

Kingdom Justice: Resolving Disputes with Eternal Perspective

1 Corinthians 6:1–11 (ESV)

Student Devotional

This 5-day devotional will guide you through Paul’s teaching on how believers should handle disagreements without tarnishing the church’s witness. Each day, ask God to shape your mindset so that your conflicts reflect Christ’s humility and the coming kingdom’s values.

Day 1: Better Ways to Handle Disputes

When one of you has a grievance against another, does he dare go to law before the unrighteous instead of the saints? (1 Corinthians 6:1, ESV)

Think About It

Picture a messy argument between two Christians spilling out into the public eye—neighbors, classmates, or coworkers all see it unfold. Paul’s alarm is clear: *Why are believers taking their problems to a secular court?* This doesn’t mean Christians can never use legal systems ethically, but it challenges us to first seek a resolution that honors God. Sometimes, church-based mediation or wise counsel from mature believers can untangle problems better than a public lawsuit. Reflect on your own life: have you ever been quick to blast someone on social media or involve “outside” opinions before trying spiritual, godly solutions?

Pray It

Lord, help me see conflicts in light of Your grace and kingdom priorities. Show me how to seek guidance from fellow believers rather than rushing to public or worldly forums to solve my problems.

Do It

If you have a lingering dispute with another Christian—maybe a financial disagreement or a personal offense—take one step toward a peaceful, God-centered resolution. Reach out for counsel from a trusted believer or suggest a calm, prayerful conversation.

Day 2: Embracing Your Eternal Role

Or do you not know that the saints will judge the world? ... Are you unworthy to judge the smallest matters? (1 Corinthians 6:2, ESV)

Think About It

It's easy to think of disputes as purely "earthly" issues—money owed, property boundaries, or broken promises. But Paul reminds us that believers are destined for a far greater role: one day, we'll reign with Christ and even judge angels (v. 3). In light of this monumental future, shouldn't we be able to resolve smaller-scale conflicts now? Your identity isn't anchored in this temporary world; it's rooted in God's eternal kingdom. When you forget your royal destiny in Christ, you're more likely to handle problems just like everyone else—fighting for personal advantage. But when you recall who you are, it changes the tone of every dispute.

Pray It

Father, thank You for calling me into a future so grand that I'll share in Christ's reign. Help me live in a way that reflects my eternal inheritance, seeking wisdom and unity instead of self-seeking solutions.

Do It

Take two minutes today to journal or pray about your "future with Christ." Ask God to shape your current attitudes and conflicts by the reality that you are part of His royal family—destined for responsibilities much bigger than minor disagreements.

Day 3: Why Not Rather Be Wronged?

Why not rather be wronged? Why not rather be cheated? But you yourselves wrong and defraud—even your own brothers! (1 Corinthians 6:7–8, ESV)

Think About It

Paul's advice might sound radical: "*Why not rather be wronged?*" That strikes at the heart of our modern mindset, which constantly encourages us to stand up for our rights, never back down, and ensure we "win" every dispute. Yet Paul insists that insisting on winning at all costs is already a defeat for the church. In some cases, accepting a personal loss or letting go of our "right" to get even may protect relationships and showcase Christ's humility to the watching world. Is there a conflict in your life where the most Christlike response might be to absorb the cost or step aside, trusting God to defend your cause?

Pray It

Jesus, You willingly suffered injustice on the cross to reconcile me to God. Show me how to reflect that same sacrificial love when I'm tempted to fight for my own advantage. Teach me the freedom of entrusting my rights to You.

Do It

Think of a small situation where you've been wronged—maybe a debt unpaid or a personal slight. Could you release it for the sake of peace and unity? This doesn't mean allowing abuse, but it may involve choosing not to escalate the matter. Pray for God's strength to let go.

Day 4: Remembering Who You Are

Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? ... And such were some of you. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified... (1 Corinthians 6:9–11, ESV)

Think About It

Paul rattles off a list of sins—sexual immorality, greed, swindling, and more—that once defined some of these Corinthian believers. But then he says something powerful: *“That’s who you were—not who you are.”* The grace of God has changed everything. If we remember that we've been washed and set apart, we have a new incentive to live differently, treating fellow believers with integrity instead of dragging them through public conflicts. When you recall that God's mercy transformed you, it becomes easier to extend mercy and forbearance to others.

Pray It

Lord, I praise You for washing away my sin and bringing me into Your family. When I'm tempted to respond harshly to other believers, remind me of the grace You've shown me. Let Your forgiveness shape my every interaction.

Do It

Spend a few minutes thanking God for specific ways He's transformed you—areas of life where you've experienced real change. Consider how remembering these transformations can help you approach disagreements with a posture of humility and reconciliation.

Day 5: Living the Kingdom Ethic Today

But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ... (1 Corinthians 6:11, ESV)

Think About It

Throughout this passage, Paul challenges us to view disputes, relationships, and personal rights through the lens of the gospel. If we're a kingdom people—destined to judge the world and angels—why would we rush to secular courts that value winning above unity? If Christ willingly suffered for our sins, why not prioritize peace and humility even when it costs us? If our old identity was crucified with Christ, why revert to selfish behaviors that tarnish our witness? Living out this “kingdom ethic” requires daily reminders of who we are: a forgiven family learning how to love each other in a world obsessed with personal gain.

Pray It

Father, thank You for setting me apart for a kingdom that runs on grace instead of greed. Help me apply this ethic in my everyday life—at home, in friendships, and in any conflicts that arise. May Your Spirit guide me to honor You above all.

Do It

Look ahead to the next time a disagreement might pop up in your life. Plan a “kingdom ethic response”: maybe that's seeking out a godly mediator, choosing to listen before defending yourself, or reminding the other person that your relationship in Christ matters more than “winning.”

You're Ready for Class!

Over these five days, you've seen that **1 Corinthians 6:1–11** calls us to handle conflicts with an eternal perspective rather than a worldly one. Let's approach disagreements among believers with humility, faith, and respect—seeking solutions within the wisdom of God's people rather than chasing legal victories. Come to class ready to share how this passage challenges your view on personal rights, community, and our ultimate calling as God's set-apart children.

Before We Gather

- Why do we often prioritize winning a dispute—especially in a courtroom—over preserving unity with fellow believers, and how does that mindset align (or not) with the gospel’s call to self-sacrifice?
- Think of a minor conflict you’ve seen among Christians—perhaps a financial or property dispute. How might seeking spiritually mature mediators within the church have honored Christ’s name more than taking the issue to secular arbitration?
- Reflect on how church-based mediation or lay judges could practically function. What strengths does the church community bring to dispute resolution that secular courts inherently lack?
- Imagine you were wrongly accused by another believer over financial dealings. What might “choosing to be wronged” actually look like in a real-life situation, and how could that choice protect the church’s testimony?
- How does recalling our baptismal identity—“washed, sanctified, justified”—help us pursue peace rather than escalate conflicts, even when we feel unfairly treated?
- How does the prevailing lawsuit culture (and emphasis on personal entitlement) clash with Paul’s vision of an eschatological community?
- In what practical ways could “losing” a legitimate claim—in business or personal disagreements—actually become a win for the church and the gospel?