

Worksheet 5: 1 Corinthians 6:1–20

Introduction: In this week’s passage, Paul addresses two additional issues as he wraps up his response to the oral reports he had received from Chloe’s people.

The first of these issues appears in 6:1–11, as Paul responds to reports that people in the Corinthian church were settling differences between themselves by taking fellow Christians before the city courts. Paul calls this “an utter failure” (6:7), pointing out that the Corinthians misunderstood their Christian identity (6:2–4) and misrepresented the church before the world (6:6).

After addressing the problems with taking other Christians to court, in 6:12–20 Paul dismantles a line of thought that may have existed in the Corinthian church. This argument suggested that because Christians have freedom, they are therefore free to consort with prostitutes (6:15). Paul argues instead that such practice is outrageous, something which Christians should “flee” (6:18). He does not draw this conclusion simply from the prevailing moral assumptions of his time. Instead, Paul grounds his reasoning in theological truth. He explains in 6:19–20 that Christian people are possessed by the Holy Spirit as God’s purchased possession, which means that freedom has its limits.

Abbreviated Outline¹ (current passage in bold):

- I. Introduction (1:1-9)
- II. Response to Oral Reports (1:10-6:20)
 - A. A Proper Perspective on Christian Ministers and Ministry (1:10-4:21)
 - 1. The Problem of Disunity (1:10-17)
 - 2. The Sin of Dependence on Personal Abilities (1:18-25)
 - 3. The Sin of Personal Boasting (1:26-31)
 - 4. Paul, a Model of Dependence on God (2:1-5)
 - 5. Spiritual Wisdom versus Worldly Wisdom (2:6-16)
 - 6. The Immaturity of the Corinthians (3:1-9)
 - 7. God’s Evaluation of Christian Ministry (3:10-17)
 - 8. Final Argument Against Human Boasting (3:18-23)
 - 9. Paul’s Example of Christian Ministry (4:1-21)
 - B. Immorality in the Church (5:1-13)
 - C. Disputes Between Believers (6:1-11)**
 - D. Limitations on Freedom in Christ (6:12-20)**
- III. Responses to a Letter from the Corinthians (7:1-16:4)
- IV. Conclusion (16:5-24)

¹ The complete outline is available on the Meadowlands Baptist Church website (www.meadowlandsbaptist.ca). Adapted from Andreas J. Köstenberger, L. Scott Kellum, and Charles L. Quarles, *The Cradle, The Cross, and The Crown: An Introduction to the New Testament* (Nashville, Tenn: B & H Academic, 2009), 482–483.

Interpretation: *Read through the passage, and then review and make notes under the questions below.*

1. How does Paul expect the Corinthians to settle disputes if they are not to go before the courts (6:1)?

2. What reasons does Paul give for not going before the courts in 6:2–6?

3. What reason does Paul give for not going before the courts in 6:9–11?

4. What principle about our human bodies does Paul state in 6:13b? Explain how this relates to what Paul says in 6:14.

5. How does the Christian’s union with Christ (6:15–17) provide the doctrinal basis for the command to “flee sexual immorality” in 6:18?

6. What does it mean to say that “your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit *who* is in you” (6:19)?

7. If *both* your body and your spirit are God’s possessions (6:20), is it correct to say that a Christian can neglect either their physical health or their spiritual life? How should Christians think differently about both aspects of life?

Application: *Take time to reflect on the implications of this passage for your own life today.*

8. What does this passage mean for your walk with the Lord?

9. How does this passage challenge the way you think about situations in daily life? What should you do about that?
