



1 Corinthians 6:1-11 "So Sue Me: God's Wisdom Shames Worldly Wisdom"
**Wk. 16 First Corinthians "Uncommon Sense: God's Wisdom over
Man's Pride through a Flawed Church."**
By Pastor Onan Coca August 10, 2025

1 Corinthians 6:1-11

When one of you has a grievance against another, does he dare go to law before the unrighteous instead of the saints? 2 Or do you not know that the saints will judge the world? And if the world is to be judged by you, are you incompetent to try trivial cases? 3 Do you not know that we are to judge angels? How much more, then, matters pertaining to this life! 4 So if you have such cases, why do you lay them before those who have no standing in the church? 5 I say this to your shame. Can it be that there is no one among you wise enough to settle a dispute between the brothers, 6 but brother goes to law against brother, and that before unbelievers? 7 To have lawsuits at all with one another is already a defeat for you. Why not rather suffer wrong? Why not rather be defrauded? 8 But you yourselves wrong and defraud—even your own brothers! 9 Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: neither the sexually immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor men who practice homosexuality, 10 nor thieves, nor the greedy, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God. 11 And such were some of you. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.

[READ THE TEXT]

"People of God, this is the Word of God!"

Congregation - "Thanks be to God!"

[PRAY FOR UNDERSTANDING]

Good morning! It's so good to be here celebrating this beautiful Lord's Day with you. If I haven't met you, my name is Onan Coca. I am one of the Pastors here at Highlands Community Church, along with our senior Pastor, Jody May, and our executive Pastor, Bill Alderson.

Pastor Jody is out today, as the May's are in Athens attending and celebrating their daughter Bailey's "pinning ceremony," as she continues in grad school at UGA. For that reason, y'all are stuck with me this morning, but I'm excited and blessed to open the Word with you as we continue in our series through 1 Corinthians.



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As we've been working through 1st Corinthians, two key ideas keep jumping out at me. First, the church in Corinth was really messed up. Second, the church in America is A LOT like the church in Corinth! And I thought that again this week as I was trying to think of a helpful illustration to start our service with – before I realized that any adult living in today's America already knows how terrible and shattering lawsuits can be!

If you've been paying attention over the last few years, you know home, car, and medical insurance rates have spiked. Why? The primary reason is that we do insurance wrong – it used to be used solely for catastrophic purposes, but now, particularly for medical insurance, we use it for everything. However, another reason for the surging costs is fraud. Americans love committing insurance fraud, which inevitably drives up the cost of everyone else's insurance. It's so bad that some insurance companies have abandoned states like California and Florida. While the fraud can take various forms, one way it happens is through lawsuits.

Let's say you're driving in Atlanta rush hour traffic when you accidentally bump the car in front of you. The cars look a bit damaged, and there's some tension and pain in your shoulders, but praise the Lord; everyone seems okay. The cars still work, and the people do too. However, a couple of weeks later, you get a call from your insurance company to inform you that the person you bumped is suing them for more than your coverage allows, which means you're getting sued too. How can this be?! I've got insurance, you say, their car wasn't totaled, you argue, they weren't even hurt! It's happening because an unrighteous person has seen an opportunity to gain an advantage for themselves, and they don't care if it costs you and everyone else a little bit of money, time, and stress.



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The media sometimes calls it living in a "litigious culture." The historical context of the passage we're looking at, Corinth around 55 AD, was a similarly "litigious" culture.

Jurors served as both judge and jury; any citizen over 30 could be involved, but most were older men. It's estimated that between fifteen hundred and two thousand jurors were needed on a typical day. Juries could number anywhere between 200 to 1000 people. Lawsuits were commonplace, and the Greeks even looked at them as a kind of entertainment.

In fact, in the ancient Greek playwright Aristophanes' satirical work, *"The Clouds,"* there is a scene where a student tells Strepsiades, "Here's Athens on the map." And Strepsiades replies by saying, "That's Athens? I don't believe it—where are the jurors? Where are the courts?"

This was the culture that Christians in Corinth were living in; this is the mindset that they were saved OUT OF.

So, that's the cultural context, and from our reading, you can see that the Lord is interested in how we deal with a litigious culture and with lawsuits in the church.

But before we dig further into this, let's remind ourselves about the context of the text we're reading, too.



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1 Corinthians is an epistle, a letter, from Paul to a group of people. While our chapter and verse divisions are helpful in searching and studying the Scriptures, they are not original to the letter and can sometimes cause us to divide parts of the letter wrongly in our thinking.

For example, as we arrive in chapter 6, Paul isn't taking a breath or changing subjects – he is continuing the logical argument he is building with Corinth. He is continuing the same train of thought that he was on in chapters 1-5, about unity, pride, wisdom, sin, judgment, and church discipline. This is NOT a different train of thought – he is building on his argument about the need to judge rightly, practice church discipline, and to purge those in continual, unrepentant sin from among the church body.

Our passage today is a very practical, straightforward, and easy-to-understand text. The language here in the passage tells us that Paul is primarily focused on civil lawsuits over money. Christians suing Christians to get financial benefit from them. Paul is saying that, **"It is a sin for Christians to sue each other."**

While we could probably just stop there, this is a really rich text, so let's spend some time digging into it. I've titled the sermon today, "So Sue Me: God's Wisdom Shames Worldly Wisdom," and the main point I'd like to get across as we consider what God is teaching us is **"Saints WERE Sinners who trusted God's Present Wisdom, Washed their Past Away, and Looked to the Future."**

I tried to be as creative as Pastor Jody by alliterating my outline like a good Baptist, but I'm not sure I've succeeded in being as creative as he usually is.



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Let's look back at our text - 1 Corinthians chapter 6 verse 1 says, "When one of you has a grievance against another, does he dare go to law before the unrighteous instead of the saints?"

Our first point today is one I've already mentioned, **1. Suing Saints ARE Sinning.**

I know being this direct might be controversial, and that there might be pushback to being black and white on this topic, so let me deal with a couple of arguments that might pop up when we say that Christians suing each other is sin.

First question or argument that might come up: What about if someone breaks the law?

As good confessional reformed folk, here at Highlands, we articulate a position called "[Sphere Sovereignty](#)," or "differentiated responsibility." Complicated words with an easy-to-understand meaning – essentially, God has established three distinct spheres of responsibility or government in our world. First, in Genesis 1 and 2, He established the family. Secondly, in Genesis 3, God establishes the church. Finally, in Genesis 9, God establishes the civil government. Each "sphere" has areas of responsibility to govern. So, when we're discussing lawsuits, we are not talking about places that fall under the authority of government; crimes or places where the law is duty-bound to get involved, like probate, are not in view. We're talking about civil lawsuits between Christians.



1 Corinthians 6:1-11 "So Sue Me: God's Wisdom Shames Worldly Wisdom"
Wk. 16 First Corinthians "Uncommon Sense: God's Wisdom over
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The second objection we might hear is, "You don't know what they did to me." That's right, I don't, but God does, and according to His Word, when Christians sue each other, it is almost always sin. I say almost because there are moments when a lawsuit might arise to protect the health, safety, or well-being of someone innocent, at-risk (like children), or unable to speak for themselves, but this would be an extremely unique outlier. Suing another believer is a sin, based on 1 Corinthians 6, Matthew 5:38-42, Matthew 18:15-35, and other similar texts.

So this idea that ***Suing Saints are Sinning*** is where we'll spend most of our time today, because we must understand what Paul is telling us here.

In 1 Corinthians chapter 5, Paul wrote condemning the Corinthian church for allowing a person in heinous sexual sin the privilege of remaining in the body. He exhorted them to clean out the leaven. He explained that when he told them not to associate with the sexually immoral, he didn't mean unbelievers because, of course, unbelievers will be immoral and Christians must remain involved in this world. He meant that they should cut off someone who calls himself a Christian and does those things. Then he said, **"12 For what have I to do with judging outsiders? Is it not those inside the church whom you are to judge? 13 God judges those outside. "Purge the evil person from among you."**

This connection to judging naturally leads Paul to his next problem with the church in Corinth: **the church members were suing each other!**



1 Corinthians 6:1-11 "So Sue Me: God's Wisdom Shames Worldly Wisdom"
Wk. 16 First Corinthians "Uncommon Sense: God's Wisdom over
Man's Pride through a Flawed Church."
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Notice two things from chapter 6 verse 1 – first, he's not singling anyone out here, like he did in chapter 5. This should signal to us that this is a more widespread problem than the incest he discussed in the last chapter. There is a widespread problem of Christians suing Christians in the pagan courts in Corinth.

Secondly, notice Paul's language in verse 1, "***Does he dare?***" The strength of this phrase seems to indicate that the person doing this is going way outside the bounds of acceptable behavior. You might wonder why Paul seems to be so wound up about this.

Remember, Paul is a Pharisee of Pharisees; he is a master of the law and sat at the feet of the greatest Jewish teacher of his day, Gamaliel. (Acts 22 and Philippians 3) Paul's rationale here is a biblical one, just as Pastor Jody mentioned last week, Paul is again reaching back to the Old Testament law and the superiority of God's law and wisdom to man's law.

Jews cared about the law, and they handled all of their legal dealings inside "the family." If two Jews were having a legal dispute, they did not go to the Greek or Roman authorities; they went to the Synagogue and were judged by Jewish law. Pastor John MacArthur, in his sermon on this passage, explains that to the Jewish mind, taking their problems to a pagan or non-Jewish court was the same thing as blaspheming the name of God, because it was "in effect saying that God doesn't have an answer to this problem." By the way, the Jews weren't wrong, and the early church continued to teach that when it came to matters within the church, God's people should not take their disputes outside of the church body.



1 Corinthians 6:1-11 "So Sue Me: God's Wisdom Shames Worldly Wisdom"
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Interestingly, the Romans and the Greeks allowed the Jews to operate this way. Remember when Jesus appeared before Pilate and Pilate told the Jews to judge him themselves? It was because Jews only brought matters involving execution to the Roman authorities, everything else they handled in the Synagogue. Rome extended this same privilege to the early Christian church because, in Rome's mind, Christianity was a sect of Judaism.

If you're doing our Bible reading plan with us, which you should be, you read about this in Acts chapter 18 earlier this week. The Jews in Corinth, out of their hatred for Paul, rioted in an effort to get Paul thrown out of the city. When the Roman authorities finally got involved, they told the Jews to handle it themselves since it was a matter of Jewish law! Which happens to be precisely what we're talking about today! How cool is that? God's sovereignty and provision are on display for us again.

So, there is NO REASON for Christians in Corinth to be appearing in Greek courts because Roman law allows them to deal with their disputes themselves.

This is why Paul is so shocked. Even the unbelieving Jews had the sense and fear of God to keep their civil cases out of the pagan courts. This is why he rhetorically asks how they could "**DARE**" to go before the unrighteous instead of the saints?

Paul then gives a few more reasons why it's foolish for Christians to appear before a secular or pagan court.



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Man's Pride through a Flawed Church."
By Pastor Onan Coca August 10, 2025

First, it's because **A. Saints Judge Sinners.**

Look at verse 2, "Or do you not know that **the saints will judge the world?** And if the world is to be judged by you, are you incompetent to try trivial cases? 3 Do you not know that we are to judge angels? How much more, then, matters pertaining to this life!"

Paul starts with a fantastic truth: believers should not take our disputes before pagan courts because we will one day judge the world! Maybe you're saying, but we just learned in chapter 5 that we're not supposed to judge sinners, because God does. That's true, but this is a future-looking passage. Our job is not to judge the unbelievers now, but one day, we will indeed be called upon to judge them.

Listen to what Daniel prophesied in Daniel 7, verses 21 and 22, "As I looked, this horn made war with the saints and prevailed over them, until the Ancient of Days came, and judgment was given for the saints of the Most High, and the time came when the saints possessed the kingdom."

We see more language like this in Matthew 19, 1 Thessalonians 3, Jude 14-15, Revelation 2, 3, and 20. The point here is simply to highlight what Paul is saying: "**Believer, you will be tasked to judge the unbelieving world.**"

Since this is true, and you will participate in judging the most consequential and important trial, outside of Christ's, the world has ever seen, why in the world would you think that an unbeliever is more competent to judge any matter between you and another believer?



1 Corinthians 6:1-11 "So Sue Me: God's Wisdom Shames Worldly Wisdom"
Wk. 16 First Corinthians "Uncommon Sense: God's Wisdom over
Man's Pride through a Flawed Church."
By Pastor Onan Coca August 10, 2025

Verse 3 continues the same theme – if we'll be judging angels, why would we think we don't have the wherewithal to judge small matters in the church?

These amazing truths were true of the church at Corinth and are true of you, Christian. On the day of judgment, we are destined to judge the unbeliever. And because this is true, when disputes arise among believers, we must handle them inside the church.

Secondly, Paul explains that **B. Sinners Don't Judge Saints**, so we must not carry our disputes into their courts.

1 Corinthians chapter 6 verses 4 through 6 says, **"So if you have such cases, why do you lay them before those who have no standing in the church? I say this to your shame. Can it be that there is no one among you wise enough to settle a dispute between the brothers, but brother goes to law against brother, and that before unbelievers?"**

Verse 4 here is a difficult verse to translate, and for this reason, the English translations all vary on it. The ESV makes it sound as if Paul is asking, "Why do you ask the pagans to judge you," while the King James Version implies that even the least educated, or most lowly Christian, would be a better judge than the best pagan judge. In both versions, as well as in most other English translations, the sense of the argument is clear: Paul is telling us that the unbelieving world has **NO ABILITY or AUTHORITY** to judge disputes between believers because they do not have the wisdom to judge rightly.

He's in essence repeating what he said in verse 1. It's just wrong for Christians to sue Christians in a pagan or secular court.

Paul then uses his words in verse 5 in a sharp, double-edged manner.



1 Corinthians 6:1-11 "So Sue Me: God's Wisdom Shames Worldly Wisdom"
Wk. 16 First Corinthians "Uncommon Sense: God's Wisdom over
Man's Pride through a Flawed Church."
By Pastor Onan Coca August 10, 2025

First, he quite literally shames the Corinthian church. 'You should be ashamed of your sin,' he says, and then he twists the knife by pointing out that - **the thing they take most pride in** - their wisdom, has failed them. *'How can you, shameful and foolish Corinthians, be so proud of your wisdom when you don't even have the wisdom to judge yourselves and must run to the pagans to judge for you?'*

OUCH.

Paul twists the knife even further by reminding his readers that they are brothers. They are family. It should have stung as they considered that they were related not by DNA but by the blood of Jesus, and adopted by the Father, and here they were letting pagans and blasphemers come between them in their disputes.

OUCH again.

Finally, Paul tells the Corinthians that the Christian life isn't necessarily supposed to be fair, because **C. Saints Suffer**.

Look again at verse seven with me, **"7 To have lawsuits at all with one another is already a defeat for you. Why not rather suffer wrong? Why not rather be defrauded?"**

Paul says that the moment you enter into a lawsuit with a brother, you've already lost. This is a no-win situation, and no matter how much money you might get, you've already been defeated. You're a loser. Your opponent is a loser. The church is a loser. The community is a loser. It's defeat all the way around.



1 Corinthians 6:1-11 "So Sue Me: God's Wisdom Shames Worldly Wisdom"
Wk. 16 First Corinthians "Uncommon Sense: God's Wisdom over
Man's Pride through a Flawed Church."
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Why? Because the Christians who sue each other have ignored God's clear teaching on love, forgiveness, and walking in unity.

Paul asks, "Why not suffer wrong? Why not be defrauded?" Here he simply echoes what our Savior, our Lord, commanded of us.

Look with me if you will to Matthew chapter 5, verses 38-42, where Jesus tells us how we respond when injustice is done to us.

"38 "You have heard that it was said, 'An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.' 39 But I say to you, Do not resist the one who is evil. But if anyone slaps you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also. 40 And if anyone would sue you and take your tunic, let him have your cloak as well. 41 And if anyone forces you to go one mile, go with him two miles. 42 Give to the one who begs from you, and do not refuse the one who would borrow from you."

You probably remember this because it comes just after the Beatitudes during the Sermon on the Mount, which Pastor Jody preached through this past year. If you weren't here for that sermon, or don't remember it, I encourage you to go back and watch the series; it would be well worth your time.

Anyway, do you see how Jesus said we should handle injustice and adversity when it comes at us?

As [Pastor Jody explained in his sermon on this passage](#), and throughout the Sermon on the Mount series, the Christian is not promised a life of ease and comfort. Instead, Jesus tells us that the injustices and adversity we face are opportunities for mercy. Opportunities to "suffer wrong" and NOT retaliate for the scars we bear.



1 Corinthians 6:1-11 "So Sue Me: God's Wisdom Shames Worldly Wisdom"
Wk. 16 First Corinthians "Uncommon Sense: God's Wisdom over
Man's Pride through a Flawed Church."
By Pastor Onan Coca August 10, 2025

Further, in this passage, Jesus directly targets our deep-seated need for superiority. In verses 39-42, he undercuts our need to demand our "rights." This is an essential message for the American church. We often put our love for "our rights" above all other things. In Matthew 5, Jesus reminds God's people that we are citizens of a different kingdom. Jesus pushes back on our **right** to be "respected," on our right to feel "secure," on our right to "freedom of choice," and finally on our right to our "property."

Listen to what Pastor Jody said about this, "Brothers and sisters, I call us to examine how we view our dignity, our security, our freedom, and our property not as something owed to us but **given to be used for God** because slaves of Christ really don't own anything. You see what we do by the laying down of our rights to be respected, laying down the urge to retaliate, **we are drawing people's attention to our testimony for Christ in how He laid it all down for us first.**" -Pastor Jody May

Maybe you'll say, "None of this seems fair." Or, "If somebody does me wrong, whoo boy, I'm gonna make them regret it!"

Family, again, the Christian life isn't about fairness; it's about God's glory. The Westminster Shorter Catechism question 1 asks, "What is the chief end of man?" and the answer is... "To glorify God and enjoy Him forever."

This is important. Look at a few verses with me.



1 Corinthians 6:1-11 "So Sue Me: God's Wisdom Shames Worldly Wisdom"
Wk. 16 First Corinthians "Uncommon Sense: God's Wisdom over
Man's Pride through a Flawed Church."
By Pastor Onan Coca August 10, 2025

Isaiah 46:8-10 "Remember this, and be assured; Recall it to mind, you transgressors. 'Remember the former things long past, For I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is no one like Me, Declaring the end from the beginning, And from ancient times things which have not been done, Saying, 'My purpose will be established, And I will accomplish all My good pleasure.'"

God is Sovereign over everything, and history is unfolding just as He planned because He is accomplishing ALL of His good pleasure. Do you believe this church?

Do you remember the story of Joseph in Genesis? His brothers sell him into slavery, and he suffers for many long years, before God raises him up to second in command of Egypt. Then, one day, his brothers wander into town, and Joseph kills them all while making an evil villain laugh, right? No, of course not! He forgives them and says in Genesis 50:20, "As for you, you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good, to bring it about that many people should be kept alive, as they are today."

So God is Sovereign, and He knows exactly what you're going through when someone treats you unjustly. Not only does He know what you're going through, but just like Joseph, dear Christian, He is working your suffering for good.

Listen to what Paul says in 2 Corinthians chapter 1 verses 3-5. After greeting them, he begins by praising God and praising Him for what you ask?

"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our affliction,



1 Corinthians 6:1-11 "So Sue Me: God's Wisdom Shames Worldly Wisdom"
Wk. 16 First Corinthians "Uncommon Sense: God's Wisdom over
Man's Pride through a Flawed Church."
By Pastor Onan Coca August 10, 2025

so that we may be able to comfort those who are in any affliction, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God. 5For as we share abundantly in Christ's sufferings, so through Christ we share abundantly in comfort too."

This Paul, who has been wrongly imprisoned, harassed, persecuted, beaten, stoned, whipped, shipwrecked, and has assassins on his trail, was praising God for the joy of being comforted in affliction!

Praise God for His comfort in our affliction so that we can comfort others in their affliction, he tells us. Paul recognizes that God is using human sin and affliction to make him look more like Jesus, so Paul can turn around and make more disciples who look more like Jesus! Or look at 2nd Corinthians 4, where he gives another reason to rejoice at our afflictions, "This light momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison..." Our affliction is preparing us for an eternal weight of glory beyond anything we can comprehend!

Christian, when another believer infringes on your "rights," you don't need to sue! Because your Father is in control, He is watching, He is using your affliction for His glory and your good, and you can trust Him. Isn't it far better for us to lose money or possessions than to lose our brother or our testimony, especially when it means we will look more like Jesus?

Remember, the world is always watching us, so when we shock them by laying down our rights and refusing to retaliate, "we are drawing people's attention to our testimony for Christ in how He laid it all down for us first." What a beautiful testimony that is to surprise the world by actually looking like Jesus.



Because we **Saints *WERE* Sinners who Trusted God's Present Wisdom, Washed their Past Away, and Looked to the Future.**

So I think we've established through 1 Corinthians 6 and Matthew 5 that Christians should not be suing other Christians. So, why was it happening in Corinth, and what was the problem saying about the church there?

Our second point today is **2. Smug Sinners are *NOT* Saints.**

Picking up again in verse 8, **"8 But you yourselves wrong and defraud—even your own brothers! 9 Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: neither the sexually immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor men who practice homosexuality, 10 nor thieves, nor the greedy, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God."**

In verse 7, the Apostle says that instead of retaliating, it would be better for us to suffer wrong or to be defrauded. But in Corinth, the Church wasn't doing this; instead, he tells us that they were the ones who were causing the suffering and doing the defrauding!

Do you wonder why Paul moved from disciplining the man involved in incest to the church members who were suing each other? It's because these lawsuits, these sins, were just as disgraceful as the sin in chapter 5. These people were defaming the name of God, and they needed to be disciplined for their sin.

Paul has been hammering on the church in Corinth for the last eight verses, but now in verse 9, he drives the nail home, hopefully straight to the heart of his readers.



1 Corinthians 6:1-11 "So Sue Me: God's Wisdom Shames Worldly Wisdom"
Wk. 16 First Corinthians "Uncommon Sense: God's Wisdom over
Man's Pride through a Flawed Church."
By Pastor Onan Coca August 10, 2025

The word "unrighteous" in verse 9 is the same Greek word he used in verse 1. The difference is that in verse 1, he clearly applies it to the pagans outside the church, but in verse 9, he's including the people in the church who continue living like the world.

He says, calling yourself a Christian is NOT what guarantees your inheritance in the kingdom of God. If you call yourself a Christian but continue in your wickedness, when you look to the future, you should **not** see eternal glory and golden shores. For unrepentant sinners, the blessings of the kingdom now – brotherhood, peace with God and each other, love, accountability, friendship - and the blessings of the future – eternal rest and relationship with God, a true inheritance in the eternal kingdom - remain just a dream. No, for those who continue in unrepentant sin, the future remains bleak.

Just like in chapter 5, Paul gets pointed and describes those outside the kingdom, and the list looks similar to the one we saw last week. Pastor Jody explained that this list of sins isn't just about the specific sins they bring to mind, but about the heart of the person trapped in them, and he also explained what some of these sins might say about a person's heart.

Consider the Apostle John's summary of Jesus' words from the Sermon on the Mount in 1 John 3:15, "**Whoever hates his brother is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him.**"

Or about adultery, Jesus says in Matthew 5:27-28, "**You have heard that it was said, 'You shall not commit adultery.' 28 But I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman with lustful intent has already committed adultery with her in his heart."**

It's about our hearts.



To his list from chapter 5, Paul has added **thieves** and a couple more specific kinds of sexual sin, **effeminacy and homosexuality**. This new list in chapter 6 touches on more than half of the Ten Commandments, including the first, second, seventh, eighth, ninth, and tenth commandments. This reminds us again of the continued importance of the moral law as guideposts, fences, and benchmarks for our lives.

The list in these verses has a lot of crossover, and many of these patterns of sin are related and don't just break one commandment but multiple. For example, all of these rightly seen as heart problems are forms of idolatry. Adultery and homosexuality are both sexually immoral AND idolatry, worshipping self-gratification instead of God. So keep that in mind as we look at the list and ask yourself, which of these can we apply to the people Paul is speaking to in verses 1-7?

- Sexually Immoral – carnal people who live to please their flesh instead of God.
- Idolators – Those who deify anything else before, or along with, the One True God.
- Adulterers – Sexually immoral people who engage in sexual activity outside the bounds of God's defined purpose of the holy covenant of marriage.
- Homosexuals – I'm going to have to quibble with our ESV here because it's leaving a word out. The passage in the Greek actually says, "nor the *malakoi*, nor the *arsenokoitai*." So what it says is "nor the effeminate, nor the homosexual." The ESV editors believed that homosexuality encapsulated the meaning of both, saying it was **both** men involved in the act. I disagree with their editing choice here because the word *malakoi* is only used once in Scripture, so I think Paul was very purposeful when he chose this word. The KJV translates it as effeminate, and the word could



1 Corinthians 6:1-11 "So Sue Me: God's Wisdom Shames Worldly Wisdom"
Wk. 16 First Corinthians "Uncommon Sense: God's Wisdom over
Man's Pride through a Flawed Church."
By Pastor Onan Coca August 10, 2025

indicate crossdressing or transgender behavior. Why might this be the case? Again, Paul seems to be returning to the Old Testament. In Deuteronomy 22:5, Moses wrote, "A woman shall not wear a man's garment, nor shall a man put on a woman's cloak, for whoever does these things is an abomination to the Lord your God." So the list should actually include – Effeminate AND Homosexual here. And for the root heart issue, we should look to the idolatry of self and the desire to please the sinful flesh.

- Thieves – these people hate their neighbor, live only to gratify themselves, and will take from others.
- Greedy – a glutton who covets and hates.
- Drunkards – ironically, also a glutton and someone who cares only for themselves.
- Revilers – a liar, a gaslighter, a gossip. This person runs down others in an effort to puff themselves up.
- Swindlers – an unethical person, perhaps also a liar, a thief, and someone who is greedy.

The bottom line is, if the suing Corinthians keep using worldly wisdom, they are proving that they are not of Christ, and that they, too, because of GREED and SWINDLING, should be removed from the body, just like those living in sexual immorality. Church, this is one of those dividing lines for Christians that we need to see, like sexual immorality. If you sue a believer for personal issues, instead of handling it through the church, you are to be removed and treated like a lost person.

Paul says that people like this. People who continue in these kinds of sin will NOT inherit the kingdom of God. Whether or not they are in the church is immaterial to their status as inheritors, because their actions reveal their hearts.



1 Corinthians 6:1-11 "So Sue Me: God's Wisdom Shames Worldly Wisdom"
Wk. 16 First Corinthians "Uncommon Sense: God's Wisdom over
Man's Pride through a Flawed Church."
By Pastor Onan Coca August 10, 2025

Listen to what James, the half-brother of Jesus, told us in James chapter 3, verses 13-18. **13 Who is wise and understanding among you? By his good conduct let him show his works in the meekness of wisdom." 14 But if you have bitter jealousy and selfish ambition in your hearts, do not boast and be false to the truth.**

We could stop here, because verse 13 proves our point, connecting our works to our heart, but let's continue because James also deals with what we're talking about in our condemnation of Christians suing Christians.

15 This is not the wisdom that comes down from above, but is earthly, unspiritual, demonic. 16 For where jealousy and selfish ambition exist, there will be disorder and every vile practice. 17 But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, open to reason, full of mercy and good fruits, impartial and sincere. 18 And a harvest of righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace.

Paul is making the same argument as James when he calls the church in Corinth to, '**Stop suing each other, make peace, and reap the rewards!**' And what is the reward? The very kingdom of God. That's worth more than any lawsuit, isn't it?

Yes, brothers and sisters, the kingdom of God is worth it all, because **Saints WERE Sinners who trusted God's Present Wisdom, Washed their Past Away, and Looked to the Future.**

So, we know now that "Suing Saints ARE Sinning," and "Smug Sinners Are NOT Saints." Our last point today is **3. Saints ARE Sanctified**. Look back at verse 11 with me.



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"11 And such were some of you. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God."

We've spent ten verses seeing Paul really tear into the church at Corinth, but now he brings the Gospel. He reminds them of who they are and what they are called to be. The story of the church in Corinth is really our story. Such were some of us. When we read 1st Corinthians, we may have a tendency to be shocked at just how ugly things had gotten there. Still, the truth is, if we're honest, if we look at ourselves rightly, we shouldn't judge them too harshly because we're a lot like them.

Such were some of us. **BUT...**

Notice a few things Paul points out about the believers in Corinth in this last line. Such were some of you, **BUT...** First, but you were washed. Second, but you were sanctified. Third, but you were justified. Finally, look who did the work, the Lord Jesus and the Spirit of our God. You and I, we, were desperately wicked, **BUT God!** All of this being in the "past tense" should jump out at you because it means it has already been accomplished for the believer. It is already true for those in Christ.

This is a much heavier verse than it might seem at first glance. It's chock-full of Great News for the believer.

In our call to obedience today, let me break down this good news for us.



1. **Washed - You are a new person. Act like it!**

Christian, you were washed. What does it mean to be washed? I'd encourage y'all to take some time this week to read Titus Chapter 3, which is the mirror image of our passage this morning. In it, Paul instructs Titus to remind his flock of the "positive" side of everything he mentions here in 1 Corinthians 6. In chapter 3 verse 5 of Titus, Paul speaks of Christians being washed like this, **"he saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to his own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit..."** So to be washed is to be regenerated, and to be regenerated is to be "born again" as we are told in John chapter 3. Christian, you are a new person, washed in regeneration and filled with the Holy Spirit; you are not the same as you were, so you should think, look, and act differently.

2. **Sanctified – You have a new Master, serve Him!**

Usually, when we speak of sanctification, we are talking about the lifelong ongoing process of becoming more and more like Jesus. But since Paul is using the word in the past tense here, he is saying that sin's power over us has been broken, and we now have the Spirit's power to serve our God as we should! We were slaves to sin, unable to do good. BUT now, we are no longer slaves to sin but to God, and we have the capacity and power to live for Him in holiness. So let us be holy, as He is Holy.

3. **Justified – You are no longer condemned, live like it!**

Being washed changes our lives, being sanctified transforms our lives, and being justified alters our trajectory. We were condemned, on the path to hell and eternal separation from God, but Jesus stepped in and made us right with the Father, and now



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our future is secure in glory with Him forevermore. Let us no longer live like sinners condemned to hell and misery. Instead, let us live like people who are looking forward to our blessed Hope.

4. **Jesus did the work, and the Spirit gives the power; you rest.**

Two thousand years ago, Jesus came to this earth and lived a perfect life, knowing you could not. He died an unjust and sinless death as the sacrifice for sinners like us. He rose again 3 days later, giving Him authority and power over sin and death, and ensuring victory for those who love and obey Him. Family, at some point along the road, you will fail. You will fall and you will sin. Do not lose heart. Do not wallow. Do not get stuck where you are. Because of the gift of the Spirit, you have the power to confess your sin, repent from it, turn back to Christ, and obey His example again. Even when you sin, the Father looks at you and sees His loving Son who perfectly did the work because He knew you could not. Rest in that love, rise from your sin, and trusting in God, you follow hard after our glorious Redeemer.

Amen? Amen.

Brothers and sisters, we can suffer affliction graciously, because we are Saints and **Saints WERE Sinners who trusted God's Present Wisdom, Washed their Past Away, and Looked to the Future.**

Let us pray.



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[CLOSING PRAYER]

[COMMUNION]

[BENEDICTION]

[RESOURCES FOR FURTHER STUDY]

Matthew Henry's Commentary on the Whole Bible

["Forbidden Lawsuits"](#) by John MacArthur

["Forgive because you're Forgiven"](#) by John MacArthur

["Advancing Christian Unity"](#) by Anthony Burgess

["Duties of Christian Fellowship"](#) by John Owen

["The Rare Jewel of Christian Contentment"](#) by Jeremiah Burroughs