

Exegetical Notes – 1 Corinthians 6:1-8

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Introduction: Having dealt with the issue of divisions within the Corinthian Church in chapters 1-4, he now turns his attention to issues within that church that are not being handled correctly by them. In this passage, he deals with the matter of lawsuits between Christians. The principle is simple. Christians should not need to, nor should they ever, take another Christian to court.

1 Corinthians 6:1-8

Verse 1

If any of you has a dispute with another, do you dare to take it before the ungodly for judgment instead of before the Lord's people?

- Apparently, the divisions among the members of the Corinthian Church were deep. Some of the members of that congregation were suing other members of that congregation in court. Christians were suing other Christians in open court.
- They were allowing secular, non-Christian judges the right to decide disputes between them instead of bringing such matters to the church.
- The disputes being discussed here are not matters in which the state would act to bring charges. Things like murder and theft are not the matters being referenced here. The problems relate to property disputes, slander, etc.

Verses 2-3

²Or do you not know that the Lord's people will judge the world? And if you are to judge the world, are you not competent to judge trivial cases? ³Do you not know that we will judge angels? How much more the things of this life!

- Because Christians are to rule with Jesus, they will judge the nations of the world at the end of time (see Matthew 19:28 and Revelation 4:20). Given this trust given to the Church by God, Christians should be able to judge earthly matters between Christians.
- On judging angels see Jude 6.

- The argument is that if God entrusts judgment on more weighty matters to Christians, then Christians are fit to judge lesser matters between them while here on earth.

Verses 4-6

⁴ Therefore, if you have disputes about such matters, do you ask for a ruling from those whose way of life is scorned in the church? ⁵ I say this to shame you. Is it possible that there is nobody among you wise enough to judge a dispute between believers? ⁶ But instead, one brother takes another to court—and this in front of unbelievers!

- “Therefore”... because of God’s decision to entrust Christians to judge important matters, Christians should not seek judgment about matters between them from those who do not understand the mind of Christ and who do not live in respect for the word of God.
- It is “shameful behavior” for Christians to expose the differences and disputes among them to those outside of the Church.

Verses 7-8

⁷ The very fact that you have lawsuits among you means you have been completely defeated already. Why not rather be wronged? Why not rather be cheated? ⁸ Instead, you yourselves cheat and do wrong, and you do this to your brothers and sisters.

- There should not be lawsuits between Christians. This is a sign of defeat.
- A Christian should turn the other cheek (see Matthew 5:39). He should endure being wronged rather than expose the body of Christ, the Church, to ridicule in the eyes of the world.
- Christians should be people who behave morally according to the word of God in every situation. They should not cheat or do wrong under any circumstance. Therefore, there should be no need for one Christian to go to court against another.

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