This chapter and the chapter before…Paul is dealing with some **real issues.** The church hadn’t changed the culture…**the culture in Corinth had changed the church**…and so this chapter and the last were and will be really sharp, very black and white and quite confrontational. But it’s important to me to go back to chapter 1 where Paul said, *“I thank my God always concerning you…”* ***He wrote that when he knew the issues.*** That blesses me…***before we go after the issues, do we have a heart for the person?***

You know, God designed the *“Power Cycle.”* Problems with electronics, sometimes even your car…what’s one of the first things you try? The power cycle! Why? Because **it works** a lot of the time. Every day you do stuff, the sun goes down…and then God gave us bedtime. ***What a blessing!*** Then as the sun comes back up…*the world power cycling*, ***we do the same thing.*** Every time I learn a lesson from God, like the one he taught me through Paul, I power cycle…send power to that new part of my hardware…reboot for that new piece of software… (Which reminds me, if Apple makes a large computer, will they ever call it a Big Mac!? HA!)

1 Corinthians 6 Verses 1 – 2

* Paul here begins to address a completely different issue and this is an interesting one. In the Greek culture, **a good legal battle was lively, welcomed entertainment.** Typically, the hearings would be in the public square which would be right in the heart of the city marketplace and so folks’ legal matters would become public events. I believe it was called ***Judge Judicus!*** HA!! But the point is, ***not much weakens the witness of the power of the gospel more than two known Christians acting like the gospel is powerless!***
* Paul says something here that is actually quite striking. If Christians have a matter against each other, why not keep it within the saints!? Here’s seemingly a crazy idea for us in our time but I wonder if it should be… Keep the matter in the church and let the church judge…implied in that…***let the matter be settled.*** In other words, whatever the saints decide, the folks must obey. I’m not sure this would work today and that is really a shame.
* There are some issues that the church cannot handle…and believe me I am not advocating for the church to be its own legal system…**not at all** and I don’t think Paul was saying that as well…but for small claims, non-criminal matters of one Christian against another, ***only the church is qualified to handle that***…really. Think about it…they were and often times we take our matters to be judged by men and women judges who do not have the Holy Spirit? And we ask them to judge between us? **They can’t discern God’s heart.** **They cannot know God’s will.** Proverbs 28:5 says, *“Evil men do not understand justice, but those who seek the Lord understand all.”*
* I know what you’re feeling because I felt it too just putting this together…***but what if I get cheated…what if they don’t have to pay…?*** Well, what if that’s God’s will? (Not right, but rather righteous? Think of the cross!) What if that outcome is what honors God and restores the relationship? The people’s court will **never** look for that outcome… Paul says, *“Why would the righteous* (in others words, the just) *go before the unrighteous* (the unjust) *seeking justice?”*
* It’s interesting…justice is defined as *the quality of being fair and reasonable under the law.* Is that really what we ought to seek? Which is better? Holding all sorts of violent, unrighteous criminal behavior aside for a moment…brother against brother…what is better? **Justice or mercy?** Think of the long run… Zechariah 7:9 says, *“Thus says the Lord of hosts, “Execute true justice, show mercy and compassion, everyone to his brother.””* So, which is better? Justice or mercy? **Honest question**…because I don’t know. Situations and circumstances and people are different…the only hope in discovering what is right is to seek God’s will on the matter. ***Something the public legal system will never do***…and so Paul says, *“You folks are not only crazy but really harming the witness of the Gospel of grace, freedom and peace.”*

1 Corinthians 6 Verse 3

* This statement is just simply **fascinating.** Perhaps this was the last straw for Lucifer. That one day, inferior mortals will sit in judgement, ***have a higher seat in heaven*** than angels. But why? How? Let me offer some thoughts and I don’t want to spend much time on this because not a lot of information is given and when that’s the case, I’d rather let the mystery remain a mystery lest we get carried away with our own ideas.
* Why would humans sit above angels? What does a human have that an angel does not? **Salvation.** What *comprises* salvation? Two things. First, ***the Holy Spirit within the heart of a man, God Himself***…and second, ***we are the bride of Christ.*** We are one with Him, right alongside of Him and we share in His inheritance as His family, His children, His bride. ***The churches position in Christ is at the right hand of the Father!*** Romans 8:16-17, *“The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together.”* Revelation 3:21-22, *“To him who overcomes I will grant to sit with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne. He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.”*
* Now, are we to judge the angels of heaven? For what? ***Their wardrobes?*** HA! This judgement is most likely speaking of the final judgement…when the angels who turned on God are finally cast into the Lake of Fire.

1 Corinthians 6 Verses 4 – 6

* Really the implication here is that the least esteemed within the Body of Christ, ***the most immature of Christians*** would make a better judge than the world when it comes to matters between brothers. Now, Paul is not at all saying that a Christian cannot **flex** the legal system…he’s just saying that if the matter is *petty*, *he said she said* small claims kind-of matters, that can and should be handled by the saints (doesn’t have to be and truly should not be left only to church leadership). But if a matter involves someone outside of the church then that unbeliever obviously will not come under the authority of the church and so sometimes legal recourse is the only option and that’s fine. You may recall that Paul himself exercised the legal system against Festus when he appealed to Caesar.

1 Corinthians 6 Verse 7a

* If brother against brother takes their petty matter to the public eye and the court of unbelievers, why does Paul call that an ***utter failure?*** *(By the way, did you hear about the cow that jumped over the barbed wire fence? It was utter destruction!! HA!!)* Because ***the integrity of the Gospel is shattered!*** *“I have found all that I need in Christ! I have received the Spirit of God, salvation from this world and unto eternal life…I have love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law.* (Galatians 5:22) *You should come to the Lord, come to my church…be filled and be free! I’ll meet you there right after court. I’m suing my brother for $500.”* **That’s oxymoronic!** That sends the worst of mixed messages and destroys the integrity of the gospel…Jesus said you will know them by their LOVE! So Paul offers a ***radical remedy…***

1 Corinthians 6 Verses 7b – 8

* Why not just **let it go?** The things of this world. The things that can and are blessings but don’t bring the fruit of the Spirit…why not just let yourself be cheated? ***God will take care of you.*** Anything you lose on this side of eternity seeking the Lord, do you think God won’t repay you 1,000 fold, with interest!? Romans 12:17-21. And don’t worry, no one ever gets away with anything…God has promised… (Ecclesiastes 3:17 NIV), *“God will bring into judgment both the righteous and the wicked, for there will be a time for every activity, a time to judge every deed.”* ***Truly it is not better, not good, not profitable at all for you…to defend your “rights” at the expense of God’s glory…***

1 Corinthians 6 Verses 9 – 10

* By going into this list, *which is not exhaustive in any way*, Paul is pointing out to the brother that had committed the offense what sort of company he is in…***a company that does not know God***…and by doing this he is explicitly not accepting a faith that professes to know God and yet defrauds his brother. He is questioning that man’s faith and **that is fair**…we can’t see a person’s heart…all we can see is his fruit…***and if the fruit doesn’t match the faith, we have a right to call that faith into question.***
* Now look…sin doesn’t send anyone to hell. All sin has been dealt with by Jesus. ***It is only the rejection of Jesus, which is the blasphemy of the Holy Spirit…that sends someone to hell.*** Jesus said in Matthew 12:31, *“Every sin and blasphemy will be forgiven men, but the blasphemy against the Spirit will not be forgiven men.”* And 1 Corinthians 12:3 says, *“No one can confess that Jesus is Lord except by the Holy Spirit.”* And so, what ultimately sends anyone out of the eternal presence of the Father in heaven that was secured for all men by the blood of Jesus at the cross and through the resurrection is **the rejection of Jesus Christ**…and so Paul convicts as it were the offender and reminds the offended…

1 Corinthians 6 Verse 11

* He reminds both parties and the church in Corinth and the reader today…that through God’s provision for our fall, ***we were washed***…we’ve been made completely clean and acceptable in the presence of God…***we were sanctified***…set apart from the traps of the flesh and the fold of the fallen world for God’s purposes, not our own…***and we were and have already been justified***…just as if I’d never sinned…how? **Simply by grace**…because of the name of the Lord Jesus through the indwelling presence and purification of the Spirit of our God. The greatest power cycle of all!