

Discovering God's Wisdom

STUDIES IN FIRST CORINTHIANS

Lesson 6 1 Corinthians 6

Searching the Scriptures for hidden treasure

"I rejoice at Your word as one who finds great treasure." Psalm 119:162

In chapter 5, it was "reported" that there was sexual immorality going on, and so, in chapter 6, we must assume it was also "reported" that the Corinthian Christians were suing each other in public courts of law. Paul is amazed, as we can see in verse 1. This chapter is actually a continuation of the thoughts begun in chapter 5, discussing the general moral laxity of the Christians in Corinth—those that God had redeemed by the very blood of His own dear Son—those called out ones, who were living as if they had not been called out, but were part of the pagan culture in which they lived.

First Day: Read 1 Corinthians 6:1-8

Verse 1 begins with the words, "**Dare** any of you...?" NASB says it this way: "**Does** any of you...*dare*...?" We can almost hear Paul saying, "**How dare** you!"

1. What were these Corinthian Christians *daring* to do? Explain what they were doing in everyday terms.
2. According to verse 1, as a Christian, to whom should you take your disputes?
 - a. If you were in such a situation today, how would you do this?
3. Why should the saints be qualified to judge temporal (trivial) matters?

verse 2a

verse 3a

Paul speaks of the Corinthians appointing those "*least esteemed by the church to judge*" (verse 4). The words, "*least esteemed by the church*" have been understood to mean either men of little account in the church (in other words, believers who were not thought that highly of), or it may have meant those who the church thought most lowly of—non-believers.

4. Who would you think of as being more qualified to judge your Christian dispute: the least esteemed Christian in your church or a wise and learned non-believer? Explain why.

- a. What would you think if you took your dispute to the church and they judged wrongly?
- b. What does verse 7 say about this?
- c. Consider why it was a shame (v. 5) for them to behave this way—why it would be better to be wronged.

Making It Personal...

A man named Herman Ridderbos has said, “*For the sake of the kingdom, Jesus wants His disciples to give up their rights, interests, benefits and safeguards...*” (Holman New Testament Commentary, I & II Corinthians.)

5. How does the cross of Christ apply to the passage we have studied today?
 - a. Are you more careful about your personal rights, or about the kingdom of God? Share your thoughts.
 - b. Is there something you have been fighting for that you should lay down today for the kingdom of God, rather than insisting upon your own rights?

Digging Deeper

- ❖ Paul speaks in this passage of believers judging the world and judging angels. The following verses give us the background for his statements.

Judging the world: Matthew 19:28; 2 Timothy 2:12a; Jude 14-15; Revelation 3:21; 20:4a

Judging angels: 2 Peter 2:4; Jude 6, Revelation 19:19-20; 20:10

- ❖ Do your best to summarize today’s passage in a couple of sentences.

Pearl of Great Price

“I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.” Galatians 2:20 This is your memory verse—begin memorizing it today!

Second Day: Read 1 Corinthians 6:9-11

1. What were some of the Corinthians before Christ? v. 9-11a

The list Paul gives of sins in this chapter is most likely correspondent to the problems in the Corinthian church. Sexual immorality was rampant in Corinth. Homosexuality and male prostitution were especially characteristic of the Greco-Roman society. Temple prostitution was the norm and was linked in their culture with worship.

2. What had been done for them “in Christ”? v. 11
3. What do the following verses say about these elements of our salvation?

Washed—*John 15:3; Titus 3:5; Hebrews 10:22; Revelation 7:14*

Sanctified—*John 17:17; 1 Corinthians 1:2; 1 Thessalonians 4:3; 5:23; 1 Peter 1:2*

Justified—*Romans 3:24; 5:1; 8:1(implied)*

Making It Personal...

4. What were *you* before Christ washed, sanctified, and justified you?
 - a. Which aspect of your salvation found in verse 11 is dearest to your heart and why?

Digging Deeper

- ❖ With verse 7 (“*Why do you not rather accept wrong?*”) and 11 (“*And such were some of you.*”) in mind, consider Jesus’ parable of the Unmerciful Servant in Matthew 18:21-35. Share your thoughts.
- ❖ Do your best to summarize today’s passage in a couple of sentences.

Third Day: Read 1 Corinthians 6:12-20

Verse 12 connects the thoughts that have gone before with the rest of the chapter. All things are lawful, Paul says: you *can* take your Christian brother to the courts of the non-believers—but is it *helpful* (NKJV) or *profitable* (NASB)? No! We have been cleansed, we have been sanctified, we have been justified, we have been redeemed by the precious blood of the Lamb...are we to continue living to please ourselves?

1. What do you think Paul meant when he said that as a Christian all things are lawful to him?
 - a. Although all things are lawful to the believer Paul, his greater concern is what is profitable. What exactly does he mean?
 - b. What do you think Paul meant when he said that although all things were lawful to him, he would not be *mastered* (NASB) by anything?
2. Throughout verses 13-19, Paul emphasizes who we belong to, as Christians. How does he say this in these verses? (Personalize it with, *My or I...*)
verse 13
verse 15
verse 17
verse 19
3. In Corinth, at the time Paul wrote this, temple prostitution was a part of the worship ritual. How do these verses make it clear that, as a Christian, sexual immorality is strictly banned?
verse 13
verse 15-16
verse 18
4. How does Paul conclude his thoughts on all immorality as addressed in chapter 6?
v. 20

Making It Personal...

5. Is there anything in your life of which it might be said that you are *not glorifying God*? Think this over carefully. (Although all things are lawful—those things that are not strictly forbidden in Scripture—all things are *not* profitable, nor are all things glorifying to God.) Name anything the Holy Spirit identifies to you here.
 - a. What should you do? See Paul's words in 1 Corinthians 9:24-27.

Digging Deeper

- ❖ Tie this week's memory verse (Galatians 2:20) with the heart of what Paul is saying in this chapter.

Fourth Day:

Deeper Discoveries

This portion of the lesson will take a closer look at some of the words in the chapter. You will need to have your tools—or resources at hand: more than one Bible translation, a dictionary or Bible dictionary, concordance, atlas, and encyclopedia. (If you don't have all of these, simply use what you do have to enrich your learning.)

Using the tools you have at hand, do some digging into the following terms. Start with your dictionary (or Bible dictionary), and then look up the references to add to your understanding. If you have additional resources, you may want to keep digging (making notes in the margins). After you've completed the investigative process, write a definition in your own words. Your investigation in today's lesson will lay the groundwork for tomorrow's study, so be as thorough as you can in your research.

Lawful (permissible) (6:12) *“All things are lawful for me...”*

Dictionary definition: _____

What does the Bible have to say? 2 Corinthians 3:17; Romans 5:13; 6:14; Galatians 5:18

❖ Write your own definition: _____

Helpful (profitable) (6:12) *“All things are lawful for me, but all things are not helpful. All things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any.”*

Dictionary definition: _____

What does the Bible have to say? 1 Peter 2:15-16; 1 Corinthians 8:9; James 1:25

❖ Write your own definition: _____

Temple (6:19) *“Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own?”*

Dictionary definition: _____

What does the Bible have to say? 2 Corinthians 6:16; Ephesians 1:4; 2:21-22; 1 Peter 2:5

Write your own definition: _____

Glorify (6:20) *“For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God’s.”*

Dictionary definition: _____

What does the Bible have to say? John 15:8; 1 Peter 4:11, 14, 16

❖ Write your own definition: _____

Fifth Day:

Heartsearch

Are you walking worthy of your high calling? Are you applying the wisdom of God to your daily life? Get ready for some self-discovery! This portion of the lesson will give you the opportunity to examine your heart, express your mind, and experience your lesson, by applying what you are learning to everyday circumstances.

Flee Sexual Immorality!

“...The body is not for sexual immorality but for the Lord.”

1 Corinthians 6:13

Reread 1 Corinthians 6:12-20 for review.

Sex outside of marriage has been compared to a man robbing a bank: he gets something out of it, but it does not belong to him, and he will one day have consequences to pay for it. In explaining the seriousness of sexual sin, Paul refers to the creation account in Genesis 2:24, *“The two shall become one flesh.”* God created the sexual union to be enjoyed by the man and woman as they are joined together in the bond of marriage. It is more than the joining of two physical bodies; it is a much deeper oneness involving the whole being. For this reason, Paul warns that sexual sin is the most serious sin a person can commit against his body. In his admonition to flee sexual immorality, Paul presents a two-fold argument: first, he points to the consequence of the sin; second, he asks believers to consider the privilege that is theirs in belonging to Christ. We’ll look at both aspects in our study today.

The matter of consequence...

The human body was designed and created by an omnipotent and omniscient God for His own purpose and use. He gave instructions as to that purpose and warned about misuse. Those who choose to ignore His warnings do so at their own peril, risking God’s judgment.

The effects of sins such as lying, murder, thievery, or those such as drunkenness and gluttony are, in a sense, outside the body, since their cause comes from without. Such sins can be damaging to the body, but the effects of these sins can usually be corrected and controlled by abstaining from them. No sin, however, is more harmful to the sanctity of one’s body as that of fornication, which involves every form of sexual union outside the marriage relationship. Because this sin involves not only a person’s body, but his whole being, those who choose to be promiscuous may suffer great damage to themselves. Remember David’s sin with Bathsheba: not only did he suffer the loss of his infant son, but he ceased to be victorious and, for the remainder of his life, he dealt with disruptions in his family and throughout his kingdom. There will be consequences to pay: inevitable mental damage, including feelings of guilt and remorse; the possibility of sexually transmitted diseases inflicted upon the body; and disqualification from further usefulness to God—until full repentance is made.

1. Read 1 Thessalonians 4:3-4 and answer the following:
 - What is God’s will for your life?
 - How can you live in holiness and with honor? (See also Romans 12:1-2)

The matter of privilege...

Just as the body was made for God's purpose, Paul gives the instruction as to that purpose in verses 19 and 20: the believer's body is the possession of the Spirit of God, "for you were bought with a price." The price is infinite—the precious shed blood of Christ the Son, for the purpose of glorifying God the Father.

Before choosing to engage in immorality, the believer should go back to the Cross, the place where Jesus Christ, in His love, bore our sins. Can you picture Him hanging there on your behalf—paying the price for your sin? Is it possible for you to contemplate what He did for you on that cross and at the same time purposely choose to give your body over to sexual sin, knowing He is present every moment and grieved beyond measure? Surely this is Paul's most convincing argument against immorality: you are not your own—you belong to Him!

2. God expects you to use your body in the same manner as Christ used His. In what way can you learn from His example? (See John 6:38.)

3. Today, He wants to use you—every part of you, as His vessel to do His will. Think about where He has you and the privilege you have in being used by Him. (Take your time with this and think it over as He brings individuals across your path this week.) In what way does He desire to use...
 - *Your hands as His hands?*
 - *Your feet as His feet?*
 - *Your mouth as His mouth?*

Heartsearch: Briefly look back over your *entire lesson* before filling in the following.

❖ *Examine your heart*

What has God put His finger on through your study and brought to light in a new way? (What did you learn about yourself?)

❖ *Express your mind*

What change has this week's study brought about in your thought process? What difference will this make in how you view your current circumstances?

❖ *Experience your lesson*

What nugget of wisdom from your lesson do you plan to apply to your life?

Sixth Day:

Laying Up Treasure

*“Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth...but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven.
For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.” Matthew 6:19-21*

The highest calling of the believer, and the most important way to lay up treasure in heaven, is through intercessory prayer. You will want to give thoughtful consideration to what you record on this page, as it will be the basis for your prayer during group time. The format for this day of your lesson is based upon the ACTS method of prayer: Adoration, Confession, Thanksgiving, and Supplication. In addition to these four, there is space provided for you to keep track of answered prayers, people and things you want to pray for in the coming week, and also a place to write out this week’s Scripture verse from memory.

Using the lesson as your focal point, write out your prayer for each of the following:

I praise God for (an aspect of His marvelous character) _____

I confess to God that I _____

I thank God for _____

I am asking God _____

Praise for answered prayer: _____

People/things I want to pray for this coming week: _____

Pearl of Great Price: _____

Notes