

Daily Devotionals: Dear Church | August 21, 2022

1 Corinthians 3:10-23 | Conflict

Day 1

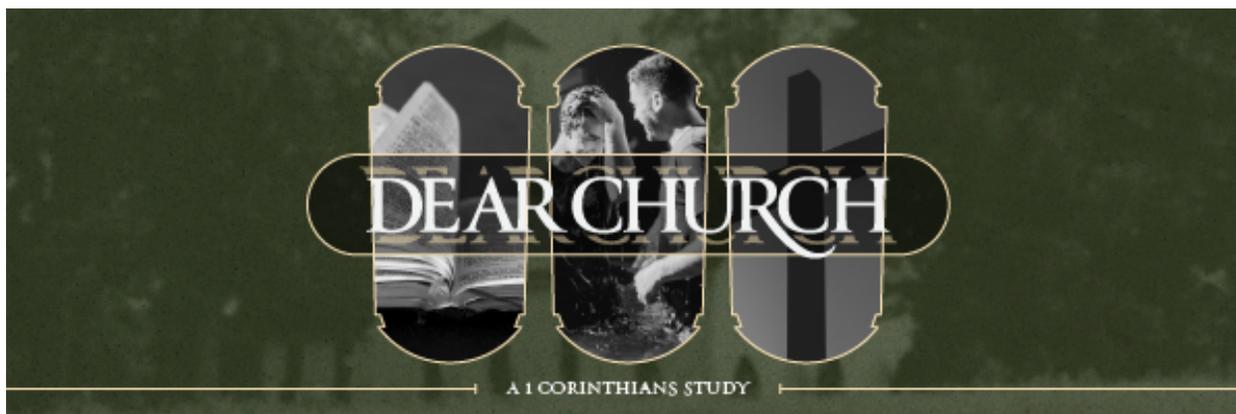
As we spend time engaging with 1 Corinthians 6:1-11, we'll be looking at the specific problem Paul is addressing and what his instructions for the church in Corinth means for us as believers today. Paul realizes that conflict is inevitable, even in the family of God. Not unlike those who find themselves in conflict today, believers in the early church preferred to manage conflict on their own, taking it before a secular court instead of taking it to God. How we respond to conflict is an opportunity to glorify God by displaying the grace and forgiveness we have received through Jesus. This week we'll be challenged to consider how we respond to conflict in our own lives and how that shapes our identity.

Today we're going to examine the passage in its entirety. While reading through it, take notice of what stands out to you, what you find confusing, and what you find encouraging. Following the passage, you'll find some questions to help you reflect on what you read. Sometimes it's helpful to read a passage in different translations/paraphrases of the Bible. We've included the NIV, ESV, and Message versions for you here. Feel free to explore a few other versions as well!

Read 1 Corinthians 6:1-11

New International Version

If any of you has a dispute with another, do you dare to take it before the ungodly for judgment instead of before the Lord's people? ² Or do you not know that the Lord's people will judge the world? And if you are to judge the world, are you not competent to judge trivial cases? ³ Do you not know that we will judge angels? How much more the things of this life! ⁴ Therefore, if you have disputes about such matters, do you ask for a ruling from those whose way of life is scorned in the church? ⁵ I say this to shame you. Is it possible that there is nobody among you wise enough to judge a dispute between believers? ⁶ But instead, one brother takes another to court—and this in front of unbelievers!⁷ The very fact that you have lawsuits among you means you have been completely defeated already. Why not rather be wronged? Why not rather be cheated? ⁸ Instead, you yourselves cheat and do wrong, and you do this to your brothers and sisters. ⁹ Or do you not know that wrongdoers will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: Neither the sexually immoral nor idolaters nor adulterers nor men who have sex with men^[a] ¹⁰ nor thieves nor the greedy nor drunkards nor slanderers nor swindlers will inherit the



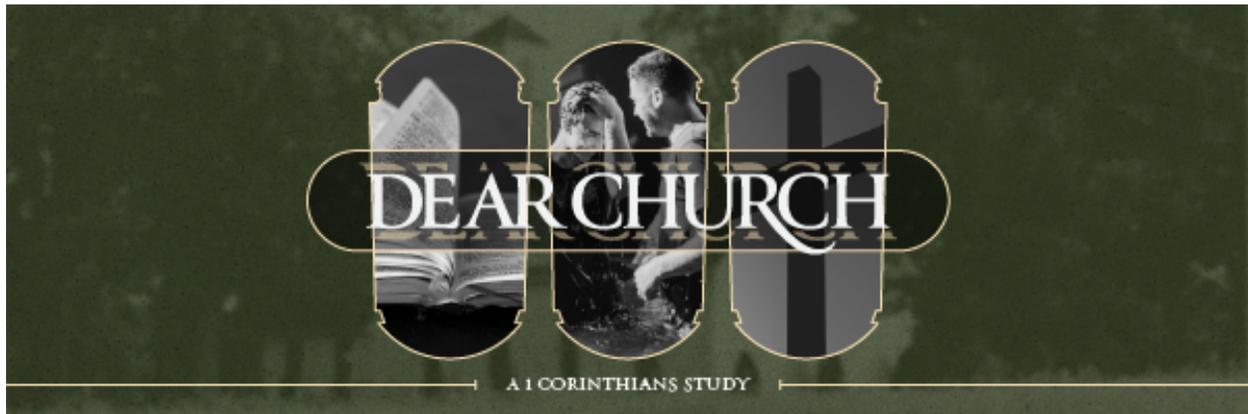
kingdom of God. ¹¹ And that is what some of you were. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.

Revised Standard Version

When one of you has a grievance against a brother, does he dare go to law before the unrighteous instead of the saints? ² Do you not know that the saints will judge the world? And if the world is to be judged by you, are you incompetent to try trivial cases? ³ Do you not know that we are to judge angels? How much more, matters pertaining to this life! ⁴ If then you have such cases, why do you lay them before those who are least esteemed by the church? ⁵ I say this to your shame. Can it be that there is no man among you wise enough to decide between members of the brotherhood, ⁶ but brother goes to law against brother, and that before unbelievers? ⁷ To have lawsuits at all with one another is defeat for you. Why not rather suffer wrong? Why not rather be defrauded? ⁸ But you yourselves wrong and defraud, and that even your own brethren. ⁹ Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived; neither the immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor sexual perverts, ¹⁰ nor thieves, nor the greedy, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor robbers will inherit the kingdom of God. ¹¹ And such were some of you. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God.

The Message

¹⁻⁴ And how dare you take each other to court! When you think you have been wronged, does it make any sense to go before a court that knows nothing of God's ways instead of a family of Christians? The day is coming when the world is going to stand before a jury made up of followers of Jesus. If someday you are going to rule on the world's fate, wouldn't it be a good idea to practice on some of these smaller cases? Why, we're even going to judge angels! So why not these everyday affairs? As these disagreements and wrongs surface, why would you ever entrust them to the judgment of people you don't trust in any other way? ⁵⁻⁶ I say this as bluntly as I can to wake you up to the stupidity of what you're doing. Is it possible that there isn't one levelheaded person among you who can make fair decisions when disagreements and disputes come up? I don't believe it. And here you are taking each other to court before people who don't even believe in God! How can they render justice if they don't believe in the *God* of justice? ⁷⁻⁸ These court cases are a black eye on your community. Wouldn't it be far better to just take it, to let yourselves be wronged and forget it? All you're doing is providing fuel for more wrong, more injustice, bringing more hurt to the people of your own spiritual family. ⁹⁻¹¹ Don't you realize that this is not the way to live? Unjust people who don't care about God will not be joining in his kingdom. Those who use and abuse each other, use and abuse sex, use



and abuse the earth and everything in it, don't qualify as citizens in God's kingdom. A number of you know from experience what I'm talking about, for not so long ago you were on that list. Since then, you've been cleaned up and given a fresh start by Jesus, our Master, our Messiah, and by our God present in us, the Spirit.

What's your first reaction to what you've read?

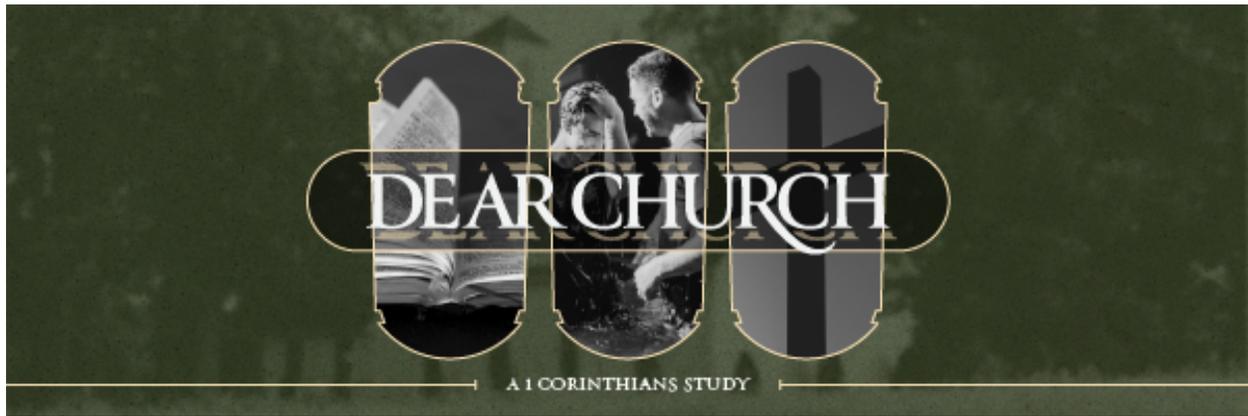
What do you sense is the main problem Paul is addressing here? Explain.

Why do you think Paul is emphasizing this matter?

Do any sentences stand out? Which ones?

Do you see repetitive wording in the different versions of the passage?

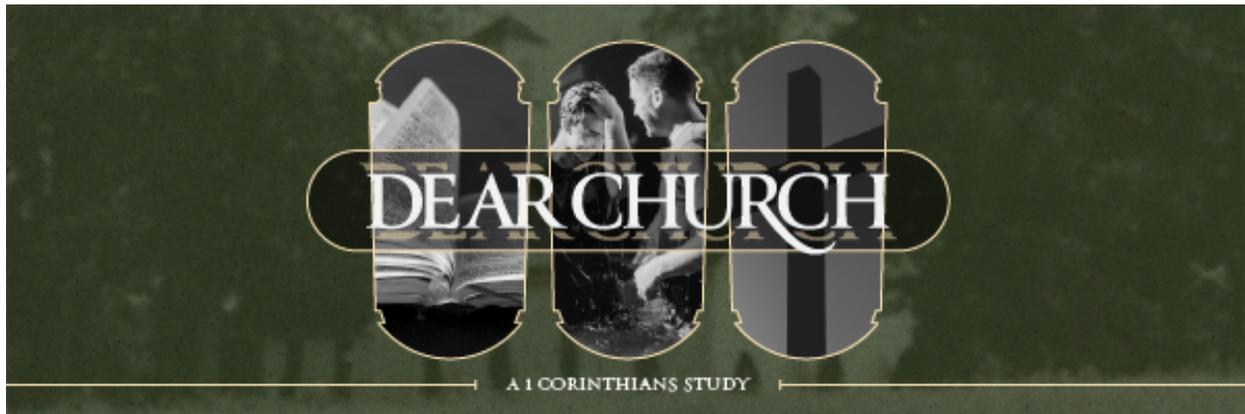
What was confusing?



What was encouraging?

RESPONSE: What is one takeaway from your time with this passage today?

PRAYER: Write a prayer based on what you studied today.



Day 2

Today let's spend some time examining the first portion of this passage. Paul is responding in outrage to the fact that the Corinthian Christians are engaging in competitive civil lawsuits in the public courts, often against one another. The process for trying civil lawsuits before the secular court generally favored the wealthy and well connected since they could afford lawyers and bribes to influence the outcome of their cases. Parties attacked one another's character and often became social enemies as a result. All this was carried out in the public marketplace for all to witness.

With that in mind, let's take a closer look at the passage.

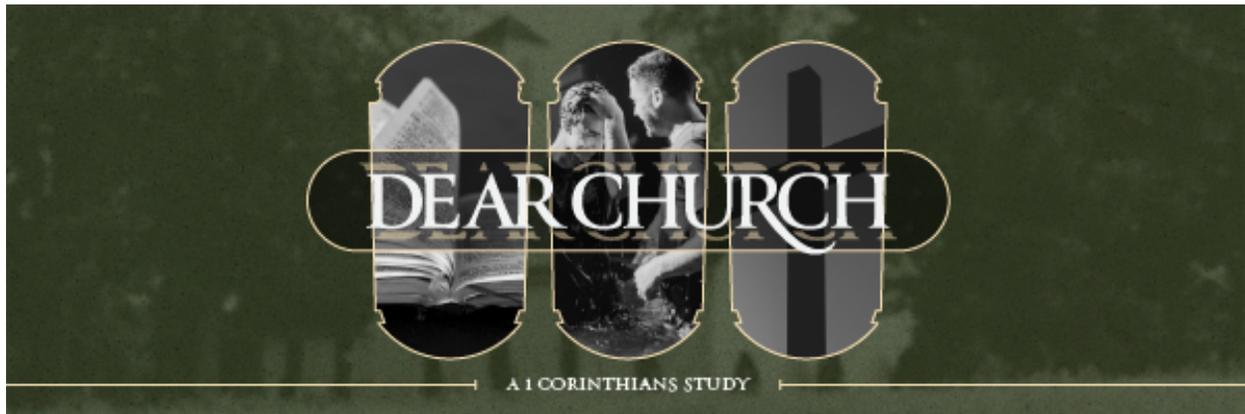
Read 1 Corinthians 6:1-6.

New International Version

If any of you has a dispute with another, do you dare to take it before the ungodly for judgment instead of before the Lord's people? ² Or do you not know that the Lord's people will judge the world? And if you are to judge the world, are you not competent to judge trivial cases? ³ Do you not know that we will judge angels? How much more the things of this life!⁴ Therefore, if you have disputes about such matters, do you ask for a ruling from those whose way of life is scorned in the church? ⁵ I say this to shame you. Is it possible that there is nobody among you wise enough to judge a dispute between believers? ⁶ But instead, one brother takes another to court—and this in front of unbelievers!

Why does Paul think believers filing lawsuits against one another was such a failure on the part of the church of Corinth?

Do you see the filing of civil lawsuits as an issue in the church today? Why or why not?



How do you see believers *today* dishonoring the church and one another in how they handle conflict?

It's important to make a few distinctions about what Paul **is** and **is not** saying when reading this passage:

- Paul is speaking of civil conflict *between believers*, not conflict between a believer and a non-believer.
- Paul is speaking specifically about civil lawsuits, not criminal matters.
- Paul is not saying believers should not submit to the authority of the law of the land.

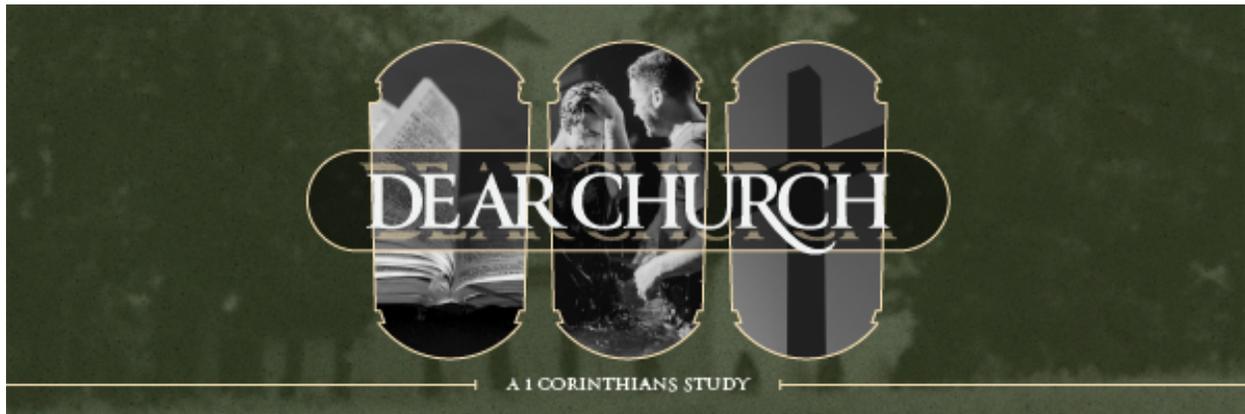
What does Paul say specifically in Romans 13:1-6 about how we are to respond to governing authorities?

With all of this in mind, how would you articulate what the responsibilities are as a follower of Jesus when it comes to disagreements with fellow brothers and sisters in Christ?

In verses 5-6, Paul lovingly shames the believers of the church in Corinth. Why does it matter how they handle conflict?

RESPONSE: What is one takeaway from your time with this passage today?

Prayer: Invite God into any questions you have about your study today and ask Him how He's asking you to respond.



Day 3

Anyone living in the Indianapolis metro area likely encounters a number of roundabouts in their daily commute. I've quickly learned that in traversing the roundabouts you can be an aggressor or an accommodator. Because drivers are required to make quick decisions based on traffic moving all around them, their decision to come to a stop, or drive through doesn't always match the decisions of the drivers around them. Drivers often must swerve or brake suddenly to accommodate the incoming cars. As a driver, I've learned this can be done with an attitude of grace and generosity or an attitude of aggression and hostility. Often, when I choose grace and generosity, it invokes aggression and hostility from other drivers. There doesn't seem to be a win-win scenario.

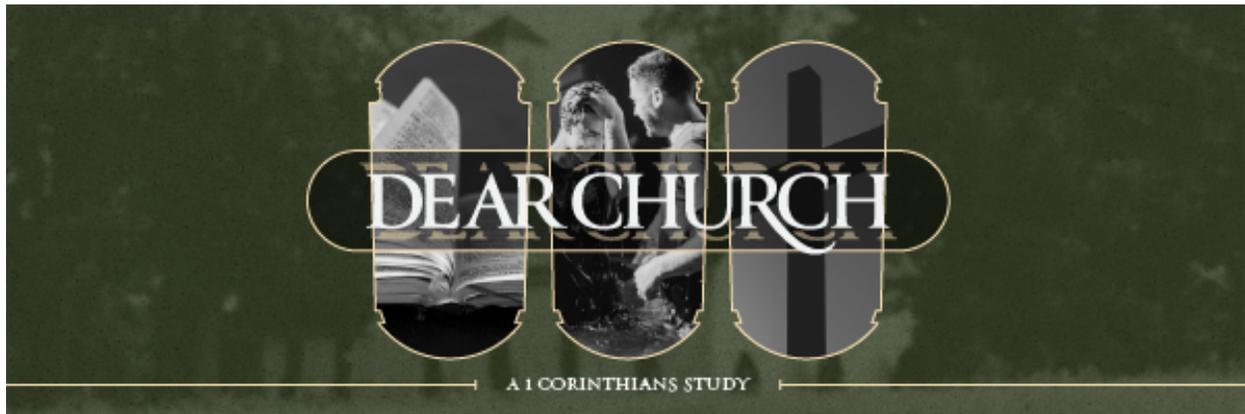
Today as we unpack the second half of this passage, Paul asks the Corinthian church to contend with how they were really being asked to respond when they were wronged by another believer. When Paul addressed the issue of lawsuits in the church, he was not telling them how to act *if* they were wronged by another believer. He was telling them to act this way *when* they were wronged by another believer. Paul knew that conflict was inevitable, even between brothers and sisters in Christ, so he proposed a new way of responding. Paul wanted the early church to realize that sometimes there isn't a win-win solution to conflict.

Read 1 Corinthians 6:7-11.

New International Version

⁷ The very fact that you have lawsuits among you means you have been completely defeated already. Why not rather be wronged? Why not rather be cheated? ⁸ Instead, you yourselves cheat and do wrong, and you do this to your brothers and sisters. ⁹ Or do you not know that wrongdoers will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: Neither the sexually immoral nor idolaters nor adulterers nor men who have sex with men ¹⁰ nor thieves nor the greedy nor drunkards nor slanderers nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God. ¹¹ And that is what some of you were. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.

How would you describe the way in which Paul attempts to stir up repentance in this passage?



Paul, in this passage, is truly counter-cultural. Our world tells us that we must always get what we're owed, or that if someone wrongs us, we should make that person compensate us fairly. But Paul is telling the Corinthians here that that kind of thinking needs to go right out the door when it comes to how we relate to fellow brothers and sisters in Christ.

In verse 7, Paul asks two questions that get to the heart of how Christians should respond to one another. What are those two questions?

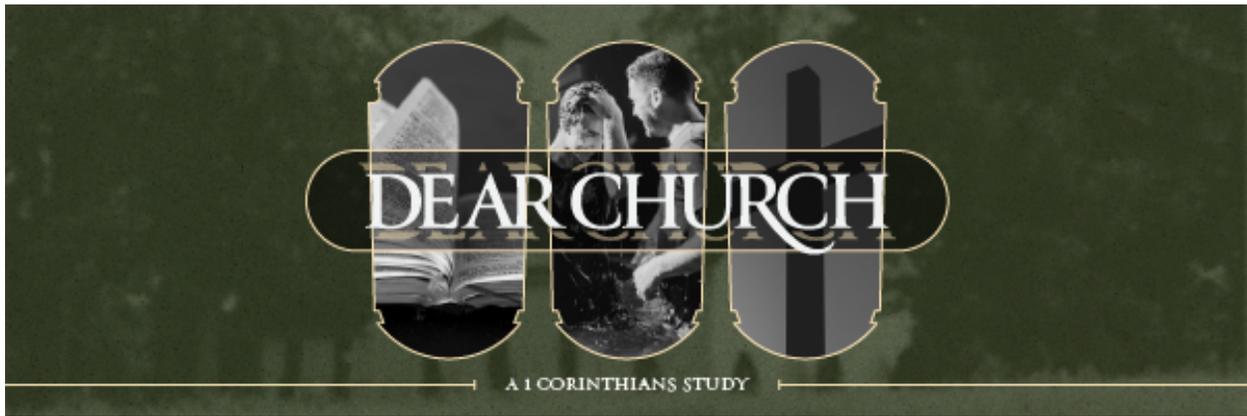
Read 1 Peter 2:19-23. How does our willingness to suffer and endure injustice deepen our intimacy with God?

When you think about values of the church and of yourself individually, how often are you willing to sacrifice being declared right?

In verses 8-10, Paul is cautioning those who claim they have the spirit of God in them, but their lives do not reflect his authority. He declares emphatically – “Do not be deceived”.

What are the other sins Paul mentions in verses 8-10 that he lumps the Corinthians' knack for wronging and cheating one another in with?

Paul is describing here those who will not inherit the Kingdom of God. Essentially, he's saying that there are two ways to operate in the world. We can either align with God's vision for human flourishing or we can align with the world's vision of human flourishing. God's vision is one of sacrificial love, encouragement, service, respect, honor, dignity, purity, holiness, and so on. The



kingdom of this world is one of drunkenness, cheating, stealing, wronging a brother or sister, impurity, and more.

In verse 9, Paul warns the Corinthians to “not be deceived.” How would you describe the relationship between deception and what Paul is articulating here about laying down your own rights, wants, and desires for your brother or sister in Christ?

In verse 11, Paul concludes on a more hopeful note. What are the three verbs Paul uses in this verse to describe what has happened to the Corinthians?

Whose name was this done in?

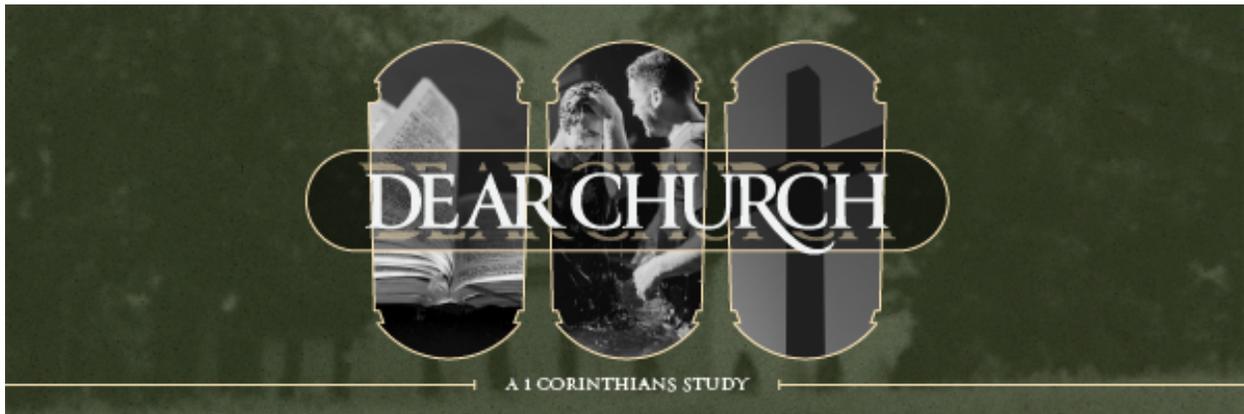
Who were these things done by?

In his commentary on 1 Corinthians, Craig Bloomberg notes:

Paul ends this section with a reminder that they have been washed (inwardly, but possibly thinking of the external rite of baptism as well). Made holy (“sanctified”) and declared righteous (“justified”).

That is good news for all of us.

RESPONSE: What is one takeaway from your time with this passage today?



PRAYER: Invite God into any questions you have about your study today and ask Him how He's asking you to respond.

Day 4

Our passage in 1 Corinthians 6 is all about conflict and disagreements amongst believers. And if I'm being honest, I have witnessed my fair share of lawsuits *between* believers – business deals gone sour, sale of cars that turned out to be lemons, dog bites, disgruntled landlords, etc. But even more than filing lawsuits in court, I've witnessed Christians taking one another to the court of public opinion via opinion pieces in the media, Facebook, or good old-fashioned gossip. Conflict seems inherently woven into the tapestry of life and followers of Christ are not exempt. Sometimes conflict can and should be avoided. However, when that is no longer possible, or when the perceived costs of avoidance exceed the costs of confrontation, Christians need only look to Scripture to discover a conflict resolution method taught by Jesus. In the Scriptures we can find a step-by-step process which aims to resolve conflict and restore relationships.

Let's look at what Scripture has to say about resolving conflict. Read the following verses and respond to the questions below:

Matthew 5:9 Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.

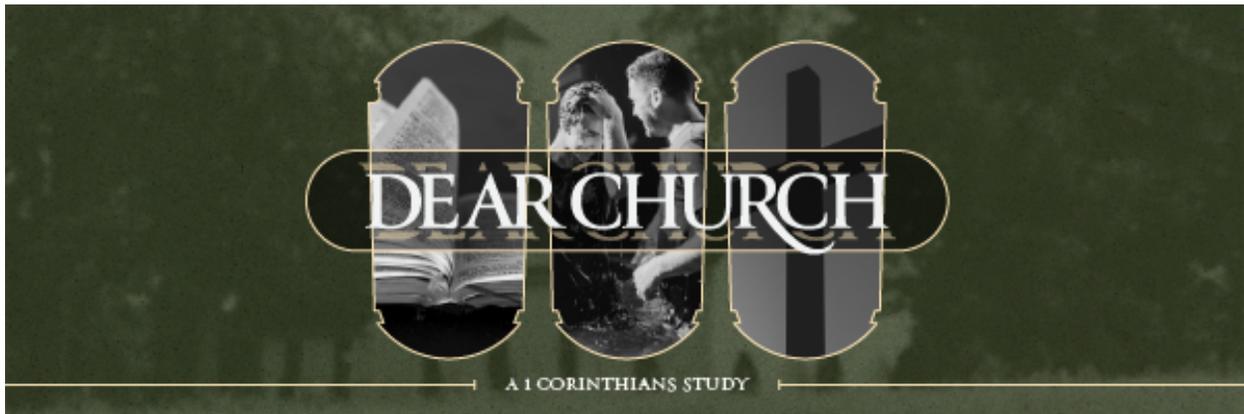
Hebrews 12:14 Make every effort to live in peace with everyone and to be holy; without holiness no one will see the Lord.

Romans 12:18 if it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone.

James 1:5 If any of you lacks wisdom, you should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to you.

What do these verses tell you about the importance of how we respond to conflict?

Who do you struggle to live in peace with?



Jesus provides a framework for addressing conflict in the passage below. Read it and respond below.

Matthew 18:15-20 ¹⁵“If your brother or sister sins, go and point out their fault, just between the two of you. If they listen to you, you have won them over.¹⁶ But if they will not listen, take one or two others along, so that ‘every matter may be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses.’¹⁷ If they still refuse to listen, tell it to the church; and if they refuse to listen even to the church, treat them as you would a pagan or a tax collector.¹⁸ “Truly I tell you, whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.¹⁹ “Again, truly I tell you that if two of you on earth agree about anything they ask for, it will be done for them by my Father in heaven.²⁰ For where two or three gather in my name, there am I with them.”

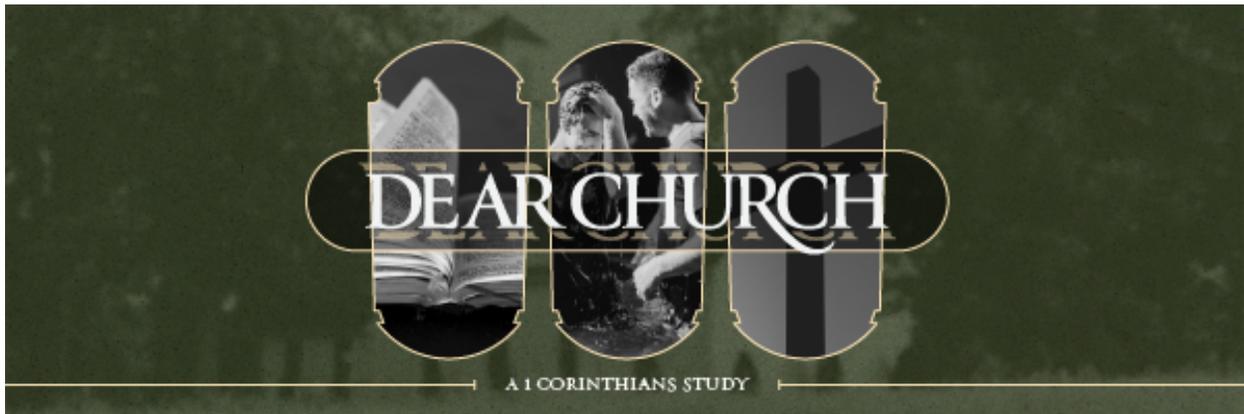
Write out the steps to biblical conflict resolution according to Matthew 18:15-20.

Have you used this process before? If so, how did it go?

Who specifically could you turn to if a conflict was not resolved after confronting your offender?

Is there unresolved conflict in your life?

Have you taken that conflict to the “public courts”? If so, how has that helped or hindered the conflict?



Read Matthew 7:5. Are there any “logs” you need to remove from your eye before you confront your brother or sister in Christ about their failings?

RESPONSE: What is one takeaway from your time with this passage today?

PRAYER: Write a prayer out based on your reading and study today.

Day 5

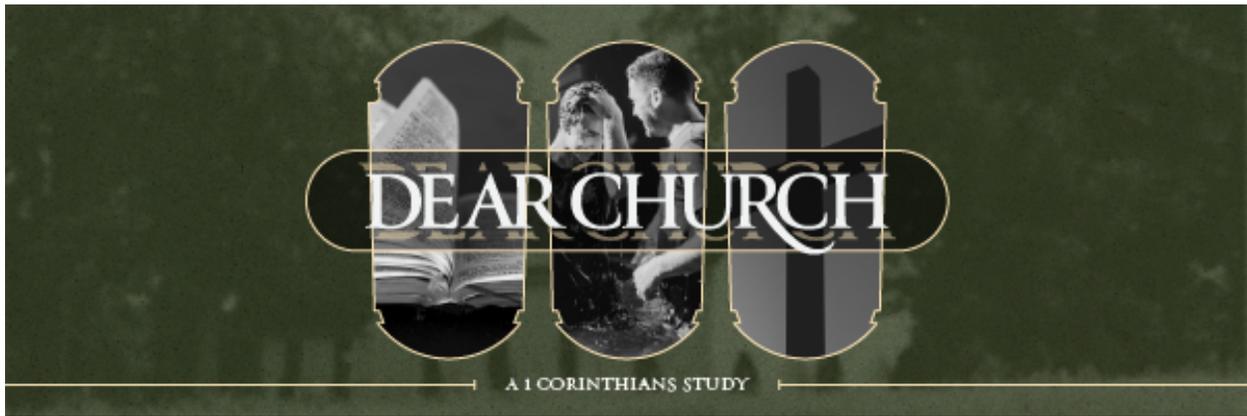
For this last day, we’ll revisit the passage. Read any translation you’d like.

1 Corinthians 6:1-11

New International Version

If any of you has a dispute with another, do you dare to take it before the ungodly for judgment instead of before the Lord’s people? ² Or do you not know that the Lord’s people will judge the world? And if you are to judge the world, are you not competent to judge trivial cases? ³ Do you not know that we will judge angels? How much more the things of this life! ⁴ Therefore, if you have disputes about such matters, do you ask for a ruling from those whose way of life is scorned in the church? ⁵ I say this to shame you. Is it possible that there is nobody among you wise enough to judge a dispute between believers? ⁶ But instead, one brother takes another to court—and this in front of unbelievers!⁷ The very fact that you have lawsuits among you means you have been completely defeated already. Why not rather be wronged? Why not rather be cheated? ⁸ Instead, you yourselves cheat and do wrong, and you do this to your brothers and sisters. ⁹ Or do you not know that wrongdoers will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: Neither the sexually immoral nor idolaters nor adulterers nor men who have sex with men^[a] ¹⁰ nor thieves nor the greedy nor drunkards nor slanderers nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God. ¹¹ And that is what some of you were. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.

How does our approach to conflict communicate our identity?



What did you learn this week that challenged you most?

What did you learn this week that encouraged you most?

What did you learn about yourself from this study?

What did you learn about God?

What lingering questions do you have?

PRAYER: Write a prayer out based on your reading and study this week.