

# Paul's First Letter to the Church at Corinth

## 1 Corinthians

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### Lawsuits in secular court (Chapter 6)

- 6:1...rhetorical question
- Paul was likely addressing a matter caused by the Greeks in Corinth
  - Jews considered bringing lawsuits to a “court of idolaters” was blasphemy against the law
  - Greeks were fond of bringing lawsuits against each other
- 6:2-5...Christians should be able to resolve disputes without using the civil courts
  - 6:2...It's not reasonable that Christians judge significant matters, but can't judge small trivial matters! The litigants should have used a process inside the church for the matter to be heard and resolved
- 6:3...Christians will judge the world and angels. Paul does not elaborate, and scripture is relatively silent on the subject of Christians acting as judges in heaven. The “angels” are probably the fallen evil angels (Jude 1:6)
- 6:4...These matters were so trivial that using the “least esteemed” in the church as a judge is adequate
- 6:5...isn't there *anyone* in the church wise enough to resolve the matter?
- 6:7...Christians suing each other *is* defeat
- Questions to answer regarding this subject:
  - The matter Paul was referencing was likely a matter between believers (see v. 5, 8), and could have been a church-related dispute
  - Is it okay for Christians to sue other Christians *regarding church-related matters*? No.
  - Is it okay for Christians to sue other Christians *regarding civil/secular matters*? Perhaps, but only as a last resort
  - Is it okay for Christians to sue *non*-Christians? Yes, especially for defense. Acts chapters 21-28 (8 chapters) detail Paul's legal defense in front of the Jewish and Roman courts before Felix, Festus, and Agrippa.

### Sexual immorality (Chapter 6)

- 6:9...Wicked people/acts will not inherit eternal life
  - “Don't be deceived”, Greek is *plan-ah'-o* meaning to be led away, note the gradual sense of being led away (compromising)
- NOTE: 1 Cor. 6:9 is a point of contention with the modern homosexual movement, even in the church
  - Some argue that Paul is not rejecting *consensual* homosexuality, but rather only homosexual abuse
  - The matter involves technical Greek interpretation, but “let scripture judge scripture” (Luther); the Bible describes homosexual acts as disgusting in God's eyes and punishable by death under the law, and is inconsistent under grace
  - Literal translation: “*have ye not known that the unrighteous the reign of God shall not inherit? be not led astray; neither whoremongers, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor sodomites..., the reign of God shall inherit*”
  - Greek words dealing with sexual sins and homosexuality
    - *Pornos (fornicators)*: originally meant exporting or selling. It came to refer to slaves who were sold as sex slaves in ancient Greece. Translated “whoremongers” in 1 Cor. 6:9, 1 Tim 1:10, Rev. 21:8, and Rev. 22:15
    - *Mal-ak-os (effeminate)*: originally meant ‘soft to the touch’

- *Arsenokoites (abusers of themselves with mankind): originated in the Septuagint (Greek translation of Hebrew Old Testament) from Lev 18:22, meaning koiten (lie) and arsenos (male). Debatable word used by Paul to describe sexual sin acts...not necessarily "being" homosexual*
- 6:11..."and such were some of you", note that Paul is asserting that we must stop committing these sins
- 6:12, 13 are two sayings from Greek Epicureans to justify their sexual acts
  - "all things are lawful for me", but it's wrong to be mastered by anything
  - "meats are for the belly and the belly is for the meat"; but the body is meant for the Lord, and the Lord is meant for the body
- 6:15...our bodies are 'members of Christ', Greek is '*mele Christous*' meaning "limbs of Christ". Vivid image of "joining a limb of Christ to a harlot" in intercourse
- 6:16, 17...note the intimate image of believers being joined to Christ (see Eph. 5:25-33)
- 6:18...FLEE '*pornia*' (broad term for sexual sin)
  - Violates Christ's rights in our bodies
  - Ruins the body itself
  - In *pornia*, the body is the instrument of sin, and becomes the subject of the damage it caused
  - Source of generational curse
- 6:19...the body is the temple of the Holy Spirit and it has been purchased with the blood of Christ. Christians are to honor God with their body