

A CASE OF LEGAL DISPUTE

1 CORINTHIANS 06:01–08

Introduction: Legal Disputes

This passage deals *only with disputes between Christian brothers*. It says nothing about going to court against unbelievers, the heathen. Note that Paul uses a progressive argument. He progresses from question to question, building reason upon reason until he reaches the great Christian principle itself: the believer ought to suffer wrong rather than run the risk of doing wrong.

- I. Question 1: Do you dare go before a secular court instead of saints to settle legal matters between Christian brothers (v. 1)?
- II. Question 2: Do you not know your high and exalted authority (vv. 2-3)?
- III. Question 3: Do you choose unbelievers as judges who have no standing in the church (v. 4)?
- IV. Question 4: Is there not a wise man in the church (vv. 5-6)?
- V. Question 5: Why not give in — suffer being cheated rather than running the risk of cheating a brother (vv. 7-8)?

Another Outline: A Case of Legal Dispute

1. The legal dispute should be settled by saints (v. 1).
2. The saints have the highest exalted authority (v. 2).
3. The standards of Christians are different from the standards of the world (v. 4).
4. The great Christian principle: the believer ought to suffer wrong rather than do wrong (v. 6-8).

I. 1 Corinthians 06:01 Legal Suits Before Secular Court

The first question — do you dare go before a secular court instead of saints to settle matters between Christian brothers? The thought in the Greek is forceful: How dare you — you who are the saints of God — go to law before the ungodly of the world!

Believers are not to be disputing and arguing over rights and authority nor over the things and possessions of this world. They are to be working and using what they earn for Christ and His cause to reach the masses of humanity who are lost and dying from starvation, disease, poverty and sin.

This was not the case within the Corinthian church, however. The church was divided, and there were apparently some who had sought legal judgment against some others. Whether the judgment involved rights within the church or actual property, or some dispute over some matter between two or more individuals is not known. There was simply a problem of legal dispute, and the opposing parties had sought secular judgment.

Note that the two conflicting parties were believers; the secular judges were unbelievers. Note also that the secular judges are called “the ungodly.” This does not mean that the world’s judges were legally unjust, that is, that the believers might not get a fair trial. It is only referring to unbelievers as a class of people who are ungodly or unjustified before God. It is contrasting the church with the world, the believer with the unbeliever. Believers are to settle their disputes between themselves within their own Christian society and be governed by the life of Christ and the law of God. In God’s eyes it is wrong for *believers* to go to law against each other before the world’s judges. There are at least three reasons why it is wrong.

1. Believers who settle differences before the world reproach and damage the name of Christ and the testimony of the church. There is no disputing this fact. It happens every time; there is no escape from the terrible tragedy: the name of Christ is always hurt when believers *carry their differences* before the world.

Thought 1. The fruit of the spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness (trust), gentleness and self-control; and it is the fruit of the Spirit that is so desperately needed by the world. But what the world receives from *disputing Christians* is anything but love and the fruit of God’s Spirit. There is a devastating difference between the testimonies of peace and conflict, joy and tension, love and anger. Just picture the scene, the awfulness of the scene as God sees it: two believers, two people who really trust God, *standing before* a judge who rejects and rebels against God. And they are asking him to judge between them instead of asking God or some Christian leader to help them see the matter clearly. Just imagine what God thinks of the two conflicting brothers!

2. Believers who settle differences before the world fail the Lord and fail Him miserably. How? They fail to govern their affairs by the *life of Christ and the law of God*. They go before unbelievers who do not govern affairs by the law of Christ nor by the law of God. Believers are to live by Christ and His Word, not by the standards and rules of the world. Believers are to salt and permeate the world, not the other way around. Believers are to be the standard for the world; they are not to accept and live by the standards of the world.

2 Cor 6:17-18 “Therefore come out from them and be separate, says the Lord. Touch no unclean thing, and I will receive you.” “I will be a Father to you, and you will be my sons and daughters, says the Lord Almighty.”

Gal 6:2 Carry each other’s burdens, and in this way you will fulfil the law of Christ.

3. Believers have both the Holy Spirit and Christ-centred leaders to help them determine God’s wisdom. Every genuine believer is indwelt by the Spirit of God, and has leaders within his church who can give him spiritual counsel. God has given His Spirit to His people for the very purpose of guiding and teaching them. He has also given spiritual leaders for the same purpose. It is God’s will for believers who have conflicts to seek the guidance of His Spirit and church.

James 1:5 *If any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to him.*

John 14:16-17 *“And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Counsellor to be with you forever — the Spirit of truth. The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him, for he lives with you and will be in you.”*

John 14:26 *“But the Counsellor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you.”*

Rom 8:9, 13 *You, however, are controlled not by the sinful nature but by the Spirit, if the Spirit of God lives in you. And if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Christ... For if you live according to the sinful nature, you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the misdeeds of the body, you will live.*

1 Cor 2:13 *This is what we speak, not in words taught us by human wisdom but in words taught by the Spirit, expressing spiritual truths in spiritual words.*

1 Cor 6:19-20 *Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore honour God with your body.*

1 John 2:27 *As for you, the anointing you received from him remains in you, and you do not need anyone to teach you. But as his anointing teaches you about all things and as that anointing is real, not counterfeit — just as it has taught you, remain in him.*

Thought 1. The church and its believers must begin to live as God and His Word instructs. A different life-style must be seen; a Christian life-style of love and purity, care and concern, discipline and godly justice must be held up ever so highly for the world to see. It is the only conceivable way the world can ever see real love and godly justice and have its desperate needs met. In particular the leaders of the church and its believers must surrender their lives and give all they have to live as God instructs. They are especially held accountable to see to it that the love and wisdom of God are ministered to His people.

Rom 13:8-10 *Let no debt remain outstanding, except the continuing debt to love one another, for he who loves his fellow-man has fulfilled the law. The commandments, “Do not commit adultery,” “Do not murder,” “Do not steal,” “Do not covet,” and whatever other commandment there may be, are summed up in this one rule: “Love your neighbour as yourself.” Love does no harm to its neighbour. Therefore love is the fulfilment of the law.*

II. **1 Corinthians 06:02–03 Knowledge of Believer’s Position**

The second question — do you not know your high and exalted authority? These two verses state clearly that believers are to judge *all disputes* between themselves. They are

to judge “the trivial cases” (v. 2) and the “things of this life” (v. 3). There is one supreme reason believers are not to go before the world for judgment:

=> Believers are to judge and govern the world. In fact, they are to even judge and govern angels in the next world.

Therefore, conflicting believers lower themselves, lose their dignity as saints, and walk out of their exalted position when they secure a verdict from the world.

1. The word “judge” means the right and power to govern, administer affairs, rule, hold authority, supervise, oversee and judge. This glorious right and power is to be given to the believer when Christ returns to rule and govern the whole universe. Paul is telling believers that they shall direct and oversee the world and angels. Christ told the apostles that they shall govern and oversee Israel (Mt. 10:28). The assignment of responsibility, duty and work is taught throughout Scripture. There is to be *judging*, that is, governing, supervision and oversight throughout eternity. All this activity and responsibility is, of course, for and under Christ.

For some unknown reason we so often picture *eternal life* as some dreamy sleep or semi-conscious type of existence or some future existence that puts us on a fluffy cloud. Eternal life is often pictured as floating around in an eternal state of inactivity. Why man cannot accept the simple statement of Christ that life is to be eternal is difficult to understand. Eternal life is life that goes on and on.

There is, however, one basic difference: life shall be perfected, perfected in body, mind and spirit. It is life lived in the midst of a new heaven and earth (perfected) — life lived before Christ and responsible to Christ in all that is assigned (Jn. 3:16; 5:24; Rom. 8:19-23; 2 Pet. 3:9-18; 1 Jn. 5:11-13; Rev. 21:1).

2. The rule and reign of believers is a fact. It is a fact so sure and certain that the Bible speaks of it in the present. The words “if you are to judge the world” are literally “is being judged.” The rule and reign of the believer is an absolute fact.

Mat 19:28 Jesus said to them, “I tell you the truth, at the renewal of all things, when the Son of Man sits on his glorious throne, you who have followed me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.”

Mat 20:23 Jesus said to them, “You will indeed drink from my cup, but to sit at my right or left is not for me to grant. These places belong to those for whom they have been prepared by my Father.”

Luke 22:30 “So that you may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom and sit on thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.”

John 5:22 “Moreover, the Father judges no one, but has entrusted all judgment to the Son.”

Rom 8:17 Now if we are children, then we are heirs — heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory.

Eph 2:6-7 *And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus, in order that in the coming ages he might show the incomparable riches of his grace, expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus.*

2 Tim 2:12 *If we endure, we will also reign with him. If we disown him, he will also disown us.*

Heb 2:5-9 *It is not to angels that he has subjected the world to come, about which we are speaking. But there is a place where someone has testified: “What is man that you are mindful of him, the son of man that you care for him? You made him a little lower than the angels; you crowned him with glory and honour and put everything under his feet.” In putting everything under him, God left nothing that is not subject to him. Yet at present we do not see everything subject to him. But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, now crowned with glory and honour because he suffered death, so that by the grace of God he might taste death for everyone.*

Rev 2:26-27 *To him who overcomes and does my will to the end, I will give authority over the nations — ‘He will rule them with an iron sceptre; he will dash them to pieces like pottery’ — just as I have received authority from my Father.*

Rev 20:4 *I saw thrones on which were seated those who had been given authority to judge. And I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded because of their testimony for Jesus and because of the word of God. They had not worshipped the beast or his image and had not received his mark on their foreheads or their hands. They came to life and reigned with Christ a thousand years.*

Rev 21:1 *Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea.*

Isa 1:26 *“I will restore your judges as in days of old, your counsellors as at the beginning. Afterward you will be called the City of Righteousness, the Faithful City.”*

Isa 65:17 *“Behold, I will create new heavens and a new earth. The former things will not be remembered, nor will they come to mind.”*

Dan 7:22 *Until the Ancient of Days came and pronounced judgment in favour of the saints of the Most High, and the time came when they possessed the kingdom.*

III. 1 Corinthians 06:04 Choosing Unbelievers as Judges

The third question — do you choose unbelievers as judges? In the Greek this sentence is emphatic: the unbelievers are...

- as nothing in the church.
- of no account in judging matters in the church.
- not held in high esteem within the church.
- of no standing in the church.

The unbelievers do not live by the life of Christ nor by the standards of God. How then can they stand before believers and judge matters in *the spirit of Christ and by God's standards*? Just think how far these Corinthian believers had fallen from their exalted position given them in Christ! Just think how far some believers and churches have fallen in our day from their exalted position in Christ Jesus our Lord!

IV. 1 Corinthians 06:05–06 No Wise Men in the Church?

The fourth question — is there not a wise man in the church? The need is for shame and embarrassment. Anyone who would walk off from an exalted position and turn away from the wisdom of God in order to secure advice from a person with no standing in God's government needs to be shamed. The question is dramatic and pointed: is there not a single wise man among you? No, not even one that can arbitrate and give a simple judgment when conflicts arise? The thrust is twofold:

1. There is no excuse for conflict among brothers, for believers going to law against one another.
2. There is especially no excuse for conflicting brothers going to law before the unbelievers of the world.

1 Cor 3:3 You are still worldly. For since there is jealousy and quarrelling among you, are you not worldly? Are you not acting like mere men?

1 Cor 6:6 But instead, one brother goes to law against another — and this in front of unbelievers!

1 Cor 12:20 As it is, there are many parts, but one body.

Phil 4:2 I plead with Euodia and I plead with Syntyche to agree with each other in the Lord.

V. 1 Corinthians 06:07–08 Suffer Being Wronged

The fifth question — why not give in? Why not suffer being wronged and cheated rather than running the risk of wronging and cheating a brother? Note two points.

1. The very fact of engaging in legal disputes is a defeat, clear evidence of hurt and damage. Just think of who is hurt and damaged when believers engage in legal disputes:
 - => The parties themselves suffer pain, tension, anger and an innumerable list of other hurtful emotions.
 - => The church suffers the loss of its testimony for Christ and the pain of being known as hypocritical.
 - => The unbelievers suffer by being turned off by those who profess love, joy and peace, and yet who show the very opposite. They suffer having their opportunity to be saved erased even more. How many unbelievers have been doomed because of the irresponsible behaviour of believers before the world?

=> Christ suffers because His people are not holding high the banner of His witness, but rather are causing it to be distasteful and cursed.

What an indictment against any believer who causes so much suffering!

Luke 6:29 *“If someone strikes you on one cheek, turn to him the other also. If someone takes your cloak, do not stop him from taking your tunic.”*

Rom 12:17 *Do not repay anyone evil for evil. Be careful to do what is right in the eyes of everybody.*

Gal 5:22-23 *But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law.*

1 Pet 3:9 *Do not repay evil with evil or insult with insult, but with blessing, because to this you were called so that you may inherit a blessing.*

Lev 19:18 *“Do not seek revenge or bear a grudge against one of your people, but love your neighbour as yourself. I am the Lord.”*

Prov 20:22 *Do not say, “I’ll pay you back for this wrong!” Wait for the Lord, and he will deliver you.*

Prov 24:29 *Do not say, “I’ll do to him as he has done to me; I’ll pay that man back for what he did.”*

2. Some of the Corinthian believers were guilty (v. 8). They wanted their rights and more. They wanted some of the things which their brothers had; therefore, they went after them. Note: they did not steal them out rightly; they sought them by legal means. They used the legal system of the world to *defraud* their brothers. The world called it legal, but it was cheating and stealing to God. It was sin, a terrible injustice.

Mat 23:25 *“Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You clean the outside of the cup and dish, but inside they are full of greed and self-indulgence.”*

Prov 16:8 *Better a little with righteousness than much gain with injustice.*

Prov 21:6 *A fortune made by a lying tongue is a fleeting vapour and a deadly snare.*

Jer 17:11 *Like a partridge that hatches eggs it did not lay is the man who gains riches by unjust means. When his life is half gone, they will desert him, and in the end he will prove to be a fool. ■*

A CASE AGAINST UNRIGHTEOUS OR WICKED CHARACTER

1 CORINTHIANS 06:09–11

Introduction

This is a shocking passage, for it deals with sins that most people think would never cause God to condemn and reject them — sins that are acceptable and practiced to minor degrees by many in society. Yet God pulls no punches: no church membership, no religion, no profession, no good works — nothing can save a person if he practices these sins.

- I. A shocking but critical question (v. 9).
- II. The deceptive sins that stimulate the flesh (sinful nature): are often thought not to be fatal (v. 9).
- III. The deceptive sins that seek gain: are often thought not to be fatal (v. 10).
- IV. The power of Christ (v. 11).

I. 1 Corinthians 06:09 Inheriting the Kingdom of God

This is a shocking but critical question that must be made known to every person. “Do you not know that the wicked will not inherit the kingdom of God?” People must know the facts: if God is righteous, then people must live righteous lives in order to be accepted by Him. However, people ignore the fact of God’s righteousness and His demand for righteousness. People divorce their behaviour from religion. People...

- profess religion
- practice religion
- talk religion
- defend their beliefs about religion

However, they go ahead and live like they want regardless of their religion. If they want to do something, they do it feeling that God will forgive them. There are few people who think that God will reject them. They feel that they will have done enough good to be acceptable to God...

- enough kindness
- enough religion
- enough works
- enough service

In the final analysis, most people just think that God will accept them. This attitude comes from a false concept of God, a concept that looks upon God as a father who is indulgent and who gives his children the license to do *some wrong*.

This is a fatal mistake. It was the mistake that some of the Corinthian church members were making, and it is the same mistake that teeming multitudes of religious people have made down through the centuries.

Do you not know that the wicked will not inherit the kingdom of God? (v. 9)

Believers are to inherit a kingdom, a new heaven and earth where God will rule and reign. They are to be given eternal life and given the glorious privilege of being citizens in God's kingdom and world. They are to live with Him and serve Him in perfection for all eternity. (See *Reward*, 1 Cor. 6:2-3; Lk. 16:10-12 .) But this glorious privilege is to be given only to genuine believers, those men and women who have truly given their lives to the Lord Jesus Christ — given their lives to live as Jesus Christ says to live. No matter how religious a person is — no matter how much zeal a person may have in keeping religious rituals and in attending services and in giving to charity — if he does not live a pure and righteous life, he “will not inherit the kingdom of God.”

Do you not know that the wicked will not inherit the kingdom of God? (v. 9)

II. *1 Corinthians 06:09 Deceptive Sins of the Flesh*

The deceptive sins that stimulate the flesh (sinful nature) are often considered not fatal. The reason is clearly seen. Note that all the sins mentioned in this verse are sins that arouse man's flesh. He derives great pleasure from them. It is man's nature to desire the arousal of his flesh; therefore, man tends to think that meeting the needs of his nature is not wrong. He tends to think that he cannot be blamed for doing what is natural, even if he does perhaps go overboard every now and then. The point is this: a person who practices these sins is *wicked* in God's eyes. He “will not inherit the kingdom of God. Do not be deceived. “

1. *The sexually immoral* “will not inherit the kingdom of God. Do not be deceived.” *The sexually immoral (pornoï)* are those who engage in all forms of sexual and immoral acts. It includes premarital sex, adultery, abnormal sex and all other kinds of sexual vice.

Rom 1:27 *In the same way the men also abandoned natural relations with women and were inflamed with lust for one another. Men committed indecent acts with other men, and received in themselves the due penalty for their perversion.*

1 Cor 6:9 *Do you not know that the wicked will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: Neither the sexually immoral nor idolaters nor adulterers nor male prostitutes nor homosexual offenders.*

Gal 5:19, 21 *The acts of the sinful nature are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery;...and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like. I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God.*

Eph 4:19 *Having lost all sensitivity, they have given themselves over to sensuality so as to indulge in every kind of impurity, with a continual lust for more.*

Eph 5:3 *But among you there must not be even a hint of sexual immorality, or of any kind of impurity, or of greed, because these are improper for God's holy people.*

1 Th 4:3 *It is God's will that you should be sanctified: that you should avoid sexual immorality.*

Jude 1:4, 7 *For certain men whose condemnation was written about long ago have secretly slipped in among you. They are godless men, who change the grace of our God into a license for immorality and deny Jesus Christ our only Sovereign and Lord...In a similar way, Sodom and Gomorrah and the surrounding towns gave themselves up to sexual immorality and perversion. They serve as an example of those who suffer the punishment of eternal fire.*

2. *Idolaters* “will not inherit the kingdom of God. Do not be deceived.” *Idolaters* (eidololatrai) are not just people who worship idols and images of metal, wood and stone. In the Scripture idolatry is the sin of the mind and body against God. Idolatry is basically two things.
 - a. Idolatry is working up concepts and ideas of God that are not true — ideas that are not true to the revelation of the Scriptures and of Jesus Christ. Men have concepts and ideas of what God is like. If their ideas are not what Scripture and Jesus Christ say, then they are worshipping an idol of their own mind. This is easily understood by the honest man. What man has ever seen God? Have you? Have I? No, for God is invisible. He is of another dimension of being entirely, the spiritual dimension. Therefore, if God is to be known, He has to love us enough to reveal Himself. And note: once He has revealed Himself, any idea or concept other than what He has revealed *becomes* an idol.

This is the very point: God has loved the world. He has revealed Himself in His Son Jesus Christ and through His Word, the Holy Scripture. Therefore, an idolater is anyone who strikes out on his own and works up concepts and ideas of God that are against what Jesus Christ and the Scripture reveal.

Gal 4:8-9 *Formerly, when you did not know God, you were slaves to those who by nature are not gods. But now that you know God — or rather are known by God — how is it that you are turning back to those weak and miserable principles [human notions, ideas]? Do you wish to be enslaved by them all over again?*

Eph 2:3 *All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our sinful nature and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature objects of wrath.*

Rom 1:22, 25 *Although they claimed to be wise, they became fools...They exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshipped and served created things [even man himself] rather than the Creator — who is forever praised. Amen.*

1 Pet 4:3 *For you have spent enough time in the past doing what pagans choose to do — living in debauchery, lust, drunkenness, orgies, carousing and detestable idolatry.*

- b. Idolatry is putting something else before God. As Scripture says, greed is idolatry. An idolater is a person who gives his mind and body — thoughts, time, energy, efforts, loyalty — to something other than to God. Idolatry is the sin of the mind and body

against God; it is the failure to look up to God and acknowledge Him; the failure to give one's life to Him including one's thoughts, time, energy and effort — one's loyalty and worship. Idolatry is putting other things before God:

=> money	=> power	=> profession	=> recognition
=> family	=> possessions	=> food	=> recreation
=> luxury	=> popularity	=> pleasure	=> fame
=> position	=> property	=> esteem	

1 Cor 10:14 *Therefore, my dear friends, flee from idolatry.*

Gal 5:19-21 *The acts of the sinful nature are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery; idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like. I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God.*

Eph 5:5 *For of this you can be sure: No immoral, impure or greedy person — such a man is an idolater — has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God.*

Col 3:5-6 *Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires and greed, which is idolatry. Because of these, the wrath of God is coming.*

Rev 21:8 *But the cowardly, the unbelieving, the vile, the murderers, the sexually immoral, those who practice magic arts, the idolaters and all liars — their place will be in the fiery lake of burning sulphur. This is the second death.”*

Rev 22:15 *Outside are the dogs, those who practice magic arts, the sexually immoral, the murderers, the idolaters and everyone who loves and practices falsehood.*

3. *Adulterers* “will not inherit the kingdom of God. Do not be deceived.” *Adulterers* (moichoi) are those...

- who are sexually unfaithful to their wife or husband.
- who look on a woman or a man to lust after her or him. Looking at and lusting after the opposite sex in person, magazines, books, on beaches or wherever is adultery. Imagining and lusting within the heart is the very same as committing the act.

Mat 5:28 *“But I tell you that anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart.”*

2 Pet 2:13-14 *They will be paid back with harm for the harm they have done. Their idea of pleasure is to carouse in broad daylight. They are blots and blemishes, revelling in their pleasures while they feast with you. With eyes full of adultery, they never stop sinning; they seduce the unstable; they are experts in greed — an accursed brood!*

Exo 20:14 *“You shall not commit adultery.”* (cp. Lev 20:10)

Job 24:15-19 *The eye of the adulterer watches for dusk; he thinks, 'No eye will see me,' and he keeps his face concealed. In the dark, men break into houses, but by day they shut themselves in; they want nothing to do with the light. For all of them, deep darkness is their morning; they make friends with the terrors of darkness. "Yet they are foam on the surface of the water; their portion of the land is cursed, so that no one goes to the vineyards. As heat and drought snatch away the melted snow, so the grave snatches away those who have sinned."*

4. The male prostitutes (arsenokoita; men homosexual) and homosexual offenders (malakoi, women homosexuals)... "will not inherit the kingdom of God. Do not be deceived."

Rom 1:26-27 *Because of this, God gave them over to shameful lusts. Even their women exchanged natural relations for unnatural ones. In the same way the men also abandoned natural relations with women and were inflamed with lust for one another. Men committed indecent acts with other men, and received in themselves the due penalty for their perversion.*

2 Cor 12:21 *I am afraid that when I come again my God will humble me before you, and I will be grieved over many who have sinned earlier and have not repented of the impurity, sexual sin and debauchery in which they have indulged.*

Eph 4:19 *Having lost all sensitivity, they have given themselves over to sensuality so as to indulge in every kind of impurity, with a continual lust for more.*

Jude 1:7 *In a similar way, Sodom and Gomorrah and the surrounding towns gave themselves up to sexual immorality and perversion. They serve as an example of those who suffer the punishment of eternal fire.*

III. **1 Corinthians 06:10 Deceptive Sins that Seek Gain**

The deceptive sins that seek gain are often considered not to be fatal. Again, the reason is they are so common among mankind. Many people practice these sins to varying degrees, accepting them as common and understood behaviour. Granted, the degree of committing the sins is minor for most people; nevertheless, many still stand guilty before God, and Scripture says they "will not inherit the kingdom of God."

1. Thieves "will not inherit the kingdom of God. Do not be deceived." The word used here for thieves (kleptai) does not mean just the *professional thief* who lives by stealing. It means the petty, sneak thief: the shoplifter, the person who steals things here and there.

Deu 23:24 *If you enter your neighbour's vineyard, you may eat all the grapes you want, but do not put any in your basket.*

Exo 20:15 *"You shall not steal."*

Rom 13:8-9 *Let no debt remain outstanding, except the continuing debt to love one another, for he who loves his fellow-man has fulfilled the law. The commandments,*

“Do not commit adultery,” “Do not murder,” “Do not steal,” “Do not covet,” and whatever other commandment there may be, are summed up in this one rule: “Love your neighbour as yourself.”

Eph 4:28 *He who has been stealing must steal no longer, but must work, doing something useful with his own hands, that he may have something to share with those in need.*

Titus 2:10 *And not to steal from them, but to show that they can be fully trusted, so that in every way they will make the teaching about God our Saviour attractive.*

1 Pet 4:15 *If you suffer, it should not be as a murderer or thief or any other kind of criminal, or even as a meddler.*

2. The greedy “will not inherit the kingdom of God. Do not be deceived.” The “greedy” (pleonektai) are those...

- who always want more and more.
- who are never satisfied with what they have.
- who want more and more to spend in pleasure and luxury.
- who crave after possessions, pleasure, fame, power.
- who bank and store up and hoard, ignoring and neglecting the desperate needs of teeming millions who are dying from hunger, disease, poverty and sin. (See Mt. 19:16-22; 19:23-26; Lk. 16:19-31.)

Luke 12:15 *Then he said to them, “Watch out! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed; a man’s life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions.”*

Eph 5:3 *But among you there must not be even a hint of sexual immorality, or of any kind of impurity, or of greed, because these are improper for God’s holy people.*

Col 3:5 *Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires and greed, which is idolatry.*

Heb 13:5 *Keep your lives free from the love of money and be content with what you have, because God has said, “Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you.”*

Exo 20:17 *“You shall not covet your neighbour’s house. You shall not covet your neighbour’s wife, or his manservant or maidservant, his ox or donkey, or anything that belongs to your neighbour.”*

Jer 6:13 *“From the least to the greatest, all are greedy for gain; prophets and priests alike, all practice deceit.”*

Ezek 33:31 *My people come to you, as they usually do, and sit before you to listen to your words, but they do not put them into practice. With their mouths they express devotion, but their hearts are greedy for unjust gain.*

Micah 2:2 *They covet fields and seize them, and houses, and take them. They defraud a man of his home, a fellow-man of his inheritance.*

Hab 2:9 “Woe to him who builds his realm by unjust gain to set his nest on high, to escape the clutches of ruin!”

3. Drunkards “will not inherit the kingdom of God. Do not be deceived.” “Drunkards” (methusoi) are people who take drink and drugs to affect their senses for lust and pleasure; who seek to be tipsy or intoxicated; who seek to loosen their moral restraints for the sake of bodily pleasure.

Luke 21:34 “Be careful, or your hearts will be weighed down with dissipation, drunkenness and the anxieties of life, and that day will close on you unexpectedly like a trap.”

Rom 13:13 Let us behave decently, as in the daytime, not in orgies and drunkenness, not in sexual immorality and debauchery, not in dissension and jealousy.

1 Cor 6:10 Nor thieves nor the greedy nor drunkards nor slanderers nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God.

Eph 5:18 Do not get drunk on wine, which leads to debauchery. Instead, be filled with the Spirit.

1 Th 5:7 For those who sleep, sleep at night, and those who get drunk, get drunk at night.

Prov 20:1 Wine is a mocker and beer a brawler; whoever is led astray by them is not wise.

Prov 23:29-30 Who has woe? Who has sorrow? Who has strife? Who has complaints? Who has needless bruises? Who has bloodshot eyes? Those who linger over wine, who go to sample bowls of mixed wine.

Isa 5:11 Woe to those who rise early in the morning to run after their drinks, who stay up late at night till they are inflamed with wine.

Nahum 1:10 They will be entangled among thorns and drunk from their wine; they will be consumed like dry stubble.

4. Slanderers “will not inherit the kingdom of God. Do not be deceived.” Slanderers (loidoroi) are people who abuse others through scolding, ranting and raving, insolent and abusive language, cursing and slanderous language.

Psa 42:10 My bones suffer mortal agony as my foes taunt me, saying to me all day long, “Where is your God?”

Psa 69:12 Those who sit at the gate mock me, and I am the song of the drunkards.

Psa 119:51 The arrogant mock me without restraint, but I do not turn from your law.

Luke 16:14 The Pharisees, who loved money, heard all this and were sneering at Jesus.

Luke 23:35 The people stood watching, and the rulers even sneered at him. They said, “He saved others; let him save himself if he is the Christ of God, the Chosen One.”

5. Swindlers “will not inherit the kingdom of God. Do not be deceived.” Swindlers (harpages) are persons who take money and things from others either by scheme or force. They take advantage of the poor, the ignorant, the innocent, the unsuspecting and sometimes even family and friends. They use whoever and whatever means they can to get what they want. They grasp to get more and more.

Now note the conclusion of this list of sins: none of these persons “will inherit the kingdom of God.” It does not matter what we think or say. God is as clear as He can be: the persons who practice these sins “will not inherit the kingdom of God.”

IV. 1 Corinthians 06:11 The Power of Jesus Christ

There is the power of Christ. Note five points.

1. “That is what some of you were” is abrupt and forceful. It is a revolutionary statement. Some of the Corinthians had been living in the terrible sins just mentioned, but no more. They had been converted and radically changed by Jesus Christ.
2. Note that the words: “you were” are repeated three times in this verse. It stresses the revolutionary change that the power of Christ works in a life that truly gives itself to Christ.
3. The word “washed” (apelousasthe) means to wash off, to wash away. It means that a person comes to Jesus Christ to have his sins washed away, and when he comes, Jesus actually washes his sins away. The word is in the Greek aorist tense which is the past tense; that is, it is referring to their conversion experience. When the believer is washed from sin he is supposed to be washed and cleansed. Sin and its defilement are supposed to be washed away forever. By the power of Christ, the believer is supposed to stay away from the dirt and the filth of the world.

John 15:3 “You are already clean because of the word I have spoken to you.”

Acts 22:16 ‘And now what are you waiting for? Get up, be baptised and wash your sins away, calling on his name.’

1 Cor 6:11 *And that is what some of you were. 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.*

2 Cor 7:1 *Since we have these promises, dear friends, let us purify ourselves from everything that contaminates body and spirit, perfecting holiness out of reverence for God.*

Eph 5:25-26 *Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word.*

James 4:8 *Come near to God and he will come near to you. Wash your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded.*

Rev 1:5 *And from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, the first-born from the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth. To him who loves us and has freed us from our sins by his blood.*

Heb 9:14 *How much more, then, will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself unblemished to God, cleanse our consciences from acts that lead to death, so that we may serve the living God!*

1 John 1:7 *But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin.*

Psa 51:2 *Wash away all my iniquity and cleanse me from my sin.*

Psa 79:9 *Help us, O God our Saviour, for the glory of your name; deliver us and forgive our sins for your name's sake.*

Jer 4:14 *O Jerusalem, wash the evil from your heart and be saved. How long will you harbour wicked thoughts?*

4. The word “sanctified” is also in the aorist tense. It, too, refers to the believer’s salvation experience. The Lord Jesus Christ set the believer apart unto God, and the experience was supposed to be a once-for-all event. The believer is not to return to the world and to its polluting sins. (See *Sanctification*, 1 Cor. 1:2.)

John 17:17 *“Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth.”*

1 Cor 1:30 *It is because of him that you are in Christ Jesus, who has become for us wisdom from God — that is, our righteousness, holiness and redemption.*

2 Tim 2:21 *If a man cleanses himself from the latter, he will be an instrument for noble purposes, made holy, useful to the Master and prepared to do any good work.*

Heb 13:12 *And so Jesus also suffered outside the city gate to make the people holy through his own blood.*

1 Pet 1:2 *Who have been chosen according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through the sanctifying work of the Spirit, for obedience to Jesus Christ and sprinkling by his blood: Grace and peace be yours in abundance.*

5. The word “justified” is probably the most glorious and unbelievable truth known to man. In the simplest of terms, this is what justification means: God takes a person’s faith in Jesus Christ and *counts* his faith as righteousness (see 2 Cor. 5:18-19; 5:21; Rom. 4:1-3; 4:1-2; 5:1). When a person genuinely believes in Jesus Christ, God *credits* that person’s faith *as righteousness*. The person is not righteous; he knows he has no righteousness of his own. He knows he is imperfect. He knows he is short of God’s glory as a sinful human being. But he truly believes that Jesus Christ died for his sins, and he wants to surrender his life and worship to Jesus Christ. Such belief honours God’s Son (whom God loves with an eternal love), and because it honours

God's Son, God accepts that person's faith for righteousness. Therefore, the person becomes acceptable to God. (In a discussion of justification a person's belief — the right kind of belief — is critical. See *Saving Faith*, Jn. 2:24; Rom. 10:16-17.)

Note the words "in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ." To believe "in the name of the Lord Jesus" means that the person stakes his life upon Jesus. He trusts Jesus Christ...

- to take care of his past: his sins and guilt, his rebellion and rejection of God.
- to take care of his present: his life and welfare while on this earth.
- to take care of his future: his eternal destiny and the inheritance of eternal life and God's kingdom.

Gen 15:6 *Abram believed the Lord, and he credited it to him as righteousness.*

Acts 13:39 *Through him everyone who believes is justified from everything you could not be justified from by the law of Moses.*

Rom 3:28 *For we maintain that a man is justified by faith apart from observing the law.*

Rom 5:1 *Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. ■*