

A9 BIBLE STUDY: I CORINTHIANS #6

Scripture of Lesson: I Corinthians 6: 1~20

In this chapter apostle Paul deals with two themes; first, about suing between fellow believers, and second, giving glory to God with our body and spirit.

1. **About going to the law between fellow brethren: v. 1~8**

Paul discourages Christians from going to the court of law between brethren, and instructs them to work out a solution before the congregation [v. 1]. This instruction of Paul is based on two reasons:

First, the saints will be judging the angels on the last day. This refers to the saints' participation in the Lord's exercise of His judgeship as prophesied in these verses. Paul states that not only all humans but angels also are included in this judgment:

So Jesus said to them, "Assuredly I say to you, that in the regeneration, when the Son of Man sits on the throne of His glory, you who have followed Me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. [Matt 19: 28]

Now Enoch, the seventh from Adam, prophesied about these men also, saying, "Behold, the Lord comes with ten thousands of His saints, to execute judgment on all, to convict all who are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have committed in an ungodly way, and of all the harsh things which ungodly sinners have spoken against Him." [Jude 1: 14, 15]

And I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment was committed to them. [Revelation 20: 4]

If Christians were to take part in the judgeship of the Lord, we should be able to judge in earthly matters between brethren.

Secondly, bringing a legal fight between two Christians before unjust courts of this world would bring shame to our religion [v. 5, 6]. It would be obeying the commandment of our Lord to rather choose to be defrauded or be face loss than to bring shame on our faith by taking a dispute to the court of law [v. 7].

This exhortation of Paul is a strong slap to the contemporary American culture of favoring legal solutions instead of amiable arbitrations or concessions. Our society needs to go back to this wise counsel if we were to make it amiable and bring peace amongst us.

Discussion topic: How is this exhortation of Paul relevant in contemporary American life?

2. **Glorify God with our body and spirit: Soli Deo Gloria: v. 9~20**

We receive salvation from God as a free gift of grace through our faith in Christ. But we are born again to do good works, that is, unto sanctification through the Holy Spirit so that we will be blameless on the day we appear before the Lord on the final day.

For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them. [Eph 2: 8~10]

When athletes run a race, they run along a pre-marked track. Our track is the "good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them." Paul defines some of the boundaries of this Christian life's track in verses 9 and 10. Specifically he states that the following people shall NOT inherit the kingdom of God:

*Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived. **Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor sodomites, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners will inherit the kingdom of God.** [v. 9-10]*

When athletes run a race, they are of course mindful of the track boundary but the aim of their running is to win the prize set forth for the winner. There are two kinds of Christians in this sense:

There are Christians who try to ride the borders, you might say. They constantly ask, "Is what I am doing okay in the eyes of God?" They walk the borderline to make sure their earthly goals are pursued while they are still recognized as Christians and stay within the fellowship of believers. There is no true peace and happiness in the hearts of such believers although they pretend to be Christians.

Some of these people, as Paul noted in v. 15, visit prostitutes as there are plenty of them in this sinful city of Corinth. They see other men lead such immoral life in such a casual way that they also are tempted to emulate their business partners and clients. They forget that their bodies are members of Christ [v. 15]. Here, Paul strongly exhorts them to flee sexual immorality [v. 18].

The ultimate goal of our running the race as Christians is to honor and glorify God only with both our body and spirit [v. 20]. This motto of 'Glory to God Alone,' expressed in Latin as 'Soli Deo Gloria,' was the main musical theme of Johanne Sebastian Bach and George Frideric Handel. They wanted to write music only for God's glory, so they signed at the end of their manuscripts, S.D.G.

Consider the lilies, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin; and yet I say to you, even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. [Luke 12: 27]

Why did Jesus value the lilies in the field of higher value than all the glory of Solomon? From earthly standard this statement of Jesus does not stand a chance of comparison at all. The gold, silver and other treasures that Solomon donated for the construction and furnishing of God's temple exceeded hundreds of millions of dollars in today's money. And this amount of contribution was only a fraction of Solomon's entire wealth. So how can you compare the glory of a lily in the field that has no name and that can be trodden down so easily and disappear with such a massive wealth and glory of Solomon? The answer is very clear to our Lord, the small lily, though it is small and its life short, it shows through its limited life full colors to magnify the power of creation imbued by the Creator, whereas God was not pleased with all the glory and pomp of Solomon, which were more for his personal glory than for God's glory.

Discussion topic:

- 1. Where do we place our life's goal? How much does God weigh in our life's pursuits compared to our personal pursuits?*
- 2. How should we keep our body and spirit if we were to honor and glorify God with them?*