.

That is, Christians who are wronging other Christians, which has caused that latter Christians to want to sue the former. Okay, so the person doing the initial injury, which is being sought to be redressed in the court by the other brother, that that is the person that he's speaking of. You unright, don't do unrighteous things.

Now, the unrighteous things would be, in the opinion of some commentators, the things that are being done initially by one Christian against another Christian, which is leading the second Christian to go back to the courts about it. But I don't agree with the commentators on this, because like I say, most of the things that he lists are not the kinds of things people go to court about. I never heard of a Christian taking another Christian to court because they were a homosexual or because they were a drunkard.

I mean, maybe a drunk driver who ran into your car, but that's not the issue here. The issue is misbehavior in general, ungodly, immoral lifestyles. And that is not descriptive of any of the people in the church.

Of course, there was one person in the church that fit, but Paul was going to have him put out of the church. It's chapter 5, makes clear, and he was going to be there anymore. Concerning these lifestyles, Paul says in verse 11, and such were some of you, but you're not anymore.

So it's clear that what he's describing in verses 9 through 10 are not people in the church. Some of them were that way once, but they're not that way anymore now that they're Christians. So the unrighteous behavior he's describing is that of the haven.

And as I said, the verbal similarity to verse 1 and the whole way that his argument is structured makes me think that he's here giving yet another reason not to entrust the judgments in these matters to an unbeliever. This unbeliever, they don't know what's right and wrong. Look at them.

They don't even know that homosexuality is wrong. They don't even know that drunkenness and idolatry is wrong. I think it's quite obvious that Paul in verses 9 and 10 is not describing any of the people in the church.

I seriously doubt that any of them were worshiping idols, for example, and idolatry is mentioned. If there were homosexuals, fornicators, and drunkards, I'm sure that he would have addressed that in the same manner he did in chapter 5. In fact, if there were homosexuals and drunkards and adulterers in the church, I'm sure that the matter of going to court against one another would hardly be the thing that would irritate him as



much as those issues. So I think he is describing actually the lifestyle of the pagans in general, including the kinds of people who judged matters in the pagan courts.

Their lifestyles were no better. Now, after giving a description, maybe I should just add this one thing. Verses 9 and 10, after giving that catalog of vices, both at the beginning and the end of that catalog, it makes this statement of them.

They will not inherit the kingdom of God. And I think the function of that statement here in this particular context is, you know, so why should they make decisions that are, you know, among God's subjects? They're not even going to be in the kingdom. You should have people who are in the kingdom of God making decisions among their fellow subjects of the kingdom.

But Galatians has a similar list and says the identical thing. Those who do these kinds of things. Only Paul in Galatians 5 lists them under the rubric of the works of the flesh.

In Galatians 5, 19, he says, now the works of the flesh are evident, which are adultery, fornication, uncleanness, licentiousness, idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like, of which I tell you beforehand, just as I also told you in time past, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God. Now, the two passages are similar in this respect. They both list some pretty standard vices.

And both of them say that those who do these things will not inherit the kingdom of God. I believe that, of course, in 1 Corinthians, he's not intending to say that any of the Christians were necessarily doing those things. Though in Galatians, he is simply saying that the works of the flesh are these things, but he is indicating that Christians should be walking in the Spirit and not fulfilling the lust of the flesh in that place.

So, again, those are not behaviors of Christians. But the question arises, of course, what about people we know who are, or appear to be Christians, who go out and get drunk? Or who do have homosexual tendencies and even succumb from time to time? To those tendencies. I think all of us know people that could be so described.

People who are in the church. People who are, as it would appear, genuine Christians. And yet we know of cases where they have been drunkards, or at least they've gotten drunk, and where there has been immorality and even homosexuality and some of these other things.

Are these people, therefore, because they've succumbed to these sins, not going to inherit the kingdom of God? Paul says these people won't inherit the kingdom of God. In answer to that, I personally think that he is, I personally think that a person who is living a chaste life, a celibate life in general, but has succumbed on occasion, and then

immediately repented of some kind of misbehavior along these lines, that person cannot really be labeled as a fornicator, although they have committed fornication. It is not what they do, generally speaking.

It is against their convictions to do it. They do not agree with it. They avoid it, generally.

They have succumbed, it may be, once, twice, maybe, who knows, maybe on rare occasions. This is not okay. It's not okay to succumb once in a while.

God's not going to grate on a curve. He's not going to say, well, most of the time you didn't fornicate, and so we'll just kind of be easy on these few cases where you did. It's not a question of whether your good deeds outweigh the bad.

It's a question of what you're committed to. It's a question of what your values that you have adopted and embraced are. The unsaved commit fornication and think nothing of it.

I mean, they don't disagree with it, in principle. It's not a matter of where they do it once and then repent, and that's the end of it. It's their lifestyle.

They've got no reason not to do these kinds of things. And yet Christians do not do this as a lifestyle. Those who inherit the kingdom of God could never be described as fornicators or homosexuals if by that we're meaning, this is the way people, these are the things that could be said to characterize their lifestyle.

If you do find someone who lives in unrepentant homosexuality and drunkenness and fornication and these kinds of things, then you clearly are looking at a person who will not inherit the kingdom of God. Regardless of how many Christian phrases they can pronounce and how long they've been in the church and so forth. I mean, people in the church who are living in sin definitely need to be forewarned by this kind of a verse that there is not an antinomian God in heaven.

There is a God who demands holiness without which no man shall see the Lord. But at the same time, those who are really striving for holiness and have succumbed to going out in a low spot in their life, in their Christian life, and they got drunk once or something and then repented of it and truly repented, they don't need to fear that, oh, I guess now I'm a drunkard, I won't inherit the kingdom of God. It's a fine line teaching on these things, because on the one hand, we want to teach what the Bible teaches about grace and forgiveness, but we don't want to make it sound like there's no consequences for misbehavior.

And we certainly don't want to make it sound like you can get away with it. Because you never really do get away with it. You may not adopt, let's say, fornication or drunkenness as a pattern of life.

You may never do that. But if you succumb to it, even extremely rarely, every time you do, though you repent and you can be forgiven, you have broken down something in your character which is not easily recovered. And some things perhaps can never be recovered fully.

I've heard people say that after you become a Christian, even if you've been promiscuous, you can become a spiritual virgin again. I'm not really sure what that means. It sounds like an awful lot of nice talk, but I'm not sure what it means in terms of experience.

I mean, either you're a virgin or you're not a virgin. And to say, well, you're a spiritual virgin, if that means God forgives you for your fornication, then I can agree with that. But I've heard teachers on Dobson's program, people like that, talk about this, becoming a spiritual virgin again after you become a Christian.

It sounds more like wishful thinking than anything to me, because everyone I know, myself included, who's made any kind of moral compromise in my earlier life or their earlier life, still suffer the consequences for that. Not in terms of eternal judgment in hell, but in terms of memories that cannot be erased, in terms of regret, in terms of loss of respect in the eyes of parties that are aware of it, and so forth. I mean, it's not with impunity that Christians sin, even though they can be forgiven.

There is always a price tag, and it's always too expensive. It's always a greater cost than was justified for the product. Satan always advertises sin as something that will yield more pleasure than whatever cost you may have to pay for it.

And he's always lying. So, what I want to say is, even though I know of Christians who struggle with homosexual tendencies and have even fallen since becoming Christians into things like that, and who are drunkards, and though I've never been tempted in either area of that and can't relate with it, yet I know that I'm a sinner too, and that Christians do fall into sin. And that what Paul is saying here is not that if a person is a sinner, and if a person has ever succumbed to these things since conversion, they are not going to inherit the kingdom of God.

I know people who think it says that, which is why I'm going off on a tangent about it, because I don't believe that that's how Paul means it. Paul is talking about people who, this is their lifestyle. These are the people that you're asking to judge your matters of justice in court.

They don't even have any moral sense themselves. These are the kinds of things they live in and approve of. They're not going to inherit the kingdom of God.

They're obviously not under the rule of God. And you, some of you were that way. Now, one thing I love, 1 Corinthians 6, 11.

It is one of the most wonderful verses I know of, and it definitely answers the whole faithless appeal to psychology on the part of modern Christians in our society who feel that if you're an alcoholic, or if you're a sex addict, as they would say, or a gambling addict, I mean, they give all these therapeutic names to behaviors that are just sin, and they call it mental imbalance or mental illness or something like that. And usually, even Christian churches often say, well, you know, we're going to have to start a support group, a 12-step program in the basement, or a Christ-centered 12-step program for people who have drinking problems and so forth. And what they do is they're assuming that these kinds of things are sicknesses, or they're not ordinary sins that you can just repent of and get delivered from.

They are somehow in the psyche in a way that especially requires secularly developed techniques brought over and sanctified by putting the name of Jesus like a postage stamp on them into the church. And we need this kind of stuff to get out of this kind of behavior. And this is a shame, because what it does, it buys right into the whole worldly interpretation of what sin is, or I mean, what we call sin, they call it sickness.

You know that homosexuality itself was listed in the psychiatric journals and books as a mental disease, mental illness, until it became politically incorrect to speak of homosexuality as a mental illness. Now it's just an alternate lifestyle. But the secular psychiatrists and psychologists listed at one time a few years ago homosexuality as a mental illness.

Now we might long for a time when they would go back to seeing it that way, because that'd be an improvement over the way they view it now. But that was not acceptable. Homosexuality is not a mental illness.

It's a sinful pattern. It is lust run rampant of a perverted sort. And notwithstanding all the modern research that's gone to try to show that some people have a genetic disposition toward homosexuality, and therefore they will always be homosexuals.

They're born that way, and that's just the way they always will be. And you can either stifle them or release them to practice it or whatever, but you're not going to change their orientation. Notwithstanding all that research, which, by the way, was done by homosexual researchers.

And I mean, this is a fact. This is a fact. Researchers that have produced the most widely publicized studies on this subject coming up with these results were themselves homosexuals with an agenda.

So one wonders whether the scientific method was skewed at all in the research. But even if it were true that some people have more of a disposition toward homosexuality than others do, I don't care whether it be genetic or simply something that happened to them because they were abused as a child or something else. I know it's true that some

people I know are inclined toward homosexuality more than I am because I'm not at all.

Not at all. And I know some people who struggle with it every day. So, I mean, you don't have to prove genetic predisposition or anything.

We can call it early childhood experiences. We can call it genetics. We can call it whatever we want to and say, this person is attracted to homosexual behavior more than I am.

I will accept that fact. I will accept the fact that this person is going to be tempted more than I am in that particular sin. And I will be tempted more than they are in other kinds of sin.

And no doubt some people are tempted more than I am toward drinking alcohol in excess. No doubt. What does that have to do with anything? It's still all sin.

And no matter how much some person has more of a problem with this sin or with that sin or another sin, it's sin. And sin is sin. And sin is something to be repented of and washed from and sanctified from.

And Paul indicates that the church in Corinth was populated with some people who had been homosexuals, some who had been drunkards, some who had been adulterers and fornicators. There were people who had broken down their moral walls and were susceptible, just like any modern counterparts would be, prior to their conversion. No doubt many of the people in the church could have argued that they had a homosexual orientation, at least prior to their conversion, because Paul says, such were some of you.

But the word were is an important word. They aren't anymore. They were not homosexuals anymore.

Now, to say that someone is not a homosexual anymore doesn't mean that they no longer struggle with an attraction to the same sex. Sinful patterns in the mind are hard to shake. They die hard.

And there are people who have developed those patterns in their thinking before they're Christians, and now that they're saved, they don't just automatically think differently. They have to wrestle with that. Behavior and choices have consequences.

And once you become a Christian, the choices and behaviors you ingrained in your life before you're a Christian don't just go away. Not instantly, anyway. Now, I have heard testimonies of homosexuals who have, you know, through following the Lord and being sanctified, at least as they would testify, entirely overcome their homosexual tendencies.

On the other hand, I know a guy, I won't give his name, but he wouldn't be shy about it because he's, in fact, he's public about it. He's a homosexual Jew in San Francisco. He

now heads up a street preaching outreach in San Francisco.

He's a friend of mine. And he's been saved and ministering on the streets for probably 15, 20 years now. And I saw him down in San Francisco at a gathering of ministers about a year ago, I guess it was, maybe a little more.

But I wanted to ask him about this. I mean, because I told him, you know, I keep reading people saying, yeah, you can get saved out of homosexuality and so forth, but you'll always be a homosexual in your orientation. I said, I said, I just, I mean, you don't have to tell me if you don't want to.

I mean, maybe this is too private, but I'm not asking about so much about how you're doing. But I just wondered, do you find that as a former homosexual and now walking with the Lord and being celibate for 20 years, that you no longer have homosexual tendencies? Are there still temptations that way? And he said, well, he says, I've heard people talk about, you know, being reoriented and so forth through the power of God. But he says, I can't claim that I've had that experience.

He's still, when he's tempted sexually, he's tempted toward men, not toward women. That's a burden he may have to bear the rest of his life. Now, I don't doubt that some people do get over it.

I know some people who are drug addicts. And the moment they're saved, they never crave another drug. Other people have to go through withdrawal and other things to get off drugs.

I know people, a guy I know said that he was just totally given over to lust. A Christian friend of mine in New Jersey, he's a man older than me by about 20 years. He said that when he was a pagan and in the early days when he became a Christian, he was, he just couldn't look at a woman in lust after.

It didn't matter who she was, didn't matter what she looked like, didn't matter what shape she was, what color she was, didn't matter if she was a woman. He would leer at her and lust after her and he was just totally consumed by his lust. And he cried out to God and he sought the Lord.

And I don't remember exactly how long this was after he was saved or whatever. But he just got totally deliberate at that. And now he doesn't look at women with lust anymore.

If he's telling me the truth, he doesn't do that. I haven't had that deliverance myself. I'd love it.

I'm not saying I'm consumed with lust. I'm not. I mean, I don't think I am.

I can look at women without lusting and usually do. But I would love it to simply have

something extracted from me in a moment's time, supernaturally by the Holy Spirit, that removed all propensity toward heterosexual, illegitimate desire. But I think I'm probably in the company of most men and saying that that's just something that it doesn't go away, but you have to fight it.

The flesh lusts against the spirit and the spirit against the flesh. And these two are contrary to one another, Paul said. Some people do experience actual deliverance in the area of their desires if their testimonies are true, and I don't doubt them.

Others do not. I know people who gave up smoking effortlessly the moment they got saved. I know other people who fought with it and fought with it and fought with it.

Some of them finally got over it years later. But not everyone has exactly the same experience in terms of what is done in the area of their desires. What I'm saying is that a person who is a homosexual, or a drug addict, or a drunkard, or a fornicator, a whoremonger, or whatever before, that person is no longer that once he's been washed and sanctified.

But that simply means he doesn't do those things anymore. It doesn't necessarily mean that he's experienced a total change in his orientation so that he no longer has temptations in those areas. There is no condemnation for having temptation.

Jesus had temptation. He was tempted in all points like we are, yet without sin. Which means that temptation is not sin, and we don't have to feel condemned if temptation is something that recurs, although we desperately wish we could have it banished once and for all.

I say this mostly for the sake of addressing the homosexual question because it is so prominent in our society right now, and so much discussion is about orientation. Obviously, to have a homosexual orientation, to have a desire for people of the same sex, is a great blight on a person's spiritual life, and a horrendous thing. And happy is the homosexual, I imagine, who has been totally delivered of that and reoriented so that they now... I know some people, formerly homosexuals, who are married and have children and appear to be living a normal life without the old desires.

But to say someone is a homosexual is really not to say anything about their orientation, it's to say something about their behavior. A homosexual is a person who has homosexual sex. In fact, I personally don't know that the word homosexual really properly should be used as a noun, so much as an adjective.

It is used, as it were, as a noun here in verse 9, but it's a substantive adjective, really, just like the unrighteous. Unrighteous is really an adjective more than a noun. But a person who practices homosexual behavior is not going to inherit the kingdom of God.

A person who struggles with homosexual thoughts and temptations and resists them is

not a homosexual in the sense of those who will not inherit the kingdom of God. It is your choices, not your temptations, that determine whether you're righteous or unrighteous inside of God. Now, these people did not go through 12-step programs or ages of therapy once they came to Christianity.

They were bound up in some of these problems, but now no longer. They are now washed. They've been sanctified, and they've been justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God, which suggests that the power of the name of Jesus and of the Spirit of God are adequate to deliver fully from these sinful lifestyles.

Not mental illnesses. These are not mental illnesses. These are sinful lifestyles.

They are behavior problems, and nothing from the world is necessary to import to help people out of them. The Lordship of Jesus Christ, the sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit is adequate. Now, you might say, well, that's easy for you to say, but I know an alcoholic who has accepted the Lord, and certainly he has the Holy Spirit.

He's been filled with the Spirit, speaks in tongues. He has Jesus as Lord, but he still falls into getting drunk frequently. And you're telling me that the Lordship of Jesus and the Holy Spirit is all they need.

Well, yeah, that is all we need. But when we say the Lordship of Jesus and the power of the Spirit, that has some content to it in meaning. That means walking in the Spirit and submitting to the Lordship of Christ.

And when a person succumbs and goes out and drinks to excess, that person is not walking in the Spirit. Because Paul said, if we walk in the Spirit, we will not fulfill the lust of the flesh. Quite obviously, if you fulfill the lust of the flesh, you're not walking in the Spirit.

Walking in the Spirit is the challenge. It's not going out and learning psychological devices to try to overcome or getting support by identifying yourself as an adult child of an alcoholic or an adult survivor of divorce or having one of these labels where people identify themselves by their problem. It's a matter of learning to walk in the Spirit.

The same for a homosexual or drunkard or a fornicator or a liar or anyone else who's got any other kind of sin. Walking in the Spirit is the challenge. There are no solutions.

There aren't special solutions for special kinds of categories of sin. And I guess maybe that's where my complaint arises. Because when the church buys into the idea that we need a special support group for people with this kind of sin, then obviously the people who join that support group identify themselves with that kind of sin.

I am a Christian whatever, alcoholic, Christian homosexual, a Christian gambling addict, a Christian sex addict, whatever. And therefore I join this group of other people who



have the same problem because our problem is a special kind of problem that needs special kind of support and special kind of treatment. No, that problem is just like any other problem.

It's sin. And sure, sin is hard to beat. We do need support.

We do need the support of the body of Christ. But to identify ourselves as this kind of a sinner, instead of this kind of sinner, I think is counterproductive because we begin to think, well, I did that because obviously, I fell again because obviously I'm an alcoholic. That's not the way the Bible talks about.

We will not fulfill the lust of the flesh. That's in Galatians 5, I think 16. Find out here.

Yeah. Galatians 5, 16. I say then, walk in the spirit and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh.

And of course, what the lust of the flesh is, is what he lists there we read earlier in verses 19 through 21, the works of the flesh, including drunkenness and others. I mean, basically, all those things that if a person does, they will not inherit the kingdom of God. Those are the works of the flesh.

And if you walk in the spirit, you don't do those things. Yeah, Adam. I consider manic depressive disorder or affective disorder, as they call it.

Well, it's a hard thing to say, but I do not call that a mental illness, as is common to do. Nor schizophrenia, nor anxiety, or panic attacks. All these things all now have psychiatric labels.

But the problem is, okay, first of all, some of those things may be caused at times by chemical considerations. I mean, brain chemistry does differ from person to person, even from one time of the month to another time of the month in some cases. And that being so, we cannot rule out that moods, even radical mood swings and so forth, might be affected by hormonal imbalances or brain chemistry and those kinds of things.

I guess my problem with it is, is the same as what I was talking about a moment ago. People identify themselves. I'm a manic depressive.

I'm a schizophrenic. I'm this, I'm that. They're identifying themselves with their disordered moods or disordered conduct in some cases.

And I believe that the things that are described in those therapeutic terms are really spiritual things. I mean, they can be triggered by something chemical. I mean, it's obvious that a person in a certain time of the month may be more irritable, in which case they have to guard against the tendency to sin in anger or something like that, I mean, or impatience or something like that.

Our circumstances, whether it's our internal chemistry or our environment around us, at various times puts different kinds of pressures upon us, which increases the temptation to do the wrong thing. But that doesn't justify our doing the wrong thing. I believe that depression is not right.

I don't see how a person can wallow in depression and still be obeying the scripture that says to rejoice in the Lord always, which was written by a guy rotting in a third world jail. You know, I mean, he said to rejoice in the Lord always. And again, I say rejoice.

I've learned whatever state I'm in to be content. Now, I have to admit, I don't understand clinical depression as an insider. I've never had it.

I mean, I've gotten depressed. I think everyone gets depressed sometimes. I'm not sure whether depression as I have experienced it is substantially different than the psychic experience of a person who's described as a manic depressant.

I don't know it to be different. That's the problem. You know, the thing is, when I'm depressed, a lot of times I just need more sleep or, you know, I haven't been eating well or some natural thing like that is the cause.

But one thing is clear. I'm not rejoicing in the Lord. You know, I mean, if I'm depressed, it's probably there's probably an element there of self-pity.

There's probably an element of anxiety. There's probably an element of things that really I shouldn't be allowing to dominate my mind, which Christians are supposed to put from them. So I think there's a mixture there.

I think that things that are that are called manic depressive affective disorder or bipolar affective disorders, it's also called or schizophrenia or chronic depression or whatever, clinical depression, clinical anxiety. I don't know that there's anything really clinical about them. I do think there are, in some of those cases, times when chemistry plays a role.

But I don't even think that when chemistry does play a role, that that cancels out a person's moral responsibility to walk in the spirit. It just challenges it more. But hey, even those of us who have no such chemical problems have plenty of challenges in the world and in our environment that make it difficult to walk in the spirit, but still necessary.

Some have greater challenges than others, which and we pity those who do, but that doesn't let them off the hook. They still are supposed to walk in the spirit. It's still not supposed to misbehave.

Now, the matter of schizophrenia, which you didn't ask about, but is often lumped with these others as a mental illness. One of those things usually treated with drugs. A lot of

what is called schizophrenia is diagnosed on the basis of people hearing voices and living in a real strange paranoid fantasy world and so forth.

And frankly, I kind of think demons are involved in a lot of those cases. I mean, drugs and other things can cause it too. But I think it's spiritual, nonetheless.

It may not be as simple as, this is a sin for you to repent of. It may actually, or it may need deliverance. But still, I would categorize these things as spiritual problems, not as mental illnesses or physiological problems.

Again, not ruling out physiological factors, but they're not a physiological problem. The problem is that I'm not walking in the spirit. And there are maybe times or conditions of my physiology that make it harder or more challenging for me to walk in the spirit, but I'm still required to do so.

Because it is walking in the spirit that causes people to cease from being fornicators, idolaters, adulterers, homosexuals, sodomites, thieves, covetous, drunkards, revilers, extortioners, and so forth. It is being washed by the blood of Jesus. It is being sanctified by the Holy Spirit.

It is being justified in the name of the Lord Jesus. These are the things that are the spiritual answers to these problems, and these problems are spiritual and moral problems. Not psychological problems.

I realize I'm out of step with what most Christians are saying on that subject these days, but I'm not alone at all. There are some Christians holding out for biblical answers to these problems still. Verse 12, all things are lawful for me, but not all things are helpful.

All things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any. Now, of course, you noticed in verse 12, he said twice the same thing. All things are lawful for me, and then he modifies it two different ways.

Not all things are helpful. I won't be brought under the power of any. There's another place where he does this in chapter 10.

Chapter 10, verse 23. He says, all things are lawful for me, but all things are not helpful. All things are lawful for me, but all things do not edify.

That's chapter 10, verse 23, which means that four times in 1 Corinthians, he repeats this phrase, all things are lawful to me. And it's in two passages where he says it twice in the same verse in the first case, and twice in the same verse in the second case. It has the sound, at least in the ears of many commentators, of a quote.

That is, as if he's quoting something, a phrase, that these Corinthians were familiar with. In fact, not only familiar, they may have generated it. It's hard to know, but almost all

commentators, of course there are fads in commentary.

If you don't read commentaries, that may be a wise choice. But in theology, there are fads and vogues. And I don't trust that all commentators, even when they're all saying the same thing, always have a good basis for it.

Sometimes some influential guy said it a generation ago, and anybody who's anybody has to show that they agree with him, and so that all the commentators of the next generation reflect his opinion, whether there's a good basis for it or not. I sometimes wonder if this point I'm about to make is one of those. But almost all commentators agree that when Paul says, all things are lawful to me, you should put that in quotation marks.

And then his statement, not all things are helpful, are his answer to that. And what the quotation marks signify is that people in Corinth, a certain libertine party in Corinth that didn't want any restraints on their behavior, had this as their slogan, all things are lawful to me. And it's possible they even picked it up by a misapplication of Paul's gospel presentation, because Paul was an emphasize of grace.

You know, the difference between Galatians and First Corinthians is striking because repeatedly, again and again in Corinthians, Paul's trying to argue against the overemphasis on liberty among the libertarian or libertine anti-Gnomean Gnostics types in Corinth. Whereas in Galatians, he's arguing for liberty and emphasizing you got to stand fast in your liberty, but he doesn't want it taken too far because there is such a thing as going berserk with this this idea of everything is lawful to me. Now, Paul, you recall from studying First Corinthians, if you were awake in First Corinthians 15, there was a council called the Jerusalem Council, at which some decisions were made by a gathering of the apostles and elders of Jerusalem about whether the Gentile converts to Christianity were going to have to be subject to the laws of Moses.

Up to that point, all the converts or most of the converts to Christianity had been Jews, and they had never challenged the matter of whether now that they're Christians, they should still keep the law. The Jews did keep the law. Even the Jewish Christians did.

They still went to the temple. They kept Sabbath in all likelihood. It was just a habit, and they saw no reason to quit.

The Jewish Christians were still circumcising their babies and stuff, and then Gentiles got saved, and they weren't circumcised, and they didn't keep the law. The question arose, well, hmm, now is it part of their requirements as converts now that they begin to keep the law like us Jewish Christians had been? That's what the Jewish council was to decide, and the answer was no. However, a letter was drafted to be delivered by Paul and Barnabas to the Gentile Christians in which they were informed of their liberty not to have to keep the Jewish law, but they were asked to observe four restrictions.

That is, restrictions upon what would be normal Gentile behavior, but very offensive to the Jews and to some Christians, including Christian Jews, and that was fornication, eating blood, eating things strangled, and eating meat sacrificed to idols. Now, those four things, the Jewish brethren and Jerusalem asked the Gentile Christians to abstain from. Now, as you can see from that list, one of those things is sexual sin, fornication.

The other three things has to do with what you put in your mouth, and Jesus said it's not what goes into a man's mouth that defiles him. And, you know, eating blood, eating meat sacrificed to idols, eating things strangled, those stand on a very different moral level than fornication. However, they were all in the same list.

Now, Paul's duty was, with Barnabas and eventually with Silas, to go around to the requests. Now, I can just imagine Paul coming to Corinth with this list. I mean, he says, listen, the brothers in Jerusalem would like for you to abstain from fornication and from things strangled and from meat sacrificed to idols and from blood.

Get the humor of them, please. Now, of course, Paul agreed with the Jerusalem Council about the fornication issue. He didn't think people should fornicate.

But on the matter of eating meat sacrificed to idols and so forth, it's very clear Paul had no scruples about that. He says so very plainly, both in Romans and in First Corinthians and in First Timothy. He basically says it doesn't matter what you eat.

And he even says so in this chapter as we go on. So my assumption is that when Paul came, dutifully, he presented the requirements of the Jerusalem Council to the Gentile Christians, said these four things they've asked you to abstain from, but between ourselves, this eating meat sacrificed to idols and blood, God doesn't care. It doesn't matter.

And, you know, what I think happened, I'm just trying to reconstruct from what Paul had to do to correct it here in this passage. I think what happened was the Libertines said, well, Paul himself said that those restrictions of the Jerusalem Council didn't matter to God. I mean, we can eat meat sacrificed to idols and so forth, and fornication, too, for that matter, that's on the list.

And they didn't make any differentiation in their mind between fornication on the one hand and eating things on the other. And if you bear that in mind, you can make good sense of what Paul argues in these last few verses of First Corinthians 6. If they were saying, well, all things are lawful to me, maybe even repeating something Paul himself had said among them, all things are lawful to eat, would be what he means. But they would be taking it more in the absolute sense, all things are lawful, including fornication.

Remember, the Libertines had this Greek notion that the body, it was, you know, incorrigibly corrupt, and therefore, you couldn't help to rehabilitate it at all, so why

bother? Why bother restricting it at all? I mean, it's going to die. It's going to go back to the dust anyway. Just let it have its way and concentrate on, you know, thinking spiritual thoughts or something.

But if you fornicate, it's no big deal. The body's no better if you don't fornicate than if you do. This is apparently what some of the Libertines were thinking, and their slogan had become, all things are lawful to me.

And Paul grants them that, in a sense. If we mean food, yes, all food is lawful to you. All things are lawful to me, but not all things are helpful.

There are some things I might even lawfully eat or do, but I should not do them because of the, they're not edifying, they're not helpful. All things are lawful to me, but I'm not going to be brought into the bondage of any. There are some things I can lawfully do, and God's not offended by my doing them, but it's not a very wise choice, because they are habits which, because of my own corrupt nature, might bring me into bondage, which is certainly an undesirable condition.

I'm not going to do that. I won't do anything, however lawfully says, that's going to bring me into bondage. He says, foods for the stomach, and the stomach for foods, but God will destroy both it and them.

Now, the body is not for sexual immorality, but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body. Now, again, some commentators believe that foods for the stomach and the stomach for foods, but God shall destroy both it and them, is again a saying of the Libertines. But it's not necessarily so.

Paul could have taught that. It could be his teaching. It doesn't matter what you eat.

Meat sacrificed, animals, blood, things strangled, it doesn't make any difference. Clean, unclean foods. The body's made for food.

Food's made for the body. These things are temporal anyway. Your body's going to go back to the dust.

The food perishes with the using, as Paul says in Colossians 2. It's no big deal what you eat. It's not a moral issue. It doesn't deal with eternal issues.

But, he says, fornication, now that's in a different category. The things you're not supposed to eat, that's no big deal. God doesn't care, really, about that.

But, to say that the body's made for food, therefore we can eat meat sacrificed to idols, is not the same thing as to say the body's made for fornication, therefore we can fornicate. The body's made for sex, obviously, so fornicate. No, it's not that way.

It may be true that the body's made for food and there's nothing wrong with what you

eat, but the body is not made for fornication. That is a different issue. It's a moral issue.

Your body is made to be consecrated to the Lord. And, he says in verse 14, God both raised up the Lord and will also raise us up by his power. So, our body is not going to perish entirely.

I mean, it's going to perish, but it will come back in the resurrection. And, to have an undefiled body is going to matter in eternity. That is an eternal issue.

Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ? Now, notice, members of Christ, we would more naturally say members of the body of Christ or members of the church. But, he argues that the church is Christ. It is the embodiment of Christ.

Christ Jesus himself is the head of the body, but we are of his flesh and his bones. We're the embodiment of him in this world today. He makes that complaint in many places.

We don't have time to survey them all right now because we're out of time. Shall I then take the members of Christ, meaning my own body, and make them members of a harlot? Certainly not. Or, do you not know that he who is joined to a harlot is one body with her? For the two, he says, shall become one flesh.

Quoting Genesis 2.24. But, he who is joined to the Lord is one spirit with him. Now, what he means by this is that there is a union of a spiritual sort, although it's expressed biblically in fleshly terms. They become one flesh.

He that is joined to a harlot becomes one body with her. It's a figure of speech. It's quite obvious that when people have sex, they don't become one body.

They go different directions in individual bodies still. They're not one body in the literal sense of the word. What he's saying is they are joined in some kind of a mystical way, which is largely psychological.

I mean, it has mostly to do with the way they feel and think and so forth. Rather, it's a spiritual kind of a thing than it is physical. But, it's almost like two bodies contain two spirits.

And now, the spirits have been merged in a sense. So, it's like there's one person out of the two, instead of two different persons. Now, if you do that as a member of Christ and the person you join yourself to is a harlot, I mean, it is understood that a person who goes into a harlot is defiled.

You cause Christ to join with a harlot, you're defiling him. This is the motivation Paul is trying to give for sexual purity, is that it's not just you that gets defiled. It's Jesus himself.

You're a member of him. You're a member of his body. He says in verse 18, flee sexual immorality like Joseph did.

He fled, literally fled from the house of Potiphar when Potiphar's wife was trying to seduce him. Every sin that a man does is outside the body, but he who commits sexual immorality sins against his own body. Now, that doesn't sound true.

If by sinning against your body, we understand that to mean doing damage to your body. It's true that sexual immorality can do damage to your body. You can contract diseases from it, but not everyone does.

Not everyone who fornicates ever gets a disease from it, and therefore, if he's thinking about physical harm to the body, he's not really speaking something that's technically true. Fornication doesn't always do physical harm to the body, and there are other sins that do. Suicide is a sin that damages the body.

Gluttony and drunkenness can certainly damage the body, and they're sins also. So, Paul is not talking here in terms of destroying the body in the physical sense, or sinning against your body in terms of doing physical harm to it. He's talking, as he was earlier in chapter 3, about those who defile the body of Christ.

Those who defile the temple of God, God will destroy. Defilement is a spiritual, moral defilement, he has in mind, not a physical damage kind of thing. While it is wrong to damage your body unnecessarily, I believe, it's bad stewardship, yet the maintenance of our body is not our priority in terms of its health, but of its purity.

And there is something about sexual immorality that stands out above all other sins in Paul's mind as bringing a special kind of defilement to the body, to the person. And that's an interesting concept. I guess, perhaps what he's saying is that even though some other sins can damage the body physically, drunkenness, gluttony, for example, can do that, but the effects of those can basically be undone.

But if you begin to observe right eating habits and moderate drinking habits and so forth, eventually the damage done to the body can often be remedied, but sexual immorality does permanent harm to the purity of the body. As I said, you only lose virginity one time. You can get forgiven.

You can even attain a high degree of purity of mind about sexual matters after you're saved, but you can never be a virgin again. Your body has been defiled.