

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. ■*