

You Are Not Your Own

¹Cor 6:1 When one of you has a grievance against another, does he dare go to law before the unrighteous instead of the saints? ²Or do you not know that the saints will judge the world? And if the world is to be judged by you, are you incompetent to try trivial cases? ³Do you not know that we are to judge angels? How much more, then, matters pertaining to this life! ⁴So if you have such cases, why do you lay them before those who have no standing in the church? ⁵I say this to your shame. Can it be that there is no one among you wise enough to settle a dispute between the brothers, ⁶but brother goes to law against brother, and that before unbelievers? ⁷To have lawsuits at all with one another is already a defeat for you. Why not rather suffer wrong? Why not rather be defrauded? ⁸But you yourselves wrong and defraud—even your own brothers!

⁹Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: neither the sexually immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor men who practice homosexuality, ¹⁰nor thieves, nor the greedy, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God. ¹¹And such were some of you. 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.

¹²“All things are lawful for me,” but not all things are helpful. “All things are lawful for me,” but I will not be dominated by anything. ¹³“Food is meant for the stomach and the stomach for food”—and God will destroy both one and the other. The body is not meant for sexual immorality, but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body. ¹⁴And God raised the Lord and will also raise us up by his power. ¹⁵Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ? Shall I then take the members of Christ and make them members of a prostitute? Never! ¹⁶Or do you not know that he who is joined to a prostitute becomes one body with her? For, as it is written, “The two will become one flesh.” ¹⁷But he who is joined to the Lord becomes one spirit with him. ¹⁸Flee from sexual immorality. Every other sin a person commits is outside the body, but the sexually immoral person sins against his own body. ¹⁹Or do you not know that

your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God? You are not your own, ²⁰for you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body.

1 Corinthians 6:1-20

When the Chapter Costs Something

If you want to know *whether a people still believe 1 Corinthians 6*, do not first ask what they write on paper or say with their lips. Ask what they do with the chapter when it costs them something.

Ask it of a “Christian” nation: what happens when, for example, *1 Cor 6:9* is read out loud and the city hears it? In Finland a member of parliament and a Lutheran bishop were put through years of police interrogation and a “*Bible trial*” because a church booklet and a handful of verses such as this said what Christians have always said about the body and human sexuality.¹ In England men have been handcuffed on High Streets for quoting our verse—that the sexually immoral, including those who practice homosexuality, will not inherit the kingdom of God—while officers explain that

¹ Mathew Pink, “[A Matter of Conviction: Finland’s ‘Bible Trial,’](#)” *Blog Action* (June 16, 2026).

such references are “no longer appropriate in modern society.”²

Ask it of a Christian school. While the student catalog can still say homosexual behavior is wrong, the system itself can grant the seminary’s name by accepting a master’s thesis that concludes that 1 Corinthians 6:9 “should not have a definitive role” in the modern question because it is part of a series of “clobber verses,” none of which can speak definitively on the subject because they “do not conceptually align with modern homosexuality,” and worse, are “weaponized” to “condemn same-sex intercourse and LGBTQIA+ people.”³ That is not the city silencing the Christian. That is the Christian schoolhouse taking the verse (and Bible) off its own table.

Ask it of the church. The same verse can be read in a pulpit and simply denied. A politician will say, proudly, that “the Bible does not even mention homosexuality.”⁴ He can say that because a *learned tradition* or the leftist ivory tower has

² For example, Jonathan Ames, “Street Preacher Was Charged with Hate Crime for Quoting Bible at Lesbians,” *The Times* (Dec 2, 2022). Several others have endured the same thing.

³ See for example Taylor Patz, “Μαλακοί and Ἀρσενικοιταῖ in 1 Corinthians 6:9-10: Reception History and Its Applicability to Modern Homosexuality,” Master’s Thesis Bethel University (Seminary), *Spark Repository* (2024).

She groups Gen 19:1–10; Lev 18:22; 20:13; Rom 1:26–27; 1Cor 6:9; and 1Tim 1:9–10 as “clobber verses.”

⁴ See James Talarico, For example, on Stephen Colbert’s show, “For 50 Years...,” Team Talarico [@TeamTalaricoHQ], X (Feb 17, 2026).

taught him the trick: the word [“homosexual”] is modern, therefore no one talked about the act in the ancient world. “Homosexual” and “homosexuality,” we are told, “**are conceptual [identity] constructs of recent time and have no ancient counterparts in any ancient language.**”⁵ Of course identity politics is new. The idea is not. The irony is self-evident: If the thing only exists since 1869 when the word was coined, it cannot also be a nature you were born with in every century.

The sexual revolution is **a rival creed** about creation, the body, judgment, and God. You may bless it. You may celebrate it. You may *not* tell it the truth—and now, in many classrooms and pulpits, you may not even tell the church.

Yet, in spite of this, Paul will not let us answer **any of these three temptations** by pretending that 1 Corinthians **5** does not exist. “**What have I to do with judging outsiders? Is it not those inside the church whom you are to judge? God judges those outside**” (**1Cor 5:12-13**). The apostle is not a chaplain to the empire, here to judge all the pagans on the streets of the city. But he also will not bless a Christian house that keeps **6:9** in the list of rules on the wall while training

⁵ Here’s a good “academic” example. **John Hall Elliott**, “**No Kingdom of God for Softies? or, What Was Paul Really Saying? 1 Corinthians 6:9-10 in Context,**” *Biblical Theology Bulletin* 34.1 (Feb 2004): 17 (online, p. 2).

its children to empty it of all meaning. If your whole ministry is pointing at the world's beds while your own Table is full of greed, slander, and *porneia*, you are not a prophet. You are Corinth with a megaphone. The leaven is still in the lump, and the house still celebrates the Passover.

So we live in a real tension, and most people pick a side so they will not have to feel it. One side hears “God judges those outside” and concludes we should never say that homosexual practice—or adultery, or greed, or idolatry. The other side hears the vice list, takes it to the street as if the passer-by were under church discipline, and cannot name a living elder who would put 1 Corinthians 5 into practice. Paul will not tolerate either. He will preach the list as the truth about wrath, repentance, and washing. He will reserve the sword of discipline for those who claim the Name of Jesus and will not repent.

One House, Two Rooms (1 Cor 6: Context/Structure)

Let's notice the context of the passage we are looking at today. 1 Corinthians 5-6 are not two (or three) topics secured together with duct tape. They form an A-B-A' chiasm of sexual immorality, then lawsuits, then sexual immorality again.

A — Sexual immorality (5)

B — Court litigation (6:1–11)

A' — Sexual immorality (6:12–20)⁶

The flow goes this way: The man with his father's wife *becomes* brothers dragging other brothers before the unrighteous in secular courts *becomes* “the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom,” and “flee sexual immorality,” because “your body is a temple.” Paul did not forget the first subject only to wander into a Perry Mason trial. He put litigation in the middle because in Corinth the courtroom *and the bedroom* were two rooms in the same house attached by a common door: the room of people who will not suffer loss and will not be told they are wrong.

There is a great irony of these chapters. This ancient church ran to the pagan courthouse to win cases against one another but would not judge the sin in its own assembly. It goes even deeper when you put it into a modern context of our world—be it secular lawyers or compromised Christians that now uses courts—and sometimes classrooms and pulpits—to stop the church from saying what 6:9-11 clearly teaches.

Ch. 6 (our focus this time) is much more complicated than the straightforward chiasm of Ch. 5. (While the ESV

⁶ Mark J. Keown, *Discovering the New Testament: An Introduction to Its Background, Theology, and Themes: The Pauline Letters*, vol. II (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2021), 149.

puts a heading break between vv. 11-12, Paul does not wait until verse 12 to change subjects, nor does vs. 12 really take us formally back to Ch. 5.) Verses 1–8 are formally the courthouse and they are a self-contained unit centering on Paul shaming them,⁷ something he says he was not doing just a few verses ago (4:14):

- A. ^{6:1} When one of you has a grievance against another,
- B. does he dare go to law before the unrighteous instead of the saints?
- C. ² Or do you not know that the saints will judge the world?
- D. And if the world is to be judged by you, are you incompetent to try trivial cases?
- C. ³ Do you not know that we are to judge angels?
- D. How much more, then, matters pertaining to this life!
- C. ⁴ [If then ye have judgments
- D. of things pertaining to this life],⁸
- C. set them to judge
- D. who are least esteemed in the church.⁹
- E. ⁵ I speak to your shame.
- D. Is it so, that there is not a wise man among you?
- C. no, not one that shall be able to judge between his brethren?¹⁰
- B. ⁶ but brother goes to law against brother, and that before unbelievers?
- ⁷ To have lawsuits at all with one another is already a defeat for you.
- C. Why not rather suffer wrong?
- C. Why not rather be defrauded?
- A. ⁸ But you yourselves wrong and defraud—even your own brothers!

⁷ I probably got too complicated on how I outlined it, but if you are interested, spend the time looking at all the letter parallels; I think you will see my logic.

⁸ The ESV flattens the parallel by simply summarizing: “So if you have such cases.”

⁹ Again, the ESV flattens the parallel (it also reads the sentence as a question rather than an imperative): why do you lay them before those who have no standing in the church?

¹⁰ The KJV here has two separate sentences, which I like, and the ESV again flattens the word “judge” by saying, “settle a dispute.”

Vs. 9-13 form two independent, differently written structures, yet can also be viewed as part of a single unit:

1 Cor 6:9-13 as Two Distinct Units	1 Cor 6:9-13 as One Unit
A. ⁹ Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? B. Do not be deceived: neither the sexually immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor men who practice homosexuality, ¹⁰ nor thieves, nor the greedy, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God. C. ¹¹ And such were some of you.¹¹ B. But you were <i>washed</i>, you were <i>sanctified</i>, you were <i>justified</i> A. in the name of the <i>Lord Jesus Christ</i> and by the <i>Spirit</i> of our <i>God</i>.	A. ⁹ Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? B. Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, ¹⁰ Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God. C. ¹¹ And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God. B'. ¹² <i>All things are lawful unto me</i>, but all things are not expedient: <i>all things are lawful for me</i>, but I will not be brought under the power of any. A'. ¹³. <i>Meats for the belly, and the belly for meats: but God shall destroy both it and them.</i>
A. ¹² <i>"All things are lawful for me,"</i> B. but not all things are helpful. A'. <i>"All things are lawful for me,"</i> B'. but I will not be dominated by anything. A''. ¹³ <i>"Food is meant for the stomach and the stomach for food"</i> B''. —and God will destroy both one and the other. A'''. <i>The body is not meant for sexual immorality, but for the Lord,</i> B'''. and the Lord for the body.	This is from the Biblical Chiasm Exchange.

¹¹ **Vv. 9-11** also form a chiasm and have a five-fold pair of sins that match:

A. ⁹ Or do you not know that the unrighteous	
B. will not inherit the kingdom of God?	
C. Do not be deceived: neither	
<u>Five Sexual Sins</u>	<u>Five Non-Sexual Sins</u>
1a the sexually immoral,	2a ¹⁰ nor thieves,
2b nor idolaters,	2b nor the greedy,
3c nor adulterers,	2c nor drunkards,
4d nor men who practice <i>malakoi</i>	2d nor revilers,
5e and <i>arsenokoitai</i>	2e nor swindlers
B. will inherit the kingdom of God.	
A. ¹¹ And such were some of you.	
<u>Three Results of Grace</u>	<u>Three Persons of the Godhead</u>
Washed	Name of our Lord Jesus Christ
Sanctified	By the Spirit
Justified	Of our God

I first noticed this from Mike Weston, “[1 Corinthians 6:11 Chiasm](#),” *Mike Weston* (April 28, 2015). He also had a video on [1Cor 6:12-20 Chiasm](#) and [1Cor 6:9-11](#).

Meanwhile, vv. 14-20 are very clearly taking us back to Ch. 5 and do it in the form of a wonderful chiasm that centers on Paul's citation of Genesis 2:24.

- A. ¹⁴ And God raised the Lord and will also raise us up by his power.
- B. ¹⁵ Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ?
- C. Shall I then take the members of Christ and make them members of a prostitute? Never!
- D. ¹⁶ Or do you not know that he who is joined to a prostitute becomes one body with her?
- E. For, as it is written, "The two will become one flesh."
- D'. ¹⁷ But he who is joined to the Lord becomes one spirit with him.
- C'. ¹⁸ Flee from sexual immorality. Every other sin a person commits is outside the body, but the sexually immoral person sins against his own body.
- B'. ¹⁹ Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God?
- A'. You are not your own, ²⁰ for you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body.

How does understanding all of this help us in interpretation? It keeps us from treating 6:1–8 as a random legal footnote and 6:12–20 as a new sermon. It shows one house with two rooms—a court and a bed—joined at the door of 6:9–13 at precisely the key theological point, one badly misunderstood or ignored, the theological gospel-text that becomes the only true antidote to fighting any and all sin in our midst.

Non-Judgmental Judgmental Judges (6:1-8)

1Cor 6:1 clearly begins some kind of new line of critique from Ch. 5's "sexual immorality." "When one of you has a grievance against another..." Hearing this, you might recall Jesus saying in the Sermon on the Mount, "If you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that *your brother has something against you*, leave your gift there before the altar and go. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift" (Matt 5:23-24).¹²

What is Jesus' answer to when someone has a grievance against you? The next two verses in Matthew, "*Come to terms quickly with your accuser* while you are going with him to court, lest your accuser hand you over to *the judge*, and the judge to the guard, and you be put in prison. Truly, I say to you, you will never get out until you have paid the last penny" (25-26). Jesus commands brothers to be reconciled to one another, 'else look out. Justice in the world can be brutal.

Paul, on the other hand, is looking at the Corinthian situation and says that when you have a grievance against another, "*Does he dare go to law* before the unrighteous instead of

¹² We are going to see the Sermon on the Mount come up several more times, even as it was hinted at in Ch. 5's judging others language, and I find this particularly amazing, since Matthew hadn't been written yet. This means that *Paul knew about the Sermon on the Mount* without ever having read Matthew's Gospel. Why? Because it was a real sermon that Jesus really preached and his disciples committed it to memory as among the most important things he ever taught. For the connections see the Appendix at the end of the sermon.

the saints” (1Cor 6:1a)? “Unrighteous” is the term *adikōn* (“a” + *dikē* = right, justice, the court’s due). It appears also in vs. 9, with the verbal equivalent also in vv. 7, 8 (“wronged”). So this is the one not in the right, someone unjust.

This is a rhetorical question. The answer is supposed to be, “No! You mustn’t do that.” Do what? Effectively, sue one another. “Go to law” means “go to court.”¹³ What court? The secular court, the court of the city of Corinth.¹⁴

He then says that you go to the unrighteous “instead of the saints,” and this connects back to Ch. 5 when they are gathered together to cast out the man committing incest. The local church has both the authority—and more importantly, the wisdom from God—not merely to cast out,

¹³ The word is a form of the verb *krinō*: “to judge.” And it is used throughout the first six verses:

V.	Greek	Form	ESV	KJV
6:1	κρίνεσθαι/ <i>krinesthai</i>	pres mid/pass inf κρίνω	go to law	go to law
6:2	κρινούσιν/ <i>krinousin</i>	fut act ind 3pl	will judge	shall judge
6:2	κρίνεται/ <i>krinetai</i>	pres mid/pass ind3 sg	is to be judged	shall be judged
6:2	κριτηρίων/ <i>kritēriōn</i>	gen pl of κριτήριον	trivial cases	judgments (of the smallest matters)
6:3	κρινόμεν/ <i>krinoumen</i>	fut act ind 1 pl	are to judge	shall judge
6:4	κριτήρια/ <i>kritēria</i>	acc pl of κριτήριον	such cases	judgments (things pertaining to this life)
6:5	διακρίναι/ <i>diakrinai</i>	aor act inf of διακρίνω	settle a dispute	judge
6:6	κρίνεται/ <i>krinetai</i>	pres mid/pass ind 3 g	goes to law	goeth to law

¹⁴ This is something different even from the court Jesus had in mind in ancient Israel which was still Jewish and—one would have hoped—rooted in the Torah. The Greek courts were theoretically far worse—(though tell that to Jesus and the Apostles).

but to settle disputes between its members before things ever get that far.

He then backs this up with vv. 2-3 (which is a two-part ABA'B' parallel; see above). “Or do you not know that the saints will *judge the world*?” and again, “Do you not know that we are to *judge angels*.” The world and angels are being judged by Christians? Paul just said, “*God judges those outside [the church]*” (1Cor 5:13). But now he says *we will judge the world*? Is that a contradiction?

No, because he has two cases with two very different time periods of judging in mind. In Ch. 5, they wanted to *hypocritically* judge the world ... *now*. It is God’s job to judge the world now—in Providence—not theirs. In Ch. 6, they want the world to judge *each other* now. Paul says that *in the future*—on Judgment Day—you will judge the world.

He asks them the question *as if they should know*. But how could they, unless he had told them? Perhaps because they had the Scripture. Daniel 7:22, 27 was long understood to be talking about the saints of the Most High being given the gavel as they inherit the kingdom. Hence, Wisdom 3:8 says, “*They will judge nations.*”¹⁵ Jesus himself puts it this

¹⁵ Also Jub 24:29; Sirach 4:11, 15; 1En 1:9, 38; 38:5; 95:3; 96:1; 98:12; 108:12; 1QpHab V, 4–5. See Roy E. Ciampa and Brian S. Rosner, “1 Corinthians,” in *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI; Nottingham, UK: Baker Academic; Apollos, 2007), 711.

way that the Twelve sit judging the twelve tribes ([Matt 19:28](#); [Luke 22:30](#)). And in [Rev 2:26-27](#) he says to the one who conquers “[I will give authority over the nations.](#)” So this is not a new teaching.

But what’s this bit about [angels](#)? Scholars say it’s difficult to know, but perhaps it comes from something like 1 Enoch 13-16 where Enoch is sent to judge the Watchers and other evil spirits.¹⁶ I don’t think Paul has Enoch in mind so much as [a biblical worldview](#). In this chapter he will call them “[brothers](#)” four times ([6:5–8](#)). This is “family” language. In the rest of Paul that family is the family *of sons*. “[Sons of God](#)” is divine-council language. The older sons (the heavenly sons of God) fell; they are judged; the younger sons (that is human believers/saints)—adopted in the Son of God—take their place on the council as his brothers. That is the story Hebrews 2 tells with Psalm 8. We were diminished below the angels for a little while, then crowned.¹⁷

The reason he mentions this [isn’t for a DCW podcast](#). It is for the twin pair that comes after each, “[And if the world](#)

¹⁶ Cf., [Joseph A. Fitzmyer](#), *First Corinthians: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, Anchor Yale Bible 32 (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 2008), 252. He also mentions 1En 91:15; 4QEnochc 1 vi 14–15; 4QEnochg 1 iv 22–23.

¹⁷ See [Judson D. Greene](#), “‘For a Little While Loer than the Angels’ (Ps 8,6): Humanity’s Temporary Inferiority in Hebrews 2,7,” *ZNW* 115 (2024): 229–48; [Douglas Van Dorn](#), “Hebrews 2:2 and the Message Declared by Angels” (2024). For more on judging angels see my friend [Anthony Delgado](#), “[Do You Not Know That We Will Judge Angels](#),” [AnthonyDelgado.net](#) (Mar 17, 2025).

is to be judged by you, *are you incompetent to try trivial cases?*” (2b). And again, “How much more, then, *matters pertaining to this life!*” (3b). Ligonier sums it up perfectly, “If at the last day we will be able to judge angels, surely we can settle minor issues among ourselves today instead of bringing them before an unbelieving world.”¹⁸

After the diversion into angels, Paul continues the apostolic rebuke. I’m reading from the KJV, “If then ye have judgments of things pertaining to this life, set them to judge who are least esteemed in the church” (4). I wanted you to hear the term “judge” in the verse before reading the ESV which makes it a little more understandable, “So if you have such cases, why do you lay them before those who have no standing in the church?” But the key is judging. They should be making proper judgments. “The spiritual person judges all things, but is himself to be judged by no one” (2:15). Instead, in line with the same kind of evil judgment they made over Paul (4:3), and the lack of judgment over the immoral brother (5:1), they now hand one another over to pagan courts who don’t even know God.

The center of this section is vs. 5 (KJV), “I speak this to your shame.” This is in contrast to 4:14’s, “I do not write

¹⁸ Ligonier Ministries, “[Judging Angels](#),” *Tabletalk* (Mar 1, 2021).

these things to make you ashamed.” Now he is. It is in fact biblically appropriate to sometimes shame others. Not for the sake of pure humiliation; but for correction and training in righteousness. Our shameless culture needs to learn the importance of this, badly. He is absolutely flabbergasted that this could be the situation in the church, because it is absurd, and because it shows a total lack of awareness of their own future judgment. Everything is backwards at Corinth.

His tone now changes. “Is it so, that there is not a wise man among you?” The sarcasm begins to drip out again. “No, not one that shall be able to judge between his brethren?” (5). This is the church that split over wisdom when Paul sarcastically said, “You are wise in Christ.” Now the same word comes back as verbal slap in the face: You are so wise that you can’t produce a single wise man to sit between two brothers?

Instead, “Brother goes to law against brother, and that before unbelievers? To have lawsuits at all with one another is already a defeat for you” (6-7). Why a defeat? Because this is *not* how people of the Kingdom of God are supposed to behave. Do you remember this from the Sermon on the Mount? “And if anyone would sue you and take your tunic, let him have your cloak as well” (Matt 5:40). Paul says the same

thing, because he is Jesus' Apostle, sent to deliver his words. "Why not rather suffer wrong? Why not rather be defrauded" (1Cor 6:7b). Instead, he concludes, "You yourselves wrong and defraud—even your own brothers." He's blatantly calling out another sin. These saints are swindling one another and then suing each other.

Washed Unrighteous (6:9–11)

He therefore moves to the key theology of the entire two chapters. This is vv. 9-11. It begins, "Or do you not know..." He has just said that twice (vs. 2, 3). This "do you not know" is directly related the others! Don't you know you will judge the world and angels? But this time, he's scolding them. He says, "Do you not know the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God?" There's our word *unrighteous* again. And it creates a huge irony. You are handing each other over to the unrighteous to judge you. But they will not inherit the kingdom; they will be judged by you!

So why ask whether they know this or not? This is not a new teaching, nor is it some perverted teaching from Paul that goes against our Lord. Remember what Jesus says again in his Sermon, "Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,'

will enter the kingdom of heaven, but the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven” (Matt 7:21; cf. 5:3, 10, 19-20). You aren’t born a Christian and just aping words doesn’t make you one. You must be born again.

Let’s focus on what it means to be “unrighteous.” He defines it. He lists ten sins—that’s an interesting number! They are grouped into two pairs of five.

5:11 (do not even eat with)	6:9–10 (will not inherit)	
sexually immoral — πόρνος (<i>pornos</i>)	sexually immoral — πόρνοι (<i>pornoi</i>)	5 Sexual Sins
idolater — ειδωολάτρης (<i>eidōlōlatrēs</i>)	idolaters — ειδωολάτραι (<i>eidōlōlatrai</i>)	
—	adulterers — μοιχοί (<i>moichoi</i>)	
—	soft men — μαλακοί (<i>malakoi</i>)	
—	men-bedders — ἀρσενοκοῖται (<i>arsenokoitai</i>)	
—	thieves — κλέπται (<i>kleptai</i>)	5 non-sexual sins
greedy — πλεονέκτης (<i>pleonektēs</i>)	greedy — πλεονέκται (<i>pleonektai</i>)	
drunkard — μέθυσος (<i>methysos</i>)	drunkards — μέθυσοι (<i>methysoi</i>)	
reviler — λοῖδορος (<i>loidoros</i>)	revilers — λοῖδοροι (<i>loidoroi</i>)	
swindler — ἄρπαξ (<i>harpax</i>)	swindlers — ἄρπαγες (<i>harpages</i>)	

The first five cover various forms of sexual sin. The first is *porneia*. This is that general word we saw last time for “sexual immorality” of just about any kind. Then *eidōlōlatrai*, idolatry. You might say, how is that a sexual sin? Because idolatry is a form of spiritual *adultery* (cf. Jer 3:9; Ezek 23:37; etc.)! In 10:7-8 Paul will say don’t be “idolaters” because 23,000 fell in Israel in one day because of *porneia*. This is the

bed plus the calf. Next is *moichoi*—*adulterers*. This is the physical counterpart to idolatry.

Now, if you are reading the ESV, you might think there is only one more in the list. “Men who practice homosexuality.” But while I fully agree with the theology of this translation, it is not technically precise and it is very important to be so. There are actually *two words*. You can see this in the KJV for example: *effeminate* and *abusers of themselves with mankind*, the older Geneva’s archaic *wātons* and *bouggerers*, or the NKJV’s *homosexuals* and *sodomites*. The first word is *malakoi*. It literally means “soft.” The moral relativists of our day will argue that this word has no fixed meaning in the interpretation of it.¹⁹ No one knows, and so the word is useless.

But the word is not useless and it absolutely means something. The instinct of the ESV is good, because it is deliberately paired with the second word which means “the active male partner who take the former to bed.”²⁰ Therefore, the first word means, “effeminate males who play the role of females in male homosexual intercourse.” This is not talking

¹⁹ Does it mean morally weak, effeminate in manner, a boy-prostitute, an “unmanly man” (all ancient), unchastity, a masturbator, wantons, abusers (all medieval redefinitions), homosexuals, male prostitutes (modern words), or what?

²⁰ Robert A. J. Gagnon, *The Bible and Homosexual Practice: Texts and Hermeneutics* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2001), 349. See esp. 310-12, 325-30.

about a disposition or psychology, but the *two roles* they play in the bed together.

The second word (*arsenokoitai*) is the key. It does not appear in ancient Greek, but is almost certainly a word **coined by Paul himself**. And where he gets the idea from is the vital point. The LXX of **Lev 18:22** refers says, *meta arsenos ou koimēthēsē*, “**You shall not lie with a male as with a woman; it is an abomination.**” “Lie with a male” is our two words that Paul contracts to form a new word. It is literally then **a male-bedder**. So the other word is the partner. What’s really important about this is how Paul in **5:1** began this entire discussion by citing *this same chapter in Leviticus* about the man lying with his mother (**20:11**). He’s never left that chapter. He has Moses clear reference to homosexual behavior explicitly in mind—even if our word wasn’t coined until the 19th c.

But these are **only the first five** in the list. The next list is non-sexual sins. Four of them are found in the previous chapter. The first is **greedy** (*plenonektai*). This is a state of the heart that turns outward to harm others. These are people who must always have more. They are never satisfied with what they have.

Methysoi are **drunkards**. This is not the man who once had too much at a wedding, but the one whose family,

work, and Sunday face are organized around hiding the bottle and calling it stress. The Bible has much to say about being a drunkard and a lot of it has to do with how he destroys everything he touches. “Be not among drunkards; the drunkard and the glutton will come to poverty” (Prov 23:20-21; cf. 23:29-35; 31:4-5; Isa 5:11, 22; Luke 21:34; 1Th 5:6-8; Tit 1:7; 2:3; 1Pe 4:3; etc.).

Loidoroi are revilers. If drunkards is *the cup*, this is *the mouth* that tears a brother apart in public, the member who never misses a gathering and never misses a chance to cut a brother in the foyer, the group text, or the “concerned” email that is really a public flaying.

Harpages are snatchers—swindlers who seize what is not theirs by force or sharp practice. This is the professing brother who “helps” widows with paperwork, deals, and loans until the money has gone into his pockets all while calling it shrewdness. Each of these were also to be barred from the Lord’s Table according to ch. 5!

But Paul adds one to make the list a full ten. It is in some ways the complement to swindling. This is the *kleptai*. You can hear it: thieves. These also steal things from others that do not belong to them. Why add this? Because he has just said, “you yourselves wrong and defraud” (6:8). *They* are

thieves. The first four were already in the house. Thieves is the lawsuit chapter now making the list. These, Paul reiterates, “**will not inherit the kingdom of God**” (10b).

Now let's think about **the implications of this**, because it is perhaps the most important thing we can do with this chapter. These Corinthians *are* tolerating *porneia*. We know this for a fact. Paul has just said that many of them *are* currently suing one another as thieves. And there is no way he added the other eight without having specific people in his mind as well. This is all **present tense** stuff. They *are* doing these things. *Right now*. This is **unrighteousness**. Yet, Paul has said the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God. The implication is stunning and it absolutely carries over today with some of these sins in the minds of many Christians. If *you do* this or that sin (but usually not all of them, of course, as we pick and choose!), *you will* not inherit the kingdom of God.

Remember the name **Matthew Shephard**, the gay University of Wyoming student back in 1998? According to the *Wiki*, on the night of October 6, 1998, Shepard was approached by Aaron McKinney and Russell Henderson at the Fireside Lounge in Laramie; all three men were in their early 20s. McKinney and Henderson offered to give Shepard a

ride home. They subsequently drove to a remote rural area and proceeded to rob, beat, tie him to a fence, and leave him for dead. He died several days later in a Fort Collins hospital. Make what you want about the story. I bring it up because of what followed.

At the funeral, members of the [Westboro Baptist Church](#), in Topeka, KS—led by pastor Fred Phelps—showed up protesting with signs that said, “[Matt in Hell](#)” and “[God Hates Fags \[them\]](#)” (to this day, their website is www.godhatesfags.com). This deeply confused way of combating a real sin could take hours of discussion.²¹

Phelps repeatedly [said that homosexuals cannot be saved](#).²² But look at what *Paul* says next about the very things that the Corinthians themselves *are presently* partaking in. “[And such were some of you.](#)” “*Were,*” *ēte*, the imperfect

²¹ What really makes me mad is that Phelps’ church was a Primitive Baptist Calvinist TULIP church—not confessional in any sense, very hyper-Calvinist, the mean and nasty kind, but which gives us all Calvinists a bad name.

²² [Michael Foust](#), “[Night & Day: The Difference Between Southern Baptists & Fred Phelps](#),” *Baptist Press* (March 31, 2003). To be fair, Phelps said *our passage* is not referring to what he calls “fags.” That’s how he gets out of the implications I’m about to share—by saying, “[I don’t say that everybody who’s ever had a rare, sporadic or occasional experience – that they were ashamed of, that they somehow got trapped into it as part of their loose living – I don’t say that every one of them is in that category ... What I’m saying is that those that are what they call ‘in the life’ \[cannot be saved\].](#)” But in doing this, he is just as guilty of imputing modern identity categories onto homosexual sins as any liberal is doing. The passage doesn’t say “in the life.” It simply talks about the act itself, just like the act of stealing, played-out greed, or any reviling—which he conveniently doesn’t have a word to speak about.

active indicative of *eimi*, “to be.” This refers to a past state, what you used *to be*. They *are doing*; yet they *were these things*.

Let me explain this using the **modern identity politics** as a foil. Today, the ongoing sexual de-evolution *identifies itself as the sin*. Someone says, “**I am a homosexual.**” “**I am a trans non-gendered non-binary he/she.**” Or whatever. “**Am**” is **the language of being**. It is what you are. But they are not identifying *as humans*, which *is* what they actually *are*. They are identifying *as actions*, according to what they *do*. Doing is not being. Doing is a performance. You can do it or not do it. You can’t stop doing “human.” You can stop “doing” these acts.

I don’t know if people identified *as* their sins 2,000 years ago like people do today. But what Paul is saying is that you, Christian, are not identified as your sin. **There is no such thing as a homosexual-Christian**. There is just “Christian.” There were people at Corinth that *were doing* homosexual sins, as well as greedy sins, reviling sins, thievery sins.

But what they *are is* (to verbs of “to be”) *Christians*. Look at what he says. “**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**” (**1Cor 6:11**). He gives three verbs, all in the aorist tense to speak about **completed action**.

Washed—that is cleaned from the inside out. *Sanctified*—the word he used at the opening of the letter—set apart as holy. *Justified*, that is declared not guilty even though you are presently a sinner. God doesn't see you as these acts. He sees you as washed, sanctified, and justified.

These three acts are performed by the Triune God? The three verbs go with the three persons: *In the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ*. This is who they were washed, sanctified, and justified into. *By the Spirit*. The *Holy Spirit* is who did the washing, sanctifying, and justifying. *Of God*—the *Father*. This is who ordained it all to come to pass. The three members of the holy Trinity working in perfect harmony to turn people who *were* one thing into people who *are* another thing. That's being language, not doing language.

The good news is that if you are in Christ, *even if you act one way, God counts you another*. God sees you as another. This is *grace*. This is *the gospel*. This is not of yourself. This is the gift of God. It is for his glory to do this for you—you who are a sinner, whether it be one of these acts or any of a thousand others that are sin. God does not view you as a sinner.

He views people *not in Christ* as sinners, because they are unforgiven. They want no atonement for them. Of course,

these people often do *think of themselves* as *being their sins*. And since they won't repent of them, they identify as them in order to justify in their minds why they do the things they do. They won't have God's grace. They don't want his forgiveness. So, he leaves them to their own corrupt nature to do the things that ought not be done (**Rom 1:18ff**). In this sense they become what they do (or as Greg Beale puts it, as what they are doing is really just an act of worship, they become what they worship). If this is what you *are*, then you won't inherit the kingdom. Not because they do those things, but because that's what they have become. For those things are not part of the kingdom of God.

The Corinthians *are not* those things; they are *doing* those things. This prove that *doing* any one of these things is *not unforgivable*. *God's grace reaches to the depths of any and all sin*, conquering, humbling, killing and raising to life a new creation when all there was before was death and chaos and rot and ugliness. That's the Gospel. Jesus died for sin. Which sin? All sin. His death is sufficient to cover any and all.

This is *received through an act of faith, knowing* that God sent his Son for you, *believing* that Jesus is the Lord, *trusting* that his death pays the penalty your sin deserves, and *delighting* in the forgiveness and freedom from bondage

that you sorely desire. Faith receives these things as true. It is passive. It is the gift of God that comes through the proclamation that Christ loves you and died for you. This is the meaning of the salvation Paul is trying to get these nasty little people to remember! Have you remembered what Christ saved you from? Have you trusted in him for forgiveness?

Lawful Bodies, Bought Temple (6:12-20)

This takes us to the **third movement** of the chapter. Now that he has given them the gospel, he needs to return to **the remedy** for their current behavior. His remedy isn't to protest them with signs. It is to show them the law on this side of having trusted Christ. It is **the third use of the law**—the use that, because of God's grace in the gospel of salvation, leads us into right and holy living.

“**All things are lawful for me**” (12), he says. What does this mean? Is Paul saying that as a Christian he is now free to commit any sin? Likely not, unless perhaps he has in mind something like Martin Luther said when asked by a student, “**Brother Martin, if what you are saying is true then we may do anything we want,**” he replied, “**Yes. Now what do you**

want?”²³ This sounds very familiar to Paul in Romans, “Where sin increased, grace abounded all the more ... so that grace also might reign” (Rom 5:20-21). Or again, “You are not under law but under grace” (Rom 6:14). That’s the “all things are lawful for me” part.

But then he immediately responds, “What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin that grace may abound? By no means!” (Rom 6:1-2). Or again, “What then? Are we to sin because we are not under law but under grace? By no means!” (15). I think Paul is thinking of the Corinthians as he is writing this part of Romans, since it literally fits their attitude perfectly, and that’s where he is writing the Romans from.²⁴ This makes it quite likely that “All things are lawful for me” is actually a Corinthian proverb that they had coined or taken out of context after Paul founded their church (that’s why it is in quotes in the ESV). Blomberg points out that this begins a pattern that will frequently recur throughout the rest of the letter – quoting a Corinthian

²³ See Michael S. Horton, *The Law of Perfect Freedom: Relating to God and Others through the Ten Commandments* (Chicago: Moody Publishers, 1993), 263. This saying may be apocryphal.

²⁴ Phoebe of Cenchreae carries the letter (Rom 16:1-2). Cenchreae is Corinth’s eastern port. Gaius is Paul’s host and sends greeting (16:23). Paul baptized him at Corinth (1Cor 1:14). Erastus is the city treasurer (Rom 16:23). 2Tim 4:20 says Erastus stayed in Corinth.

slogan to give it a limited endorsement, but then immediately qualifying it.²⁵

How does Paul qualify that claim? Not by saying it isn't true in *some* sense, but by saying, “**But not all things are helpful.**” Again, “**All things are lawful for me**” (I hear it now with a tone of sarcasm again), “**but I will not be dominated by anything.**” It isn't that they take grace too far—that isn't possible. It's that they fail to understand **what grace does** to a Christian. And this is the key thing to understand as he moves his point forward. It is grave danger to not understand grace, because it could mean that you have not yet received it in the first place.

He **quotes one more proverb.** “**Food is meant for the stomach and the stomach for food**” (13). This could be another Corinthian saying or a popular saying throughout Greece—especially in more stoic circles. It means something like **the body is just an appetite machine**: food belongs in the stomach; the stomach belongs to food. It's like a fuel and a tank. It represents the way God made living creatures in this present age and the purpose of both will be “destroyed” by

²⁵ **Craig Blomberg**, *1 Corinthians*, The NIV Application Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1994), 125. He says, “**These Corinthian slogans (here the three sayings of verses 12–13 which the NIV encloses with quotation marks) all share four characteristics: (a) they are short, pithy, and proverbial; (b) they reflect the libertine wing of the church; (c) Paul himself could have conceivably uttered them in some specific context; and (d) apart from that context they were so misleading that abuse was almost inevitable.**”

God when this age comes to an end, Paul concludes (“and God will destroy both one and the other”).

Think about this in light of something like Romans 14, which is about matters **indifferent** (Gk: *adiaphora*) and actually has **food** as one of the examples, concluding, “The kingdom of God is not eating and drinking” (Rom 14:17). He will tell the Corinthians this very thing in 1Cor 8:8, “Food will not commend us to God. We are no worse off if we do not eat, and no better off if we do.” So just like in the previous two proverbs, they got something right. We are not under law, but under grace. And eating various foods isn’t a matter to fight over.

What they **didn’t get right** is their *application* of **things indifferent vs. sexual immorality**. Paul says in the next breath, “The body is not meant for *porneia*, but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body” (6:13b). The stomach is meant for food and food for the body ... *the body is meant* for the Lord and the Lord for the body. In other words, **your body belongs to him**, not yourself to do whatever you want.

He adds a little theology, “And God raised the Lord and will also raise us up by his power” (14). This previews all of 1 Corinthians 15. This resurrection means that God still cares about the body in the age-to-come. Which body? *Our*

body, not some brand new shell unrelated to who we are. But rather, **the physical definition of who we are**. He will make the body new.

“**Do you not know...**” (the fourth time he has said this) “... **your bodies are member of Christ?**” (15a). In other words, your body is Christ’s body played out corporately in the church. Think about the adultery part of Jesus’ Sermon on the Mount. Adultery is a body-problem; better to lose a “**member**” than the whole body go to **Gehenna** (i.e. be destroyed; **Matt 5:27-30**).

Next, comes **a specific example**, “**Shall I then take the members of Christ and make them members of a prostitute [pornē]? Never!**” (1Cor 6:15). It is tempting, giving that Paul will talk about our bodies as “temples” in a moment, to think that the prostitution in mind could be coming from the Acrocorinth and the worship of the **goddess Aphrodite** up on the hill. But there is little evidence of this in first century and Paul does not use the word for a temple prostitute (*hierodoulai* or *hetairai*). Furthermore, we have no hint that these people were deliberately worshiping Jesus and the gods together, which is what temple prostitution would demand. Their sin is more sophisticated sin than that! He uses **the normal word** that fits with *porneia* more generally. So

that's what is likely in view.²⁶ Think East Colfax. He summarizes the point in **vs. 16**, “Or do you not know that he who is joined to a prostitute becomes one body with her?” How could that possibly happen?

Paul adds **the center of this chiasm**. It is a proof-text from **Genesis 2:24**, “For, as it is written, ‘The two will become one flesh.’” The Sermon on the Mount next talks about divorce and remarriage (**31-32**) and when Matthew comes back to this in ch. 19, he cites this same verse in Genesis (**19:5**). This is what the Corinthians and many today who play games with sex fail to realize and it gets to **the power of sex** that I talked about last time—especially its **power to destroy**. When a man and woman are joined together, they become one flesh. This is something that happens in the spiritual realm and there's nothing that can undo this, except death. Think about the ramifications of this for prostitution, adultery, rape, casual sex, you name it. Not only do we have many people that are one flesh with dozens or hundreds of others, but in the church, they are now uniting the members of Christ himself to those he is not joined to. This is sacrilege, perverted, and deeply unholy.

²⁶ See **Barbette Stanley Spaeth**, “[Paul, Prostitutes, and the Cult of Aphrodite in Corinth](#),” *BAR* (Spring 2023): 65-68.

He explains the spiritual point. “But he who is joined to the Lord becomes *one spirit* with him” (1Cor 6:17). It is a real invisible spiritual union that is created through faith in Christ, just like worshiping the gods through idols creates a spiritual union with those entities. Joining bodies is not the moral equivalent of putting food in a stomach. People don’t think about this because it is invisible. Yet, it is very real.

Paul’s “never” now becomes, “Flee from sexual immorality.” This sounds like Proverbs and lingering near the strange woman (Prov 5-7). It sounds like Joseph who fled Potiphar’s wife (Gen 39:12), something that became “Flee, therefore, fornication, my children” (in the Testament of Reuben 5:5). This is Jesus’ “If your right eye or hand causes you to sin, cut it off.” Don’t negotiate with lust. Separate from it.

Why? He says, “Every other sin a person commits is outside the body, but the sexually immoral person sins against his own body” (1Cor 6:18b). Paul isn’t saying that something like gluttony or drunkenness doesn’t use the body. He is saying that *porneia* does something to the body as a self. It turns his own body into the instrument and the place of a false one-flesh.

Thus he adds a fifth, “*Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God?*” (19). This is the equivalent of Jesus saying that he would destroy the temple in three days ... that temple was his body (John 2:19-21; 1:14). In the OT, the Holy Spirit indwelt the tabernacle and temple. Today, he indwells Christians. For we are his temple. Even secular people today talk about their bodies as temples. How much more should Christians?

Therefore, “*You are not your own, for you were bought with a price*” (19b-20). This is what the entire two chapters have been leading towards. With the conclusion, “*So glorify God in your body.*”

We asked a question of a nation, of a school, of a church. The magistrate does not want 1Cor 6:9 read in the street. The seminary will grant a degree to a thesis that guts the verse of all meaning. The pulpit will say the Bible never mentioned the thing the vice list named. And some would rather picket than put a brother out of the meal.

Paul will not let any of those have the last word. He will not let us judge the world as if we had no house to clean. He will not let us clean the house by pretending the list is a

“clobber verse.” He walks the unrighteous from the courthouse to the kingdom and then he breaks them: *such were some of you. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified.*

That is the gospel. Not “I *am* this.” I *was*. The body is not a stomach. It is not yours. It is a member of Christ, a temple of the Spirit, bought with a price. That is why the church must recover again the vital word of these two chapters. *Flee porneia* and all sin that is a vice of the world. Suffer wrong rather than drag a brother before the unrighteous. Glorify God in your body. That’s how you find out whether a people still believe 1 Corinthians 6—not by what they put on a website, but by whether they will still say the past tense out loud, and then live as if it were actually true.

Appendix: The Sermon on the Mount in 1 Corinthians 1-6

Sermon on the Mount	1 Corinthians 1-6
Matt 5:3, 6. Poor in spirit; hunger and thirst	4:8-11. “Already rich... kings”; we hunger and thirst
Matt 5:11-12. Reviled and persecuted	4:12-13. When reviled, we bless; persecuted, we endure
Matt 5:13. Salt thrown out	5:6-13. Leaven out; purge the evil person
Matt 5:14-16. Light that cannot be hidden	4:9. Spectacle to the world, to angels, and to men
Matt 5:22. Anger w/ <i>brother</i> liable to the council	6:6-8. Brother vs brother; you wrong your brothers
Matt 5:25-26. Brother has something against you	6:1. One of you has a grievance against another
Matt 5:40. Give up your cloak	6:7. Why not rather be wronged / defrauded
Matt 5:27-30. L Lust; lose a member not the body	6:15-20. Members of Christ; flee <i>porneia</i> ; sin against one's body
Matt 5:31-32. Marriage and one-flesh (19:5)	6:16. “The two will become one flesh”
Matt 5:38-42. Do not resist; extra mile	6:7. Already a defeat to have lawsuits at all
Matt 6:4, 6, 18. Hidden will be rewarded/revealed	4:5. Things hidden in darkness; purposes of the heart
Matt 6:24. Cannot serve two masters	6:12. I will not be dominated by anything
Matt 7:1-5. J Judge not; log/speck; you will see	4:3-5; 5:12-13; 6:2-5. Judging
Matt 7:6. Holy things not to dogs	5:9-13. Do not eat w/ so-called brother; God judges outsiders
Matt 7:21-23. No kingdom for lawless “Lord, Lord”	6:9-10. The <i>adikoi</i> will not inherit the kingdom
Matt 7:24-27. Wise man builds on the rock	3:10-15. Foundation; what is built will be tested by fire

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