

STUDIES IN THE BOOK OF 1ST CORINTHIANS

Examining the Household of Faith

Resolve Your Differences Among Yourselves

1 Corinthians 6:1-8

Some of the best marital advice I ever received came from my Aunt. She simply said, “Make sure that you keep in-house stuff, in-house.” I wondered how many marriages have been ruined because of the interference of outside influence. Certainly, two rational thinking adults could have easily arrived at a workable resolution had they not included outside intervention.

The same can be said of the household of God. I wonder how many churches could have prevented a “church split” if they had just kept “in-house stuff, inside the house.” If there are two individuals with a dispute, and they both have the mind of Christ, it seems that though they, too, would be able to arrive at a working compromise. But this is not the case in the Corinthian church, which is further evidence that the members were not as mature as they supposed that they were. Paul has to address the matter of taking fellow church goers to court and suing them in the public eye.

Christians must learn to settle their differences.

When Christians are not able to arrive at a working solution, it is evidence that there is failure in the fellowship of believers. And the only way that there can be failure is if there are one or more individuals who are not operating in the fear and the admonition of the Lord. Instead, they have somehow given place to the devil and his angels.

Another reason that Paul did not want the people of Corinth taking in-house business down to the public, Roman courthouse was because the Roman courts were notorious for being corrupt. Depending on the status of the two citizens (and church goers) involved in the dispute, you may or may not be awarded and afforded a fair trial. So Paul admonishes the household of faith not to allow sinners rule on their disputes, which were usually small matters, at any rate. Even if it was a serious offence, there should have been enough people with the love of God who could objectively come to a Godly ruling in any matter amongst the saints.

The last reason that Paul gives for not counting on the common courts in Corinth is that Christians would ultimately judge the angels. If they were in charge of this high responsibility, then certainly they can handle problems amongst themselves. These people have no standing in the church or the family of God, so why involve them in matters that they don't have to be involved in? Why give them the opportunity to corrupt a simple procedure? In other words, leave in-house stuff in-house.

God's people must not war with each other.

Paul also had to remind them of another reason that they should not sue each other. We are brothers and sisters in Christ. Our minds have been renewed. We have been freed

from the power and penalty of sin. We have an uncommon love for common people. We esteem others higher than ourselves. We have the ability to turn the other cheek and walk a mile in each other's shoes. Because we are all in the family of God, we don't want to do any harm to our brother or sister in the Lord. As Christians we have been washed with the waters of baptism that unify us together in Christ. We have all been brought from the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of light by the reconciling and redeeming act of almighty God. In this act, he also justified us and placed us right relationship with God. God now continues to sanctify us and set us apart for special service and purposes.

Therefore there should never be a place or room for the kinds of sins that were being committed against the one or the other listed here in these verses. There should be such an atmosphere of love and conscious Christian consideration one for the other that legal ease should not even be the last resort, it is something that we should not resort to at all. We should be able to arbitrate and mediate our own matters with responsible and respected elders of our own congregations. If after this process, one or the parties is still not adequately satisfied with the verdict, then the other party, because of his affiliation with the God of reconciliation should just take the high road whatever that entails in order to keep peace in the assembly of God.

Christians should live at peace with one another.

Paul says if at all possible, live peaceably with everyone. All the items cited in the list above give us all the reasons in the world to live at peace with one another. One of the reasons that is not listed above is something that Paul mentions in the sixth chapter of Galatians in the first verse. "Brothers, if anyone among you is caught in any transgression, you who are spiritual, should restore him in a spirit of gentleness."

There will be times when our family members will have moments. We should be open and willing to forgive them and soon as possible reconcile them back into the fold. We should possess a forbearing spirit that is not so easily offended and not so staunch against being open to mend broken relationships. This verse in Galatians has the picture of resetting a broken bone. It might have been a traumatic experience. It might have been extremely painful. It was possibly very ugly. However, we cannot allow our brother or sister go around looking or feeling out of place. As the spiritually mature party, we should reach out and attempt to heal the breach. This means that sometimes you will go over and above the call of duty, if there is such a thing in the body of Christ.

The longer you are Christian, because you are the mature one in the matter, you may even find yourself asking for forgiveness even when you feel you have done nothing worth apologizing for. We must remember that all Christians, while they may be Christian all the same, are not on the same level of maturity. Therefore we have to show and display the example that we want modeled in the view of the less mature members of the body of Christ. In other words, do whatever it takes to keep the peace. Jesus says in John 15, that they will know that we are Christians by our love.