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## Bible Knowledge Commentary - 1 Cor 6:1-11

### B. Failure to Resolve Personal Disputes ([6:1-11](#))

#### [6:1](#)

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#### B. Failure to resolve personal disputes ([6:1-11](#))

The topic of judgment continued as Paul shifted to another disorder afflicting the Corinthian church. The same laxity in dealing with the immoral brother was found in cases of personal disputes between members which the church refused to adjudicate. It was yet another manifestation of the divisive spirit which racked the congregation.

With the introductory phrase “Do you not know,” Paul pointed toward certain truths which should have prevented the problem in the first place. The phrase recurs six times in this chapter alone. (Outside this letter this construction appears only three other times in the NT.) Paul had used it before ([3:16](#); [5:6](#)) and would subsequently use it again ([9:13](#), [24](#)) to the same effect. The implication that they should have known these things must have painfully hit home to a church enamored with its own wisdom and knowledge.

**6:1.** Paul’s chagrin about this issue was great, not only because it further divided the church, but also because it hindered the work of God among the non-Christians in Corinth (cf. [10:32](#)). Those related by faith needed to settle their disputes like brothers, not adversaries (cf. [Gen. 13:7-9](#)).

#### [6:2](#)

**6:2.** The first of six **do you not know** phrases in this chapter (cf. [vv. 3](#), [9](#), [15-16](#), [19](#)) concerned the role of saints in judging (cf. [John 5:22](#); [Rev. 3:21](#)). Paul had probably taught this doctrine in Corinth in the course of his founding the church there, since he cited it as an indisputable proposition.

#### [6:3](#)

**6:3.** Since they were going to judge supernatural beings (the fallen **angels**, 2 Peter [2:4](#); [Jude 6](#)), surely they should handle mundane matters satisfactorily.

#### [6:4](#)

**6:4.** The form of the Greek word (kāthizete, **appoint**) may be a statement (indicative) or a command (imper.). The niv has taken it as a command, making the difficult phrase **men of little account** refer to those in the church not too highly esteemed for their “wisdom”; but Paul considered them more than adequate for the task.

“Appoint” may be indicative (and therefore a question; see alternate trans. in marg.) which seems more likely in view of [verse 5](#). If so, the participle translated “men of little account” would be better rendered “men who have no standing” **in the church**, that is, non-Christians. The sad refrain of [verse 1](#) to which Paul would refer yet a third time in [verse 6](#) was thus heard again.

## [6:5-6](#)

**6:5-6.** No doubt the statement in [verse 5](#) reddened some of the **wise** Corinthians' faces. Certainly a part of Paul's concern in this issue was the harmful effect such legal wrangling would have on the cause of the gospel in Corinth ([9:23](#)). Such lawsuits certainly did not glorify God ([10:31-33](#)).

## [6:7-8](#)

**6:7-8.** Because their greed dishonored God, Paul concluded that the important issue was lost before the case had begun. He therefore said that mundane loss was preferable to the spiritual loss which the **lawsuits** produced. As it was, the Corinthian lawsuits seemed not to have been so much a matter of redressing wrong or seeing justice served as a means for personal gratification at the expense of fellow believers. This was "body life" at its worst!

## [6:9-10](#)

**6:9-10.** Paul's third reminder (**Do you not know...** cf. [yv. 2-3](#)) was probably meant to complement the thought of [verse 4](#), but it also illustrated the gap which existed between the Corinthians' future position and their present practice. **The wicked** would have no share in God's future **kingdom** because they were not related to Christ, the Heir (cf. [Mark 12:7](#)). The wicked would one day be judged by the saints ([1 Cor. 6:2](#)) on the basis of their works ([Rev. 20:13](#)) which would condemn them. Yet the saints were acting no differently.

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The word *adikoi* ("the wicked") in [1 Corinthians 6:9](#) was used in [verse 1](#), there translated "the ungodly." The verb form *adikeite* ("do wrong") however, was used in [verse 8](#) to describe the Corinthians' behavior. Their future role should have radically affected their practice in the present (cf. [1 John 3:3](#)). If they thought otherwise, Paul warned, they were **deceived** (cf. [1 Cor. 5:11](#); [Rev. 21:7-8](#); [22:14-15](#)).

The list of offenders was similar to that noted earlier ([1 Cor. 5:10-11](#)), which no doubt corresponded to problems in Corinth and in other large cities of the day (cf. [Eph. 5:3-6](#)). Homosexuality and male prostitution, for example, were especially characteristic of Greco-Roman society. Plato lauded homosexual love in *The Symposium* (181B). Nero, emperor at the time Paul wrote this letter, was about to marry the boy Sporus (Suetonius *Lives of the Caesars* 6. 28), an incident bizarre only in its formality, since 14 of the first 15 Roman emperors were homosexual or bisexual.

## [6:11](#)

**6:11.** **Some** (but not all) the Corinthian Christians had been guilty of the sins listed in [verses 9-10](#), **but** God had intervened. They **were washed... by the Spirit** (cf. [Titus 3:5](#)), **sanctified** in the Son (cf. [1 Cor. 1:2](#)), and **justified** before God (cf. [Rom. 8:33](#)). This fact of justification was an appropriate thought for those judicially carping Corinthians.