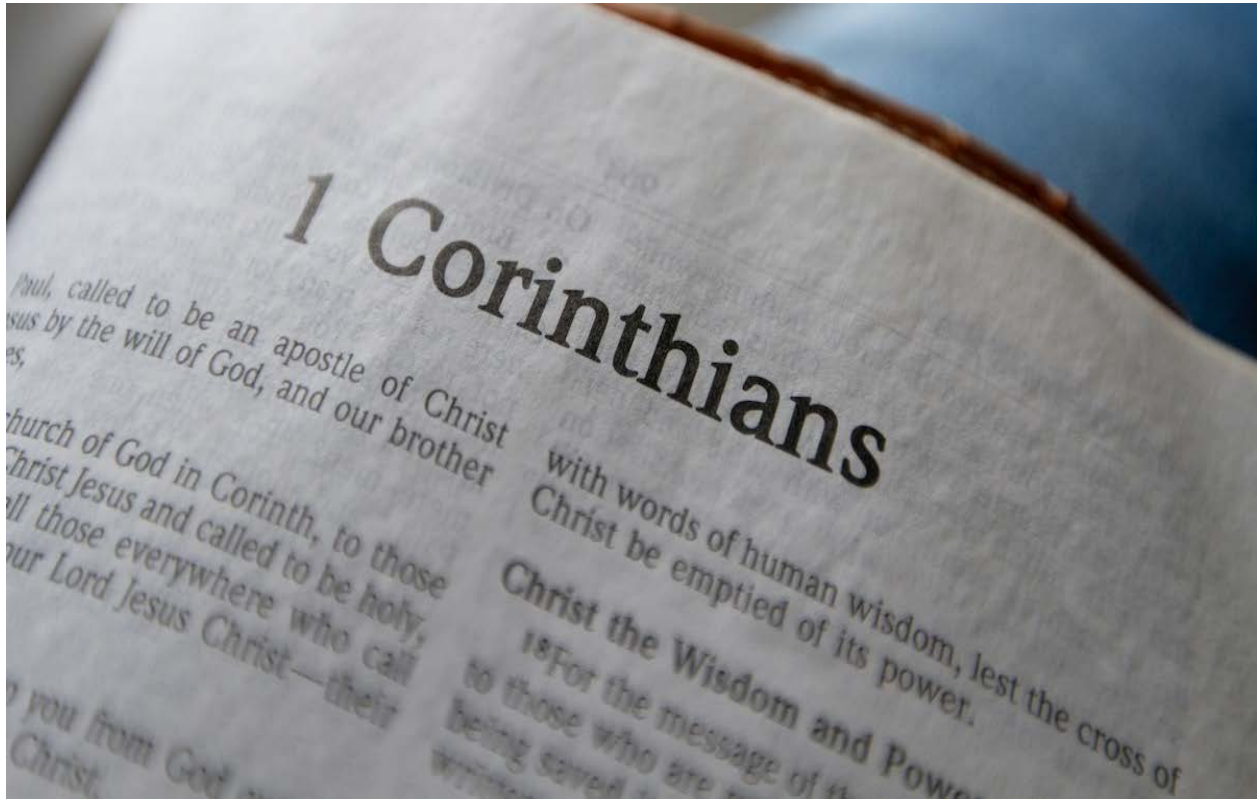


# Not Our Own

1 Corinthians 6  
1 and 2 Corinthians Part 7



T. M. AND SUSIE MOORE

*A Scriptorium Study from The Fellowship of Ailbe*

Not Our Own: 1 Corinthians 6  
1 and 2 Corinthians Part 7  
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## Introduction to *1 Corinthians 6*

We should concentrate on how to glorify God with our bodies, not to offend against Him. After all, we are not our own.

But if we're going to use our bodies to honor the Lord, we must first make sure our spirit—our soul—is cleansed and rightly engaged with Him. That means dealing with wrong attitudes, sinful desires, hurtful intentions, and messed-up priorities by giving them all over to the Lord to be made new.

This is a daily need and requires daily disciplines of prayer, meditation, seeking the Lord, hearing His Word, and offering ourselves to Him. As hard as we must flee immorality we must flee to the safety of our Lord and His grace.

For we are not our own, but His.

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We hope you find this study instructive and helpful to equip you for your walk with and work for the Lord. Thank you for joining us.

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## 1 Judge the World?

*Pray Psalm 119.25-27.*

My soul clings to the dust;  
Revive me according to Your word.  
I have declared my ways, and You answered me;  
Teach me Your statutes.  
Make me understand the way of Your precepts;  
So shall I meditate on Your wonderful works.

*Sing Psalm 119.25-27.*

(Festal Song: *Rise Up, O Men of God*)

My soul clings to the dust; revive me by Your Word!  
My ways I have declared to You; teach me Your statutes, LORD!

Make me to understand Your precepts and Your ways,  
as on Your works I meditate with wonder and with praise!

*Read and meditate on 1 Corinthians 6.1-3.*

*Preparation*

1. To what did Paul object?
2. What are saints supposed to judge?

*Meditation*

We can imagine the Corinthians, upon hearing these verses read aloud, turning to one another with a quizzical look as if to say, “What?”

In all his epistles, Paul makes two things very clear: God is the final authority in all matters of truth and falsehood, right and wrong, beauty and goodness. And second, believers must live unto the Lord and for His glory. We are new creations; everything of the old leaven must be allowed to pass away.

Even if that means turning our world upside-down (Acts 17.6).

By taking their disputes and disagreements—yet more indicators of their dividedness—“before unrighteous judges”, the Corinthians were choosing to be governed by the fallible and often unjust laws of an unbelieving society. Why should we do that? We are citizens of an eternal Kingdom and subjects of an infallible King. Is not His Word sufficient to resolve our disagreements so that justice and love prevail? And ought we not seek the counsel of other believers to help in such matters?

The believing community is a new Kingdom with an ancient and unchanging Law, as Paul demonstrated in chapter 5. If we are to restore justice, truth, goodness, and love to the world, we must begin in ourselves and our churches. Indeed, believers are called to exercise divine judgment on all matters, whether of this world (v. 2) or the unseen realm (v. 3), where John calls us to test every spirit (1 Jn. 4.1-3). Believers must so feed on God’s Word that they become filled with Jesus, Who then fills the world with Himself through them (Eph. 4.7-10). Then everything in the world will become subject to the sanctified judgment of God’s people, and the beauty, goodness, and truth of God will declare the knowledge of His glory (Hab. 2.14).

God’s Law and all His Word are sufficient for every good work (2 Tim. 3.15-17). It’s time we believed this and acted accordingly.

*Treasures Old and New: Matthew 13.52; Psalm 119.162.*

Let's work our way backward for a moment:

1. If everyone in the church was keeping the Law of God, there would be no need to go to court.
2. If there was an occasion of sin in the church, and the church dealt with it, there would be no need to go to court.

So Paul's concern regarding the church publicly embarrassing itself and going to court about anything having to do with problems within the church, is well founded (1 Cor. 6.1).

Think of all the horrific things that have happened within the church and that the church has not dealt with. Not only does the world know the worst about the church, but they see that it is intentionally impotent to deal with it. And any thoughts they may have had about coming to church are put on the back burner—revulsion and fear keeping them from the loving Savior.

The Church is meant to be the “joy of the whole earth” (Ps. 48.2); and Jesus longs to “draw all peoples to” Himself (Jn. 12.32).

But unconfessed and undealt-with sin within the Body is the blockade that keeps those things from happening.

“To do righteousness and justice is more acceptable to the LORD than sacrifice” (Prov. 21.3).  
“Therefore, to him who knows to do good and does not do it, to him it is sin” (Jms. 4.17).

Righteous living takes the willingness and participation of the whole congregation. Moses tried to lead the people all by himself, to judge between this person and that, and to make good decisions for everyone. It was an impossible task. So his father-in-law said to him, “The thing that you do is not good. Both you and these people will surely wear yourselves out. For this thing is too much for you; you are not able to perform it by yourself” (Ex. 18.17, 18).

He went on to make this suggestion: “Stand before God for the people, so that you may bring the difficulties to God. And you shall teach them the statutes and the laws, and show them the way in which they must walk and the work they must do. Moreover you shall select from all the people able men, such as fear God, men of truth, hating covetousness; and place such over them to be rulers...and let them judge the people at all times...for they shall bear the burden with you...and all this people will also go to their place in peace” (Ex. 18.19-23).

We are all called to be “Moses' helpers” in keeping and sustaining the Law within the bounds of the church. Peace among the brethren is certainly one goal; and our witness to the world another; but the main goal is to prove our love for God and to honor and glorify Him—thus participating with Him (1 Cor. 3.9) in causing the church to be the joy of the whole earth; and getting out of the way so that Jesus can draw all peoples unto Himself. Going before an unrighteous court being a moot point.

Dare we do otherwise?

*For reflection*

1. We don't keep the Law to be saved but because we *are* saved. What does it say about us if we refuse to learn and keep the Law?
2. In what sense are all believers called to be “righteous judges”?
3. What can you do to improve your ability to fulfill that calling?

*Not Our Own: 1 Corinthians 6*

*The Corinthians were wrong in two ways. First, they were unfaithful, and second, they were expounding God's laws with a show of respect but in reality attributing their authority to idols. Ambrosiaster (fl. 366-384), Commentary on Paul's epistles.*

*Pray Psalm 119.28-32.*

What judgments—decisions, choices, courses of action—will you take today? Ask God to fill your soul with Jesus, direct your steps by His Word, and empower your choices by His Holy Spirit.

*Sing Psalm 119.28-32.*

(Festal Song: *Rise Up, O Men of God*)

My soul weighs down with woe, I need Your strength, O LORD!  
Remove from me all lying ways; grant me Your holy Word!

I choose the way of truth; Your judgments I proclaim.  
Your testimonies I embrace, LORD, put me not to shame!

Command my course, O LORD; Your gracious truth impart.  
I cling to You and know You will enlarge my seeking heart.

## 2 Right Court

*Pray Psalm 52.1-4.*

Why do you boast in evil, O mighty man?  
The goodness of God *endures* continually.  
Your tongue devises destruction,  
Like a sharp razor, working deceitfully.  
You love evil more than good,  
Lying rather than speaking righteousness.

*Selah*

You love all devouring words,  
You deceitful tongue.

*Sing Psalm 52.1-4.*

(Warrington: *Give to Our God Immortal Praise*)

Why do the mighty boast in sin? God's love endures, it knows no end!  
They with their tongues vain boasts repeat, and like a razor, work deceit.

Men more than good in evil delight, and lies prefer to what is right.  
They utter words both harsh and strong with their devouring, deceitful tongue.

*Read 1 Corinthians 6.1-6; meditate on verses 4-6.*

*Preparation*

1. To whom should we not look for just judgments?
2. Where did Paul want the Corinthians to turn?

*Meditation*

You cannot play tennis on a pickle ball court. Ice hockey does not work on a basketball court. A squash court is for squash, not shuffleboard. If you want to get the most out of your sport, make sure you're playing on the right court.

That's Paul's counsel to the Corinthians in a nutshell. The right court for Christians in which to resolve their differences in the grace and truth of the Lord, so that justice and neighbor-love prevail, is the court of the church. Secular civil courts work, to the extent they do, only because they borrow on concepts of law and justice which derive from the Law of God. But courts are drifting away from such a fixed reference to make decisions according to uncertain winds of doctrine and the temper of the times. Such opinions should be "least esteemed" by believers who are concerned for righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit.

If we have judgments concerning things pertaining to this life, we must turn to our church and her leaders to help us. If we need skill in thinking about how to discern God's will, apply His Word to our work, grow in our ability to make wise and loving choices, and further the rule of King Jesus into every area of our lives, we must look to the church and its leaders and members. It would be shameful to expect secular courts of any stature or design to help us figure out how to fulfill our calling to the Kingdom and glory of God.

And if we believe that our churches are not up to this challenge, then our duty is to do everything in our power to make that not the case. Be grounded in the Word of God. Encourage your fellow church members to do the same. Choose leaders who love the Lord and His Word. And trust God to bring His blessings to and through you as you learn to judge with righteous judgment about every aspect of life.

*Treasures Old and New: Matthew 13.52; Psalm 119.162*

Since the beginning of this letter to the church in Corinth, Paul has been speaking against divisiveness within the Body of Christ. It is not to happen for any reason. “Is Christ divided?”, he asked (1 Cor. 1.13). The answer obviously is “No”.

Jesus said, “Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation, and every city or house divided against itself will not stand” (Matt. 12.25).

“I say this to your shame”, Paul said. “Brother goes to law against brother, and that before unbelievers!” Divided amongst themselves for all to see, and nobody to be properly helped. Only judged by “those least esteemed”, non-believers in the world (1 Cor. 6.4-6).

When Nehemiah returned to Jerusalem to bring concord to the mayhem, he said, “You see the distress that we are in, how Jerusalem lies waste, and its gates are burned with fire. Come and let us build the wall of Jerusalem, that we may no longer be a reproach” (Neh. 2.17).

The same can be said for the church today. You see the distress, the church lies waste, our integrity burned. But come, let us build the church, we can be revived, so that we are no longer divided and a reproach—in the world’s eyes and in our own.

We must not be found guilty of the same sin that has plagued God’s people in perpetuity: “In those days there was no king in Israel; everyone did what was right in his own eyes” (Judg. 17.6).

We serve King Jesus. We live within His Kingdom and Law. We do what He has called us to do. We are not divided. We take our stand on the right plane. We take our claims to the “Right Court”.

For “Better is one day in Your courts than a thousand elsewhere...” (Ps. 84.10 NIV).

*For reflection*

1. Why was Paul so adamant about not going to court before unbelievers?
2. The lesson for us is clear: Esteem the Word of God first and always, and the views of mere men least of all. How does this lesson apply to your daily life?
3. Can the Church fulfill its calling apart from the Law of God? Explain.

*This in no way contradicts Romans [13], where Paul tells people to respect the magistrates. He is not telling us to resist secular authorities, but rather we should not appeal to them. Theodoret of Cyr (393-466), Commentary on the First Epistle to the Corinthians 195*

*Pray Psalm 52.5-9.*

Pray for the lost people in your Personal Mission Field. Ask God to soften their hearts and to give you an opportunity to share Jesus with them. Pray that you will continue to grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

*Sing Psalm 52.5-9.*

(Warrington: *Give to Our God Immortal Praise*)

God will forever break them down, uproot, and cast them to the ground!  
He from their safety tears them away, no more to know the light of day.

The righteous see and laugh and fear, and say, “Behold, what have we here?  
Such are all who at God conspire, and wealth and evil ways desire.”



*Not Our Own: 1 Corinthians 6*

But as for me may I be seen in God an olive ever green!  
Ever in God, most kind and just, shall I with joy and gladness trust!

Thanks evermore to our Savior be raised! His faithfulness be ever praised!  
Here with Your people, loving God, I wait upon Your Name, so good!

### 3 UF

*Pray Psalm 51.10-13.*

Create in me a clean heart, O God,  
And renew a steadfast spirit within me.  
Do not cast me away from Your presence,  
And do not take Your Holy Spirit from me.  
Restore to me the joy of Your salvation,  
And uphold me *by Your* generous Spirit.  
*Then* I will teach transgressors Your ways,  
And sinners shall be converted to You.

*Sing Psalm 51.10-13.*

(Passion Chorale: *O Sacred Head, Now Wounded*)

Create in me a clean heart, renew me from within!  
Take not Your Spirit from me because of all my sin.  
Salvation's joy restore, LORD, and keep me in Your hand;  
thus shall I tell Your strong Word to sinners in the land.

*Read 1 Corinthians 6.1-8; meditate on verses 7, 8.*

*Preparation*

1. *What did Paul describe as an "utter failure"?*
2. *What should these brethren have done?*

*Meditation*

By this point the Corinthians were probably saying, "All right already! I get it!" But Paul is not finished casting this situation—bringing Kingdom citizens to judgment before unbelieving judges—in the worst possible light. It was an "utter failure" on the Corinthians' part. But in what sense? In the sense that they completely failed to live their citizenship within the Kingdom framework to which God had called them. They went beyond the Word of God to seek the word of fallen, sinful men concerning a matter that should have been resolved within the church. They failed as citizens of the Kingdom of God.

It would have been better just to absorb the wrong than to go whining and complaining to unbelieving judges to get what they thought they deserved. Instead of being cheated and wronged, however, they cheated and wronged their brethren by depriving them of true justice and subjecting them to the uncertainties of fallible men.

"You're a failure! A cheat! A wrongdoer!" Do you think Paul was serious about our learning to live as people who belong to God? Who have been translated into His Kingdom? In whom the Spirit of God is writing and teaching and empowering us to live by the Law of God (Ezek. 36.26, 27)? In the second epistle he will declare it boldly: "If anyone *is* in Christ, *he is* a new creation!" (2 Cor. 5.17) New creations don't dress up in the old leaven of their former sinful lives. If we do not encourage one another, by our own actions and words, to live like those who belong to God, we are guilty of all that Paul insists on in these verses.

And who wants to go through life with "UF"—utter failure— stamped on their forehead? Let's live like who we are and encourage our brothers and sisters in the Lord to do the same.

*Treasures Old and New: Matthew 13.52; Psalm 119.162*

Instead of wearing a pithy WWJD bracelet or flaunting a Purpose-Driven Life keychain, perhaps we should

don a UF sweatshirt purchased at our local Christian bookstore? Maybe if we owned our Paul-given nomenclature we would be more likely to confess and turn from it?

This is obviously serious business that needs attention; and we must give it such.

“Do not say, ‘I will recompense evil’; wait for the LORD, and He will save you” (Prov. 20.22)

“Do not go hastily to court; for what will you do in the end, when your neighbor has put you to shame?” (Prov. 25.8)

“But I tell you not to resist an evil person. But whoever slaps you on your right cheek, turn the other to him also. If anyone wants to sue you and take away your tunic, let him have your cloak also. And whoever compels you to go one mile, go with him two” (Matt. 5.39-41).

As our inimitable mentor, Pat Hunter, once asked, “What are you willing to take for Jesus’ sake?”

We most assuredly do not want Jesus to perceive us as “utter failures” in His Kingdom work. To preclude that, we have the entirety of His Word to guide us in the right paths (Ps. 23.3).

“The law of the LORD is perfect, converting the soul;  
the testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple;  
the statutes of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart;  
the commandment of the LORD is pure, enlightening the eyes;  
the fear of the LORD is clean, enduring forever;  
the judgments of the LORD are true and righteous altogether...  
Moreover by them Your servant is warned,  
and in keeping them there is great reward” (Ps. 19.7-9, 11).

Keep God’s Law; walk in His paths; stay in His court; daily feast on and follow Jesus—the Word of God; then throw away any kitschy thing that has UF on it! We will not be needing that reminder any longer.

*For reflection*

1. What kind of “failure” do we realize when we seek guidance other than from God and His Word?
2. How do we cheat—steal from—our neighbors by not showing them the way of righteousness?
3. How can we avoid being cheats and utter failures? How will you avoid these pitfalls today?

*Here there may be as many as four crimes involved. The first is not knowing how to bear being wronged. The second is to do wrong. The third is to reserve settlement of the matter to the unrighteous. And the fourth is that this kind of thing is being done to a fellow believer. John Chrysostom (344-407), Homilies on the Epistles of Paul to the Corinthians 16.7*

*Pray Psalm 51.1-9.*

Let there be no unconfessed sin in you. Ask the Lord to search you and to convict and cleanse you as needed. Call on Him to keep you in His path throughout the day ahead.

*Sing Psalm 51.1-9.*

(Passion Chorale: *O Sacred Head, Now Wounded*)

Be gracious to me, Savior, according to Your love!  
According to Your mercy, my sins, my sins remove!  
O wash me, precious Savior, and cleanse me from all sin;  
look on me with Your favor, and cause my grief to end.

*Not Our Own: 1 Corinthians 6*

Against You only, Savior, have I become unclean;  
thus just the condemnation which You pronounce on me.  
LORD, I was born to sinning, while You seek truth within;  
to wisdom my heart winning, release me from my sin!

In Jesus' blood and mercy, LORD, cleanse my evil heart!  
Let me washed, cleansed, renewed be and pure in whole and part.  
Bring joy again and gladness; look not upon my sin.  
Deliver me from sadness; renew me yet again!

## 4 Excluded

*Pray Psalm 72.7-11.*

In His days the righteous shall flourish,  
And abundance of peace,  
Until the moon is no more.  
He shall have dominion also from sea to sea,  
And from the River to the ends of the earth.  
Those who dwell in the wilderness will bow before Him,  
And His enemies will lick the dust.  
The kings of Tarshish and of the isles  
Will bring presents;  
The kings of Sheba and Seba  
Will offer gifts.  
Yes, all kings shall fall down before Him;  
All nations shall serve Him.

*Sing Psalm 72.7-11.*

(Martyrdom: *Alas! And Did My Savior Bleed*)

Let righteousness abundant be where Jesus' reign endures;  
let peace increase from sea to sea 'til moonlight shall be no more.

And let the Righteous rule the earth, and let His foes bow low;  
let nations praise His matchless worth, and all His bidding do.

*Read 1 Corinthians 6.1-11; meditate on verses 9-11.*

*Preparation*

1. Who will inherit the Kingdom of God?
2. Who will not?

*Meditation*

The Kingdom of God and righteousness go together. You cannot have one without the other. Nor must we seek them separately. Jesus commanded us to seek the Kingdom *and* righteousness of God as the defining priorities of our lives (Matt. 6.33). If we do not seek the Kingdom—the rule of King Jesus, according to His Law, for every aspect of life—we will not increase in righteousness. If we do not seek the righteousness of Jesus—to be increasingly transformed into His likeness (2 Cor. 3.12-18)—we will not inherit the Kingdom.

Paul's catalog of those who are excluded from the Kingdom is not meant to be exhaustive. He merely picks out sins with which the Corinthians were familiar—and practiced in—to remind them that life in the Kingdom puts all this old leaven aside and daily seeks to be a new, clean loaf for the Lord. Those who have been washed in the blood of Jesus and set apart (sanctified) for Him will not go back to their old ways. And if they do, it raises the question of whether they have truly been born from above into the Kingdom of God.

Inheriting the Kingdom is a daily process. Every day a little more of that vast heritage is available to us. As we press on in keeping the feast of Jesus and His Word and living the washed and sanctified life, we will realize more of our inheritance of righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit (Rom. 14.17, 18).

Don't be deceived. Kingdom citizens seek Kingdom priorities, pursue Kingdom work, and bear Kingdom fruit. Those who prefer to continue in sin—though they profess faith in Jesus—have no grounds for being sure that this inheritance is theirs.

*Treasures Old and New: Matthew 13.52; Psalm 119.162*

Fear is a great motivator. Everybody knows that and practices it in one way or another. It is just the way things work.

“Therefore say to the house of Israel, ‘Thus says the LORD GOD:

“Repent, turn away from your idols, and turn your faces away from all your abominations.

For anyone of the house of Israel, or of the strangers who dwell in Israel, who separates himself from Me and sets up his idols in his heart and puts before him what causes him to stumble into iniquity, then comes to a prophet to inquire of him concerning Me, I the LORD will answer him by Myself.

I will set My face against that man and make him a sign and a proverb,

and I will cut him off from the midst of My people.

Then you shall know that I am the LORD””” (Ezek. 14.6-8).

Sin happens in the church because there is no fear of God (Ps. 36.1; Rom. 3.18).

Contrary to the way some parents raise their kids— “I’ll tell you this now. And if you don’t do it, I’ll tell you again. And again. And again”—God means what He says, and will act on it, make no mistake. “Do not be deceived” (1 Cor. 6.9).

The Ten Commandments sums up Paul’s list succinctly. Every accusation Paul launches at the Corinthians is found within God’s perfect Law (Ex. 20.1-17).

Paul makes very clear that we are all guilty of sin (Rom. 3.23). But after his list, yes, he says, “And such were some of you” (1 Cor. 6.11). But the operative word is “were”. Now we are new creations. These old things have passed away and everything about us has become new (2 Cor. 5.17). And of course, we still sin, but not intentionally or perpetually. We are convicted of it, we confess it, and we turn away from it. The Holy Spirit uses the Word of God to keep us close to Him and far from sin (Heb. 4.12, 13). So, reading the Word daily is a joyous and preventive necessity.

Because now we are washed, sanctified, and justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God (1 Cor. 6.11). Cleaned up (Jn. 13.8) and redressed in His battle gear (Eph. 6.10-18), ready for the work all who are included in salvation are called to do (Eph. 2.10).

“The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom;  
a good understanding have all those who do His commandments.  
His praise endures forever” (Ps. 111.10).

*For reflection*

1. How would you counsel a new believer to deal with any lingering sins in their life?
2. What can you do to recognize and resist temptation before it becomes sin?
3. How can believers help one another to keep from falling into sin?

*All unrighteousness is sin; all reigning sin, nay, every actual sin, committed with design, and not repented of, shuts out of the kingdom of heaven. Be not deceived. Men are very much inclined to flatter themselves that they may live in sin, yet die in Christ, and go to heaven. But we cannot hope to sow to the flesh, and reap everlasting life. Matthew Henry (1662-1714),  
Commentary on 1 Corinthians 6.9-11*

*Pray Psalm 72.15-19.*

Pray that God will show you how to seek His Kingdom and righteousness as the defining priority of your life.

*Sing Psalm 72.15-19.*

(Martyrdom: *Alas! And Did My Savior Bleed*)

Let Christ be praised and all the gold of Sheba be His right;  
let blessings to His Name be told, and prayers made both day and night.

And let the earth abound with grain, let fields His fame proclaim;  
and may our King forever reign and nations bless His great Name.

Now bless the God of Israel Who wondrous works performs.  
And bless His Name, His glory tell both now and forevermore!

## 5 Members of Christ

*Pray Psalm 38.9-12.*

Lord, all my desire *is* before You;  
And my sighing is not hidden from You.  
My heart pants, my strength fails me;  
As for the light of my eyes, it also has gone from me.  
My loved ones and my friends stand aloof from my plague,  
And my relatives stand afar off.  
Those also who seek my life lay snares *for me*;  
Those who seek my hurt speak of destruction,  
And plan deception all the day long.

*Sing Psalm 38.9-12.*

(Leoni: *The God of Abraham Praise*)

You know all my desire, my sighs You know full well.  
My strength fails and light's holy fire my eyes dispel.  
My friends and loved ones fail; the wicked do me wrong.  
My life they seek, my soul assail the whole day long.

*Read 1 Corinthians 6.1-17; meditate on verses 12-17.*

*Preparation*

1. What seems to be the focus of these verses?
2. Of what are believers members?

*Meditation*

Moving on, Paul took up a claim that was being asserted by certain of the Corinthians: I'm saved, I can do what I want (v. 12). Paul responded in two ways. First, we don't want to do anything that isn't helpful for God's ongoing work of sanctification in us (v. 11). And second, we don't want anything—like a bad habit—to exercise controlling power over us (vv. 12, 13). Our bodies, Paul insisted, are “for the Lord”, to do His work in His way for His glory.

We are especially to guard against sexual immorality (vv. 13, 15, 16). It sounds as if some of the Corinthians were visiting prostitutes, as they had in their “old leaven” days, no doubt. Would Jesus do that? Obviously, not. Yet here they were, *members* of the Body of Christ, giving themselves to sinful practices and considering that it was “lawful” for them to do so! Even to lust sexually for another person is a sin, Jesus explained (Matt. 5.27-29). How much more to engage in unlawful sinful practices? Paul had just explained that adulterers will not inherit the Kingdom of God (v. 10). The Corinthians should stop deceiving themselves about such things (v. 9).

As members of Christ's Body we should go only where He would go and do only what He would do. Jesus fulfilled all the Law of God; we must devote ourselves, body and soul, to the same. For as much as we might wish our sinful desires to be lawful and edifying, that's not ever going to be the case. We are one with Jesus by His indwelling Spirit (v. 17). Jesus will show us what is lawful and what is not, what sanctifies and what destroys, what glorifies Him and what merely gratifies the flesh. The more we look to Him and follow in His way (1 Jn. 2.1-6), the more we will find true life and edification unto His praise and glory.

*Treasures Old and New: Matthew 13.52; Psalm 119.162*

This is a good news/good news proposition:  
“The body is not for sexual immorality but for the Lord.”



“He who is joined to the Lord is one spirit with Him” (1 Cor. 6.13, 17).

You don’t have to betray or be betrayed.  
You don’t have to be one with anyone other than your spouse.  
You don’t have to get any number of transmissible diseases.  
You don’t have to feel guilt.  
You don’t have to be blackmailed.  
You don’t have to be put out of your church.  
And most of all, you don’t have to disappoint your Savior.

But, you do get to be joined to the Lord Jesus and be one with Him.  
You are free to live His abundant life with Him.  
And you do inherit the kingdom of God.  
Win/win/win.

“So shall I keep Your law continually, forever and ever.  
And I will walk at liberty, for I seek Your precepts” (Ps. 119.44, 45).  
“But he who looks into the perfect law of liberty and continues in it,  
and is not a forgetful hearer but a doer of the work,  
this one will be blessed in what he does” (Jms. 1.25).

Jesus said of Himself, that He came to earth to bring liberty and freedom:  
“The Spirit of the LORD is upon Me,  
Because He has anointed Me  
To preach the gospel to the poor;  
He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted,  
To proclaim liberty to the captives  
And recovery of sight to the blind,  
To set at liberty those who are oppressed;  
To proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD” (Lk. 4.18, 19).

Liberated and fully free to join and follow Him.  
“If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself,  
and take up his cross daily, and follow Me” (Lk. 9.23).

*For reflection*

1. Where does the idea come from that sinful practices might be OK or even edifying?
2. What should you do whenever that thought begins to play in your mind?
3. Whom will you encourage today to resist temptation and stay the course with Jesus?

*Some among the Corinthians seem to have been ready to say, All things are lawful for me. This dangerous conceit St. Paul opposes. There is a liberty wherewith Christ has made us free, in which we must stand fast. But surely a Christian would never put himself into the power of any bodily appetite. Matthew Henry (1662-1714), Commentary on 1 Corinthians 6.12-20*

*Pray Psalm 38.17-22.*

Meditate on today’s text as you wait on the Lord in prayer. Ask Him to show you any place in your life—thoughts, desires, practices—where you have gone beyond or are failing to live up to His Word. Confess and rejoice to move on in His love.

*Sing Psalm 38.17-22.*

(Leoni: *The God of Abraham Praise*)

My sins I now confess; my anxious soul relieve!

Though foes are strong, LORD, heal and bless all who believe!

Forsake me not, O LORD! Repay my foes with wrath.

Stand by me with Your saving Word and guard my path!

## 6 Not Our Own

*Pray Psalm 32.1, 2.*

Blessed *is he whose* transgression *is* forgiven,  
Whose sin is covered.

Blessed *is* the man to whom the LORD does not impute iniquity,  
And in whose spirit *there is* no deceit.

*Sing Psalm 32.1, 2.*

(Hendon: *Take My Life and Let It Be*)

Blessed are they whose sins the LORD has forgiven by His Word!  
Pure their spirits are within; them He charges with no sin;  
them He charges with no sin!

*Read 1 Corinthians 6.1-20; meditate on verse 18-20.*

*Prepare*

1. Why are we not our own?

2. How did Paul describe our body?

*Meditation*

Paul did not dwell on the sins of his readers. He had loftier goals, and he wanted them to think with the mind of Christ about who they are and what that implies. But he had to confront their sinful practices and urge them to discontinue them all. Old leaven is of no use; they needed to be a new lump to grow and bear fruit for the Lord. Growth in the Lord—from infancy to maturity—requires both repentance and renewed vision and resolve.

And the daily dedicating of our bodies to the Lord for His glory.

Paul's command to flee sexual immorality surely would have led the Corinthians to recall Joseph and how he fled from Potiphar's wife (Gen. 39). Better to end up slandered and thrown in jail than to give in to wantonness and immorality. Our bodies are not our own to abuse with such wickedness. We have been bought with the price of Jesus' blood; we are not our own (v. 19)! Our bodies are the dwelling-place of God!

We should thus concentrate on how to glorify God with our bodies, not to offend against Him (v. 20). But if we're going to use our bodies to honor the Lord, we must first make sure our spirit—our soul—is cleansed and rightly engaged with Him. That means dealing with wrong attitudes, sinful desires, hurtful intentions, and messed-up priorities by giving them all over to the Lord to be made new. This is a daily need and requires daily disciplines of prayer, meditation, seeking the Lord, hearing His Word, and offering ourselves to Him. As hard as we must flee immorality we must flee to the safety of our Lord and His grace.

For we are not our own, but His.

*Treasures Old and New: Matthew 13.52; Psalm 119.162.*

Paul told the Corinthians clearly: "Flee sexual immorality" (1 Cor. 6.18) because it is against God's Law. But it is also a sin that infects our whole person: body, mind, soul, and spirit. And in so doing, we are crowding out the Holy Spirit, "who is in you, whom you have from God" (1 Cor. 6.19). Moreover, we don't even belong to ourselves because we have been "bought" and paid for "at a price" (1 Cor. 6.20).

And not just any price, but the price was the sacrifice of the Son of God, who gave "His life a ransom for

many” (Mk. 10.45; 1 Tim. 2.6).

“Therefore submit to God.  
Resist the devil and he will flee from you” (Jms. 4.7).

Back in the day there was a cartoon that may still be around today; the point being, the main character knew how to flee. Every episode had some version of the Roadrunner evading his nemesis Wile E. Coyote. In the process, one observed a speedy flight, with only gusts of wind and lots of dust left in his path. A lot of fleeing took place.

That is what our lives should look like when it comes to evil. We flee; we submit to God; and the devil flees from us, too! A virtual whirlwind of feathers, wind, and dust!

No one, with a mind and a heart, wants to make the Holy Spirit’s time inside us miserable. For we have Paul’s parting shot to the Corinthians to ponder: “If anyone does not love the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be accursed” (1 Cor. 16.22).

Much better to flee sin. Draw near to God, and watch the devil flee from us.  
This is what God wants us to do, and since we belong to Him, we’d best do it His way.  
After all, Jesus paid the ultimate price for this to be so (Jn. 3.16; Rom. 5.8-10; 1 Jn. 4.9).

*For reflection*

1. How do you prepare to face the temptations you will encounter each day?
2. When temptation does come, how do you deal with it?
3. How can believers help one another to flee immorality of every kind?

*Paul does not say that we are under compulsion but that we have been bought—and bought with a great price, reminding us of the way in which our salvation was obtained. John Chrysostom (344-407), Homilies on the Epistles of Paul to the Corinthians 18.3*

*Pray Psalm 32.3-11.*

Thank God for His forgiveness. Pray that He will teach you how to live according to His Word and that He will fill you with gladness in doing so.

*Sing Psalm 32.3-11.*

(Hendon: *Take My Life and Let It Be*)

When in silence I remained, groaning in my sinful pain,  
You Your hand upon me lay; all my strength You drained away,  
all my strength You drained away.

I confessed my sin to You; You forgave me, ever true!  
Let confession’s pleading sound reach You while You may be found,  
reach You while You may be found!

When flood waters threaten me, You my hiding place will be.  
O’er them I will rise above, buoyed by Your redeeming love,  
buoyed by Your redeeming love.

Teach me, LORD, how I should live; sound instruction ever give.  
Let me never stubborn be; let Your eye watch over me,

let Your eye watch over me.

Though the wicked wail and weep, they rejoice whose souls You keep.  
Trusting, we exult with praise, joyfully singing all our days,  
joyfully singing all our days!

## 7 Bodies in Motion

*Pray Psalm 84.1-4.*

How lovely *is* Your tabernacle,  
O LORD of hosts!  
My soul longs, yes, even faints  
For the courts of the LORD;  
My heart and my flesh cry out for the living God.  
Even the sparrow has found a home,  
And the swallow a nest for herself,  
Where she may lay her young—  
*Even* Your altars, O LORD of hosts,  
My King and my God.  
Blessed *are* those who dwell in Your house;  
They will still be praising You.  
*Selah*

*Sing Psalm 84.1-4.*

(Holy Manna: *Brethren, We Have Met to Worship*)

LORD of hosts, how sweet Your dwelling; how my soul longs for Your courts!  
Let my soul with joy keep telling of Your grace forevermore.  
Like a bird upon the altar, let my life to You belong.  
Blessed are they who never falter as they praise Your grace with song!

*Review 1 Corinthians 6.1-20; meditate on verses 13-20.*

*Preparation*

1. How does Paul teach us to think about our bodies?
2. How is it that our bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit? What makes this so?

*Meditation*

An important truth is hidden away in these verses, which, if we miss it, we miss the real nature of the Christian faith.

Our passage begins and ends with a call to serve and glorify God with our bodies. Our bodies, Paul says, are “for the Lord” (v. 13); therefore, we must be diligent to “glorify God” in our bodies (v. 20). We offer ourselves daily as living sacrifices to the Lord, to be pleasing in His sight, purified of all sin, and ready to go as a sweet aroma of Jesus to the world. As our bodies go into motion for the Lord, seeking His glory in all things, we will naturally follow Jesus’ lead, walking as He did and not according to our “old leaven” way of life. This is what it means to devote our bodies to the Lord and direct and use them for the Lord and His glory in everything we do (1 Cor. 10.31).

But notice also that Paul says that the Lord is “for the body.” The Lord works from within our bodies to make us willing and able to know His pleasure in all we do (Phil. 2.13). The Spirit of God has taken up residence in our bodies, making them temples of the Lord; and He works to teach, convict, transform, and empower us so that we *can* follow Jesus and glorify God *in our bodies*. We do not depend on our own strength but on God, Who is *in* us and *for* us always.

God is for us, friends! He wants the best for us, body and soul. Let’s make sure that our souls are pure before our bodies go into motion, for if we do, we’ll know God is with us and for us to bring glory to Himself and righteousness, peace, and joy in the Spirit to us.

*Treasures Old and New: Matthew 13.52; Psalm 119.162*

“LORD, who may abide in Your tabernacle?  
Who may dwell in Your holy hill?  
He who walks uprightly,  
and works righteousness,  
and speaks the truth in his heart;  
he who does not backbite with his tongue,  
nor does evil to his neighbor,  
nor does he take up a reproach against his friend;  
in whose eyes a vile person is despised,  
but he honors those who fear the LORD;  
he who swears to his own hurt and does not change;  
he who does not put out his money at usury,  
nor does he take a bribe against the innocent.  
He who does these things shall never be moved” (Ps. 15.1-5).

“Therefore whoever hears these sayings of Mine, and does them,  
I will liken him to a wise man who built his house on the rock:  
and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew  
and beat on that house; and it did not fall,  
for it was founded on the rock” (Matt. 7.24, 25).

Founded on the Rock and filled with the Holy Spirit, we devote ourselves to God, inside and out, ready to do the Kingdom work assigned for us to do. Knowing that “God is with us and for us to bring glory to Himself and righteousness, peace, and joy in the Spirit to us.”

*For reflection*

1. What does it mean for you to devote your body to the Lord each day?
2. How does it help you knowing that the Lord is *for* your body and all the ways you use it?
3. Your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit. What kind of accommodations is He seeking in you?

*If our body is a member of Christ and Christ has risen from the dead, our body will surely follow his lead.* John Chrysostom (344-407), *Homilies on the Epistles of Paul to the Corinthians 16.2*

*Pray Psalm 84.5-12.*

Pray for the day ahead, that, as you are in motion for the Lord and His glory, His grace will abound to you and spread through you to touch others with His goodness, truth, and love.

*Sing Psalm 84.5-12.*

(Holy Manna: *Brethren, We Have Met to Worship*)

Blessed are they whose strength is founded in Your strength, O LORD above.  
All whose hearts in You are grounded journey in Your strength and love.  
Though they weep with tears of sadness, grace shall all their way sustain.  
In Your Presence, filled with gladness, they shall conquer all their pain.

LORD of hosts, my prayer receiving, hear me, help me by Your grace!  
In Your courts I stand believing; turn to me Your glorious face!  
LORD, our sun, our shield, our glory, no good thing will You deny  
to those who proclaim Your story, and who on Your grace rely.

*Questions for Reflection or Discussion*

1. What did Paul mean by saying that we, the saints of God, will judge the world? What does that require of you each day?
2. What can keep us from devoting our bodies continually to the Lord?
3. What does it mean to glorify God in your body? Give some examples from a typical day.
4. In what sense is God “for the body”, that is, for *our* bodies as we go in motion in the world?
5. What’s the most important lesson you’ve learned from this part of our study of 1 and 2 Corinthians?

*For prayer:*



## The Fellowship of Ailbe

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Thank you.