

## Introduction

One of the things that I have always enjoyed studying and teaching is leadership. In particular, I like to teach and train church leaders. The Bible has a lot to say about leadership, and there are numerous examples of great leaders to learn from. One of the first passages that deals with the selection of leaders is in Exodus 18, where Moses' father-in-law, Jethro came and observed what Moses was doing. He was settling all the disputes among the people, and Jethro told him that what he was doing was not good, and that he would wear himself out, as well as all the people. He counseled him to raise up leaders to help him judge the people. So, Moses received Jethro's counsel and raised up leaders of tens, fifties, hundreds, and thousands.

(Ex 18:17–22) “17Moses' father-in-law said to him, “The thing that you are doing is not good. {18} You will surely wear out, both yourself and these people who are with you, for the task is too heavy for you; you cannot do it alone....{21} Furthermore, you shall select out of all the people able men who fear God, men of truth, those who hate dishonest gain; and you shall place these over them as leaders of thousands, of hundreds, of fifties and of tens. {22} Let them judge the people at all times; and let it be that every major dispute they will bring to you, but every minor dispute they themselves will judge. So it will be easier for you, and they will bear the burden with you.”

In Numbers 1, God had Moses take a census, and he counted 603,550 men who were from twenty years old and upward, and were able to go out to war. The total population is estimated to be about two and a half million people. If we used only the men to come up with the leaders that Moses appointed, there would have been 79,065 leaders (60,355 captains of ten, 12,071 captains of fifties, 6,036 captains of hundreds, 604 captains of thousands). Why did Moses need all these thousands of leaders? The primary thing that they were tasked with was to settle the disputes among the people.

(Num 1:1–46) “Then the LORD spoke to Moses in the wilderness of Sinai, in the tent of meeting, on the first of the second month, in the second year after they had come out of the land of Egypt, saying, {2} “Take a census of all the congregation of the sons of Israel, by their families, by their fathers' households, according to the number of names, every male, head by head {3} from twenty years old and upward, whoever is able to go out to war in Israel, you and Aaron shall number them by their armies....{45} So all the numbered men of the sons of Israel by their fathers' households, from twenty years old and upward, whoever was able to go out to war in Israel, {46} even all the numbered men were 603,550.”

Throughout history there have been disputes among people. There are disputes about property lines. I personally know several people who have had to use legal property surveys to help them resolve these disputes. One of the most common disputes is over family inheritance. I have seen family members stop talking to other family members because the way an inheritance was divided up. There are disputes about property, inheritance, and many other things.

In Jesus' earthly ministry, a man came up to Him and asked Him to tell his brother to divide the family inheritance with him. His brother was probably the eldest, and the eldest son normally got a double portion. We do not know the details of this particular incident, but it sounds like the brother got everything, and he did not receive anything. Jesus refused to get involved and said, “Man, who appointed Me a judge or arbitrator over you?” Then Jesus said to the crowd, “Beware, and be on your guard against every form of greed; for not even when one has an abundance does his life consist of his possessions.”

(Luke 12:13–15) “Someone in the crowd said to Him, “Teacher, tell my brother to divide the family inheritance with me.” {14} But He said to him, “Man, who appointed Me a judge or arbitrator over you?” {15} Then He said to them, “Beware, and be on your guard against every form of greed; for not even when one has an abundance does his life consist of his possessions.”

In the New Testament, there are lots of examples of disputes. There were certain Jewish men who were teaching that you had to be circumcised in order to be saved. Paul and Barnabas had great dissension and debate with them. It was not resolved, so they went to the apostles and elders in Jerusalem to discuss the matter. After much debate, the apostles and elders came to one mind about the matter, and sent a letter to the churches with their answer. There are doctrinal disagreements, and there are disagreements about vision and leadership. We know that there were divisions in Corinth about leadership; some were for Paul, some were for Apollos, and some were for Cephas. There were disputes about philosophers, and many other things.

(Acts 15:1–2) “Some men came down from Judea and began teaching the brethren, “Unless you are circumcised according to the custom of Moses, you cannot be saved.” {2} And when Paul and Barnabas had great dissension and debate with them, the brethren determined that Paul and Barnabas and some others of them should go up to Jerusalem to the apostles and elders concerning this issue.”

In our text today, we find that there were disputes in the church that were being taken to the courts to be decided by the judge. There were people in the church trying to defraud others in the church. It was a terrible witness to the city of Corinth. In Paul’s message today he gives three reasons why we should settle our disputes inside the church, and not take our cases before the unrighteous courts. Although some people use this passage to teach that Christians should not ever sue or take someone to court, that is not what the passage is about. It is about why Christians need to **resolve their matters internally** rather than going outside the church to the courts of law to get their matters resolved, and Paul gives three reasons for this. First, God has made saints to be judges. Second, worldly judges are of no account or have no standing in the church. Third, it is actually a defeat for Christians to go before unbelievers to get their cases settled. Let’s read our passage.

### **Why saints should settle their disputes inside the church rather than before the courts.**

1. God has determined that saints are to be judges
2. Worldly judges are of no account in the church
3. It is a defeat for us to go before unbelievers

(1 Cor 6:1–11) “Does any one of you, when he has a case against his neighbor, dare to go to law before the unrighteous and not before the saints? {2} Or do you not know that the saints will judge the world? If the world is judged by you, are you not competent to constitute the smallest law courts? {3} Do you not know that we will judge angels? How much more matters of this life? {4} So if you have law courts dealing with matters of this life, do you appoint them as judges who are of no account in the church? {5} I say this to your shame. Is it so, that there is not among you one wise man who will be able to decide between his brethren, {6} but brother goes to law with brother, and that before unbelievers? {7} Actually, then, it is already a defeat for you, that you have lawsuits with one another. Why not rather be wronged? Why not rather be defrauded? {8} On the contrary, you yourselves wrong and defraud. You do this even to your brethren. {9} Or 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 effeminate, nor homosexuals, {10} nor thieves, nor the covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers, will inherit the kingdom of God. {11} Such were some of you; but you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God.”

### 1. **God has determined that saints are to be judges** (1 Cor 6:1-3)

The first reason that we are to judge our disputes in the church rather than taking them to outside judges in the court system is that God has determined that the saints are to be judges. This goes against what many Christians have been taught, that they are never to judge. Many Christians today do not view themselves as judges, and some of the ones who think they are judges, judge others out of arrogance. The saints in Corinth were no different; they did not see themselves as judges or having the ability to judge, so Paul tells them that God has determined to make them judges.

Paul began by asking, “Does any one of you, when he has a case against his neighbor, dare to go to law before the unrighteous and not before the saints?” This is the subject of the passage. It is about why we need to resolve matters within the church rather than going to the unrighteous courts to resolve things. Paul uses this phrase, “Do you not know” three times. It is a question, but there is also some disappointment and shock that they would do this. It was almost unthinkable to do this in Paul’s mind. The Jews had their own legal system, and even after the Romans took over Israel, they respected the Jewish justice system, and allowed the Jews to try their own cases. Normally, the only time that the Jews went to the Gentile court system was if they wanted something beyond what their own laws allowed, as when the Pharisees and Sadducees brought Jesus to Pilate. They wanted Jesus put to death, and their law did not allow this.

(1 Cor 6:1–2) “Does any one of you, when he has a case against his neighbor, dare to go to law before the unrighteous and not before the saints? {2} Or do you not know that the saints will judge the world? If the world is judged by you, are you not competent to constitute the smallest law courts?”

When Paul was being held by Festus, and he wanted to send him back to Jerusalem and stand trial before the Jewish Sanhedrin Council, he appealed to Caesar. He knew that the trial before Caesar would be more honest than the trial by the corrupt religious leaders. Normally, the Jews would not think of standing trial before the Gentile judges. In the church, there would not have been the corruption of those presiding over the case, so it would be unthinkable to go to the unbelieving judges.

Then Paul asked, “Do you not know that the saints will judge the world? If the world is judged by you, are you not competent to constitute the smallest law courts?” God has determined that the saints, the believers, the righteous, are to judge the world. The small legal cases that they were having were minor compared to judging the world, which the saints will do in the future.

Corinth was not a Jewish town; it was a Gentile town, so it would be helpful to give some historical background about the legal system in Rome and Greece. Like the United States, they were a litigious society. However, they had a process that began with private arbitration. If someone had an issue with his neighbor, he would use an arbitrator. Each party would have an arbitrator and then a third neutral person would round out the arbitration team. These three arbitrators were responsible for finding a workable solution to the problem.

If they could not find a resolution, the matter went to the second level, a court known as the Forty. At this level another arbitrator was appointed, only this time they were not private arbitrators, but public arbitrators. Every citizen that was sixty years old had to serve as a public arbitrator.

If the matter was not resolved at this second level, it went to a multiple-jury court. At this third level, the jury had a minimum of two hundred people on it, and could have as many as six thousand people. It was a very big group of people and reaching a consensus with a group that large was difficult. Everybody that was thirty years of age and up was on call to serve as a juror in these large courts. So, the Corinthians were very well versed on the legal process and the court system, and their role as jurors.

Why did the Corinthians choose to use the legal system outside the church rather than resolve it within the church? There were two reasons. First, that was their culture. They were a litigious society, and they were used to taking every matter before these courts. It was their old way of life before coming to Christ, and they continued to live their former lifestyle rather than a new transformed life. Second, in verse eight, Paul said that they were wronging and defrauding one another. The Corinthians thought that they could get higher settlements in the courts than they could inside the church, so they were choosing to use the legal system. This begged the question, “Does any one of you, when he has a case against his neighbor, dare to go to law before the unrighteous and not before the saints?”

(1 Cor 6:8) “On the contrary, you yourselves wrong and defraud. You do this even to your brethren.”

The Corinthians knew about being jurors and trying cases. They may not have known that God had determined that the saints are to be judges, but they certainly knew about judging matters. They should have been able to judge these small disputes and cases that they had between fellow believers. Paul went on to ask, “Do you not know that we will judge angels?” If we took a survey in the churches in America and asked that question, I would venture to say that most people would get it wrong. God has planned for us to judge the world, and to also judge angels. If an angel sins and rebels against God, he is a fallen angel. These fallen angels will be judged, and you and I have been designated by God to judge them.

(1 Cor 6:3) “Do you not know that we will judge angels? How much more matters of this life?”

Paul’s next statement makes his point. “How much more matters of this life?” If we have been called by God to judge the world, and to judge angels, we should certainly be able to judge these the matters of this life between church members.

## **2. Worldly judges are of no account in the church (1 Cor 6:4-5)**

Paul’s second reason for the saints to try their own cases in the church rather than through the secular courts was that the judges of the courts were of no account in the church. The KJV says the judges were least esteemed in the church, and the ESV says that the judges have no standing in the church. When you are considering someone who might be able to try a case properly, a secular judge would rank the lowest among saints. A judge would be the least esteemed and of no account in the church.

(1 Cor 6:4) “So if you have law courts dealing with matters of this life, do you appoint them as judges who are of no account in the church?”

Why would judges be the least esteemed? It is because Christians have been given the Holy Spirit, and the Holy Spirit knows the thoughts of God. Paul has already told them that because we have the Spirit, we have the mind of Christ. Christians have understanding of God’s principles, and have God’s thoughts on the matters. Paul had written, “A natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually appraised.” Secular judges do not understand the things of God, and do not have God’s thoughts. Therefore, they would be least esteemed.

(1 Cor 2:14–16) “But a natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually appraised. {15} But he who is spiritual appraises all things, yet he himself is appraised by no one. {16} For WHO HAS KNOWN THE MIND OF THE LORD, THAT HE WILL INSTRUCT HIM? But we have the mind of Christ.”

Paul added, “I say this to your shame.” Bringing their dirty laundry out for the world to see was shameful. Having someone judge matters, who is of no account and does not understand the things of God, was shameful. It was shameful because it communicated to the world that the church was full of strife, disputes, and people that were trying to defraud one another. Who would want to become part of a group of people like this? Many people today feel the same way. They see the church as a bunch of hypocrites and don’t have an interest in joining a group of people like this. It was also shameful because it communicated to the world that God does not have the answers for the problems that we have. The truth is that we do have the answers. God gave His Son Jesus so that our sins would be forgiven, and that we could live transformed lives. Paul wrote that if any man is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old things have passed away and new things have come. It was shameful to tell the world that new things have not come, and we are an evil, hypocritical group of people.

(1 Cor 6:5) “I say this to your shame. Is it so, that there is not among you one wise man who will be able to decide between his brethren,”

(2 Cor 5:17) “Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come.”

Then, Paul asked if there was not one wise man among them who could decide matters between his brethren. The Corinthians thought of themselves as being wise, but their actions indicated otherwise. There certainly should have been many people, not just one person, who was wise enough to judge the disputes among the people.

### 3. **It is a defeat for us to go before unbelievers** (1 Cor 6:6-11)

It was not only shameful for them to appoint a secular judge; it was a defeat for them when brothers went to law with brothers. The word, defeat, is *hettema* (Strong’s G2275) in the Greek, and it means a deterioration, failure, or fault. This was a failure by the church to do what they should have been doing. This failure or fault was a terrible witness to the world. This was not being a light set on a hill. This was damaging their reputation, and the reputation of Christ. The church should be able to resolve things internally, and not hand out their dirty laundry for the world to see.

(1 Cor 6:6-7) “but brother goes to law with brother, and that before unbelievers? {7} Actually, then, it is already a defeat for you, that you have lawsuits with one another. Why not rather be wronged? Why not rather be defrauded?”

Then Paul asked, “Why not rather be wronged? Why not rather be defrauded?” It would be better to be wronged and defrauded than to have Christians fighting one another in a secular court. It would be better to be wronged than to give a bad witness to the world.

Some scholars believe it is wrong for a Christian to ever sue someone. They use this passage to say that it is better to be wronged or defrauded than to sue someone else. I believe the context of a passage is very important. Paul is saying that it is better to be wronged than to give a bad witness to the world of greed, fraud, discord, and an inability to live in harmony with one another. Being defrauded and wronged are in comparison to being defeated by going before a secular judge to resolve struggles between two Christians.

After inferring that it would be better to be wronged and defrauded than to take a case before a secular judge, Paul mentions that they are wronging and defrauding their own brethren. He said, “On the contrary, you yourselves wrong and defraud. You do this even to your brethren.” The reason that they were going before a worldly judge was to get a better settlement than they would get before asking someone in the church to help them resolve the matter. They were purposely trying to defraud one another. They were trying to wrongfully take advantage of one another. They were trying to cheat one another.

(1 Cor 6:8) “On the contrary, you yourselves wrong and defraud. You do this even to your brethren.”

Trust is important in relationships. If you have no trust, then a relationship is very difficult to pursue and maintain. If you do not trust someone, you will question everything that is done, and you will keep your distance. You will not confide in them or share with them. You will not be open and transparent. You can't do these things when you do not trust the other person. That is why Paul said that it is required of God's servants and stewards to be trustworthy. Pastors need to be trustworthy, or the congregation will not trust them.

(1 Cor 4:2) “In this case, moreover, it is required of stewards that one be found trustworthy.”

There are a number of things that can destroy our trust of another person. When someone lies to you, you don't know if you can trust them in anything they say. When someone tries to cheat and take advantage of you, you will not trust them. When someone betrays your trust and confidentiality by sharing things with others, you cannot trust them. Once trust is betrayed, it is very difficult to earn that trust again. It can be done, but it is difficult. It will require repentance and forgiveness. It will also require the fruit of repentance to earn trust when it has been lost.

In Acts 13, John Mark left Barnabas and Paul. This did not set well with Paul, and when they were about to embark on their second apostolic journey, Paul did not want Mark to accompany them. Paul did not trust someone who had deserted them on their first trip. One of Paul's core values was faithfulness. Paul wanted to bring along a faithful man. Barnabas took Mark and mentored him. It took time, but later on in Paul's ministry, he asked for John Mark, because he was useful to him. Trust can be regained, but it can take time. It was going to take some time for the church in Corinth to build and regain the trust of one another. They needed to stop wronging and defrauding one another, something that was almost unthinkable to Paul.

(Acts 13:13) “Now Paul and his companions put out to sea from Paphos and came to Perga in Pamphylia; but John left them and returned to Jerusalem.”

(Acts 15:37–40) “Barnabas wanted to take John, called Mark, along with them also. {38} But Paul kept insisting that they should not take him along who had deserted them in Pamphylia and had not gone with them to the work. {39} And there occurred such a sharp disagreement that they separated from one another, and Barnabas took Mark with him and sailed away to Cyprus. {40} But Paul chose Silas and left, being committed by the brethren to the grace of the Lord.”

(2 Tim 2:2) “The things which you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses, entrust these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also.”

(2 Tim 4:11) “Only Luke is with me. Pick up Mark and bring him with you, for he is useful to me for service.”

It was a defeat for the Corinthians to go before unbelievers and let them judge their cases. Paul ends by saying that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God. He did not want them being deceived. Fornicators, idolaters, adulterers, effeminate, homosexuals, thieves, covetous, drunkards, revilers, and swindlers will not inherit the kingdom of God. These were the people that the church was going before to try their cases. It was shameful and it was a defeat.

(1 Cor 6:9-10) “Or 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 effeminate, nor homosexuals, {10} nor thieves, nor the covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers, will inherit the kingdom of God.”

There are many people who are deceived today. They believe that it is okay to be a fornicator. It is okay to be an adulterer. It is okay to be a homosexual or lesbian. It is okay to be cheat the government of sales tax revenue or other taxes. Our culture deems that it is acceptable, so it is okay. They want to change God’s laws and standards to agree with their views. In some churches, they have accumulated teachers in accordance to their own desires, who will teach according to their views. In 2 Timothy 4:3-4, Paul prophesied that this would happen, and it is being fulfilled today. Unfortunately, when they stand before God, and give account to Him, the word is very clear; “neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor homosexuals, nor thieves, nor the covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers, will inherit the kingdom of God.”

(2 Tim 4:3–4) “For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but wanting to have their ears tickled, they will accumulate for themselves teachers in accordance to their own desires, {4} and will turn away their ears from the truth and will turn aside to myths.”

Paul said it was shameful and a defeat to have their cases tried before unbelievers. Then, he said, “Such were some of you; but you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God.” All of us were sinners. We may not have been an adulterer, but we may have been covetous. We may not have been a drunkard, but we may have been a glutton. We may not have been a thief, but we may have stretched the truth. We were all sinners, but when we came to Christ, we were changed. We were washed. God washed away our sins. Though our sins were as scarlet, He has made them white as snow.

(1 Cor 6:11) “Such were some of you; but you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God.”

We were also sanctified, which means to be made holy. He who knew no sin became sin that we might become the righteousness of God in Him. He made us holy, and He continues to sanctify us. When we came to Christ, we were also justified, which means to be declared innocent. The church is different from unbelievers. We are a changed people, and our lives need to be radically different than the world. When we called upon the name of Jesus and made Him Lord, He put His Spirit inside of us, and made us righteous.

(Is 1:18) “Come now, and let us reason together,” Says the LORD, “Though your sins are as scarlet, they will be as white as snow; though they are red like crimson, they will be like wool.”

(2 Cor 5:21) “He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.”

### **Conclusion and Applications**

The Corinthian church was divided by philosophies and leaders. There was immorality and arrogance in the church. And there were lots of lawsuits among the members that were being taken to the judges to be settled. They were wronging and defrauding one another. This was shameful and a defeat to them. Paul wanted them to understand that they would someday judge angels and the world. God had determined that they were going to be judges, and these matters of life should be no problem for them to judge inside the church. The church is different than the world. We are a changed people, and our lives need to represent the kingdom of God.

The passage today was about why we should settle things inside the church, rather than taking them before unrighteous judges outside the church, who are of no esteem in the church. Many people use the passage to teach that Christians should never sue someone, but that is not what the passage is about. I want to take a few minutes to look at some applications.

For most disputes, we should try to settle privately with the other person. We should not need to bring in another person in the church. Solomon told us to not be hasty about arguing a case. He did not say not to bring a case, but to not go out hastily. When we argue our case, we need to keep the matter between us and not reveal the secrets of others.

(Pr 25:8–10) “Do not go out hastily to argue your case; otherwise, what will you do in the end, When your neighbor humiliates you? {9} Argue your case with your neighbor, and do not reveal the secret of another, {10} or he who hears it will reproach you, and the evil report about you will not pass away.”

Jesus told us to make friends with our opponents so that our opponents do not take us to the judge. We need to get things resolved with others, and preferably by going to him before it goes to court. If we are guilty and have done something wrong, we need to repent, and make it right with our opponent. We should not wait for a judge or court to force us to do what is right.

(Matt 5:25–26) “Make friends quickly with your opponent at law while you are with him on the way, so that your opponent may not hand you over to the judge, and the judge to the

officer, and you be thrown into prison. {26} Truly I say to you, you will not come out of there until you have paid up the last cent.”

When we have a dispute with our neighbor, we need to look at our motives and goals. Jesus told the man in the crowd to be on his guard against every form of greed. We need to search our hearts to see if there is greed, or any other wrong motivation. God told us not to seek revenge, but to leave room for the vengeance of God. Is there greed, vengeance, or any other wrong motivation in my heart? Paul wrote that immorality, greed, and any impurity must not be named among us. We need to check our hearts when we have a dispute with our neighbor.

(Luke 12:13–15) “Someone in the crowd said to Him, “Teacher, tell my brother to divide the family inheritance with me.” {14} But He said to him, “Man, who appointed Me a judge or arbitrator over you?” {15} Then He said to them, “Beware, and be on your guard against every form of greed; for not even when one has an abundance does his life consist of his possessions.”

(Rom 12:19) “Never take your own revenge, beloved, but leave room for the wrath of God, for it is written, “VENGEANCE IS MINE, I WILL REPAY,” says the Lord.”

(Eph 5:3) “But immorality or any impurity or greed must not even be named among you, as is proper among saints;”

There may be times that someone wants to sue us. Jesus said that we are not to resist an evil person, and whoever slaps us on the right cheek, we should turn the other also. If they want to sue us and take our shirt, we should let him have our coat also. Whoever forces us to go one mile, we should go with him two. The way that we respond to situations is supposed to be very different than the world. However, this is not an open license for anyone to take everything we have.

(Matt 5:39–41) “But I say to you, do not resist an evil person; but whoever slaps you on your right cheek, turn the other to him also. {40} If anyone wants to sue you and take your shirt, let him have your coat also. {41} Whoever forces you to go one mile, go with him two.”

A certain pastor came to me one day and said that I needed to give him my house, which was valued at \$240,000.00. It would have been wrong to give this false prophet my house. If he had asked for my car, I should not have given him my car and my truck. We will have to pray through the things that come up in our lives and let God lead us. If it were a matter of food and clothing, something necessary, we would have willingly given him my shirt and a jacket, but my house was a whole different matter.

There may be times that we need to defend ourselves in court. In Larry Burkett’s book, *Business by the Book*, he gives a story of a CEO of an electronics firm who had a conviction that he should never sue. A competitor began using his proprietary products and it cost the company millions of dollars. He did not sue because of his conviction about suing. The stockholders sued him because he had not protected their interests, and they won. The courts made the CEO compensate the stockholders several hundred thousand dollars. The CEO should have sued the other company to protect the interests of the corporation. <sup>1</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> Larry Burkett, *Business By The Book*, pages 202-203.

When we have differences with another believer that is not part of our church, we should try working things out on a personal level. If not, we should try to find a mediator that is acceptable to the other person and to you. It would be good if that person was another believer. There is also a Christian mediating organization called Peacemaker Ministries. Their website is: <https://www.peacemakerministries.org/>. Whenever possible, we should try to resolve matters by mediation, rather than through the courts.

When someone has wronged us, I believe that we need to take the matter before the Lord to see how He would like us to handle it. God is a God of justice. In Micah 6:8, God tells us that there are three requirements of us. We are to do justice, love kindness, and to walk humbly with Him. When we have been wronged, God wants justice, and He wants us to do justice. In the Old Testament He gave all kinds of laws so that there would be justice. The fact that we are Christians does not change the character of God; He is still a God of justice. The fact that we are Christians does not take away our legal rights. Sometimes Paul used his rights as a Roman citizen, and sometimes he kept silent. There may be times that we need to exercise our rights, such as to defend ourselves, our loved ones, and our property. There may be times that we do not exercise those rights. We need to walk humbly with the Lord, love kindness, and to also do justice.

(Micah 6:8) “He has told you, O man, what is good; And what does the LORD require of you But to do justice, to love kindness, And to walk humbly with your God?”

On criminal matters, the members of a church cannot just settle these things internally. There have been cases where churches have not told legal authorities about a rape or other crime, and the church has faced lawsuits. According to the Church Law Center, the number one reason that churches get sued is over the sexual abuse of a minor.<sup>2</sup> There are times that the church needs to report things to the proper law enforcement authority, and failure to take action and report the crime could result in significant damages.

### **Prayer**

Father God, help us to be a church that is trustworthy. Help us to love one another and look out for the interests of others. Help us never to wrong or defraud our brother. Help us to learn to resolve matters with our neighbors in a way that honors You. May we never bring shame or defeat to our church by the way that we handle matters. Give us wisdom to resolve the matters of this life. We ask this in Jesus' name. Amen.

---

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.churchlawcenter.com/church-law/the-top-5-reasons-churches-get-sued/>

**Introduction** (Ex 18:17–22, Num 1:1–46, Luke 12:13–15, Acts 15:1–2, 1 Cor 6:1–11)

1. **God has determined that saints are to be judges** (1 Cor 6:1-3, 6:8)
  
2. **Worldly judges are of no account in the church** (1 Cor 6:4-5, 1 Cor 2:14–16, 2 Cor 5:17)
  
3. **It is a defeat for us to go before unbelievers** (1 Cor 6:6-11, 1 Cor 4:2, Acts 13:13, Acts 15:37–40, 2 Tim 2:2, 4:11, 2 Tim 4:3–4, Is 1:18, 2 Cor 5:21)

**Conclusion and Applications** (Pr 25:8–10, Matt 5:25–26, Luke 12:13-15, Rom 12:19, Eph 5:3, Matt 5:39–41, Mic 6:8)

**Christian Mediation Organization**

<https://www.peacemakerministries.org/>