

## 1 Corinthians 6:1-11: We Can Work It Out

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### Introduction

- <https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/nation/2024/09/18/8-year-old-drives-to-target-dashcam-video/75275523007/> - When you have to have what you want, you'll do whatever it takes to get it.
- That's how we live: do whatever it takes to get what you want out of life. We live with a "my will be done" attitude. If that's the attitude that characterizes your life, then you are likely to experience much relational conflict.
- How many of you are dealing with relational conflict right now? How many of you are highly stressed in your life because of relational conflict? How many of you are stressed out because of a conflict you are having with someone who is a follower of Jesus?
- Conflict is a part of living in a broken world. By nature, we are self-centered people at war with each other trying to get our own way.
- When you find yourself in conflict with another brother or sister in Christ, what do you do?
- There was conflict in the church at Corinth. In this passage, Paul helps the believers in Corinth to understand how they should deal with conflict. If you find yourself in conflict with another brother or sister in Christ, three ways to respond:

## Resolve your disputes with the help of God and His people.

- In [1 Corinthians 5](#), Paul addressed a sin that the church wasn't willing to deal with. In [1 Corinthians 6](#), Paul deals with a minor dispute that someone in the church was blowing out of proportion.
- We don't have all the details, but one believer is disputing with another believer, and the way this believer is handling it is by suing this other believer.
- Maybe it was a dispute over money, or maybe this believer who is being sued didn't complete some work he told this other believer he would do. We don't know, but there was an unwillingness to settle the dispute outside of the court system.
- In the ancient Roman empire, it was common to take people to court for just about anything. However, the court system was corrupt, and it was almost guaranteed that someone was going to end up humiliated and shamed. The court favored the wealthy and the social elite. If you were poor or had a lower status in society, you couldn't sue someone of a higher social rank. Jurors were required to be wealthy. It was an unfair system.
- What's likely in the church at Corinth is that a wealthy church member is taking a poor church member to court to sue him over a minor grievance that could be settled within the church. It would result in that poor believer being humiliated. Paul is not happy about this.
- Caveat: Paul is addressing an issue between brothers/sisters in Christ that could be handled outside of the church. He is NOT talking about some type of criminal activity that requires the court system. He is NOT saying that there is never a time when the local authorities should step in. ([Romans 13](#)).

- Paul is upset that the Corinthians would invite a corrupt world to resolve matters that believers should be able to resolve themselves. After all, believers in Jesus are saints (vs. 1). Believers have been redeemed and given the Holy Spirit. We have the wisdom of God, the discernment of God, and the fruit of the Spirit growing within us. Why would we seek a sinful world's counsel on how to deal with our personal grievances when we have the wisdom of God?
- vs. 2-3 - After all, there will come a day when believers judge the world. If that's true, why would we invite the world to judge our trivial cases? Further, Paul says there will come a day when we judge angels. We don't know exactly what Paul means, but we do know that there is coming a day when we will reign and rule with Christ. That is our destiny. It's not the destiny of a lost world.
- vs. 4-6 - For Paul, taking a brother/sister to court is not just illogical, it's shameful. Airing someone's dirty laundry to the world is humiliating and hinders the mission of the church. Certainly, someone in the church can help!
- For Paul, it's illogical that believers would take trivial matters to the Roman court system when they have everything they need to settle their disputes apart from the opinions of a corrupt world.
- How is this word helpful for us?
- **You are more than capable of settling most of your conflict yourself.** You have the Spirit of God living in you, and you have His Word. The reason why you stay in conflict with your brothers and sisters is that you are unwilling to submit yourself to the Word. Pride keeps you from having a conversation with that person who you are in conflict with. You'll talk and gossip to everyone else about your problem, you'll even solicit advice from people who don't know Jesus. But, you won't talk to the person who you're in conflict with.

- **If you are unable to settle your conflicts, you have a church that should be able to help you.** Sometimes we need a mediator, a counselor, or a helper. Are we the kind of people who help people in conflict by praying with people and giving biblical counsel? Do we encourage humility, unity, and Christlikeness? God has placed His Spirit in us collectively to help us live in unity. Are we the kind of church that stirs up conflict or helps people live in relational peace? Are we prone to gossip, or are we prone to help people live by the Spirit? When you receive godly counsel, are you willing to receive it and take it?

## Restore relationships as much as possible.

- In the public court, someone would be destroyed. The goal of conflict resolution between Christians is not to damage or humiliate someone else. The goal of conflict resolution is to restore relationships.
- Sometimes, that's not possible, but it's the goal. vs. 7 - For Paul, if believers drag someone into the public square, and have them humiliated in order to win their case, that believer has actually lost.
- For you to damage someone's reputation, to put them down in front of others to build yourself up, to gossip and slander to prove you're right is not a win, it's a loss. Why is it a loss? 1. You have shamed a brother/sister in Christ. 2. You are showing the character of your heart is not Christlike. 3. You are damaging the work of Christ in His local church. What does a lost world think of us when all they see is us fighting and arguing like the rest of the world does?
- Instead, Paul says it's better to be wronged or cheated by a brother or sister in Christ and let it go if it's going to further damage a relationship or damage the witness of the church. That's a strong word, because we want vindication or to be proven right more than we want to save a relationship. But often, extending grace when you've been wrong and forgiving for the sake of the relationship is far better than winning an

argument because it displays the Gospel. This is what Jesus does for us! He extends grace and forgives even when we have wronged Him.

- **Be willing to put Jesus first in your disputes.** How would Jesus want me to respond, and how can I glorify Jesus? Do I need to overlook? Do I need to keep my mouth shut? Do I need show extra compassion? Do I need to just let it go? What will bring Jesus the most glory?
- **Be honest about your own heart motivations in your disputes.** Do you just want to be proven right? Do you just want your will to be done? Or, do you actually care about the heart of the other person you are involved in the conflict with?
- **Be willing to protect your Gospel witness.** What does the way I'm handling this conflict say about what I believe about Jesus? Is the way I'm handling this conflict demonstrate the power of the Gospel or my own selfishness?
- **Be willing to lose an argument to save a relationship.** You don't always have to be right. That doesn't mean you let people walk all over you, but it does mean that relationships matter more than you proving your right. Sometimes the wisest course of action is to backoff, let the conflict go, and come back to it later when you and the other person are able to talk through it with more wisdom and maturity. This is why walking by the Spirit and not walking in your own selfishness is so important. This takes humility and much grace.

## Never underestimate the power of grace.

- In vs. 9-11, Paul reminds the Corinthians why they should not take their trivial cases to the public court. The judge and jurors in the public court are not a part of the Kingdom! Paul gives a list of the types of people that are outside the Kingdom of God. People outside the Kingdom live lifestyles that are completely opposed to Christ. People who live these lifestyles and reject the Gospel of Jesus Christ will not inherit the

Kingdom of God. Rather, according to [Revelation 21:8](#), their destiny will be the lake of fire.

- But... vs. 11 - the church is made up of people who USED to live these lifestyles. For many of us, vs. 9-10 describes who we used to be. We live a life opposed to God, but in His grace, God opened our eyes to our sin. We repented of our sins and cried out for salvation.
- For Corinthians, this is NOT who they were anymore. They had been washed by the blood of the Lamb. They were sanctified - marked by Jesus as His people. They were justified - made righteous through faith.
- The problem Paul keeps addressing - Corinthian believers don't live like who they are. They keep reverting back to their old ways. No wonder there's so much conflict. The Spirit of God wants to remind you:
- **You have been forgiven much.** Forgiven is who you are if you are a follower of Jesus. You will stand before Christ innocent because of the atoning work of Jesus.
- **You can be forgiven much.** The hope of these verses is that there is no sinful lifestyle that is beyond the grace of God. The invitation is for all sinners to experience salvation in Christ - to believe that He died on a cross for your sins and rose again to give you life abundant and eternal. This morning, if you are not a follower of Jesus, be forgiven.
- **You can forgive much.** Forgiven people forgive much. When you are willing to deal with your conflict by letting go of your need to be right and seeking instead to live at peace with someone else even if that means you might not get your way, you bring glory to God. If you are in conflict right now with a brother or sister in Christ, how is the Spirit of God leading you to respond this morning? What effort do you need to make toward restoration? How can the people of God help you? How can you use the wisdom that God has given you in His Word to resolve the conflict? Are you willing? Or, is your pride keeping you from obeying the Lord?

