Grace Baptist Church/CIC/CIC Dr. Rick Griffith

20 Sep 1998/20 Jan 08/21 Oct 12 Message 7 of 24

Simple Deductive 40 Minutes

**To Sue or to Sew**

Title

***1 Corinthians 6:1-11***

**Topic:** Lawsuits

**Attribute:** Reconciling

**Subject:** Disputes between believers

**Complement:** must be solved by believers

**Purpose:** The listeners will not initiate lawsuits against other believers.

# Introduction

### Interest: I’m not sure if you have seen the recent seat belt law, so I thought I’d inform you (explain with slide). You might say this is an innovative way to prevent conflicts!

Seat belt

### Over the years I’ve counseled many Christians in conflict with other believers:

2 person cartoon

#### One couple expressed grief that another couple had been very unfriendly and antagonistic towards them. Hoffs/Coxs

#### One single man had conflict with his girlfriend over whether he should marry her, given their doctrinal differences. John@GBC

#### Another man felt unjustly treated by a dentist in his church over a botched teeth job, so he demanded $100,000 for potential future dental work. Joey

#### One Christian wanted to sack another believer over work-competency issues. This climaxed in him suing a Christian organization. Cox/Pallatt/litigation

### Need: Have you ever had any conflicts with other believers? No? May God forgive you for not telling the truth!

• You?

#### Sometimes in the family of God we see things differently due to our different giftedness, background, priorities, spiritual condition, etc.

#### Sometimes theological differences provide seed for conflict.

#### We don’t always agree—from curtains to car parks to care groups to cuisine!

#### I even heard of one church that split over the colour of the carpet!

### Yes, conflict is inevitable—that is, as long as blood is flowing in your veins! So if you can bleed physically today then it’s only a matter of time before you will bleed emotionally due to disagreements with other believers.

### Now why am I bringing this up? Is it because this church has people arguing? No. Actually, I don’t know of any arguments among us. I am just committed to sequential exposition of Scripture. My last message in this sermon series on 1 Corinthians ended with chapter 5, so I trust that God wants to speak to us today from chapter 6.

Why?

### MI: In your bulletin outline you’ll see the key concept in the text we’ll look at today: Conflicts among Christians are family matters—not for unbelievers to solve. This is clearly taught in 1 Corinthians 6:1.

MI

#### Here Paul acknowledges that disputes between Christians do occur (1a).

##### Paul is not so naive to think that disputes don’t happen.

##### William Barclay notes, “[The Greeks] were characteristically a litigious people. The law courts were one of their chief entertainments…. In a Greek city every man was more or less a lawyer and spent a very great part of his time either deciding or listening to law cases” (in Charles R. Swindoll, *Strong Reproofs for a Scandalous Church: A Study of 1 Corinthians 1:1-6:11* [Insight for Living, 1988], 84).

##### Paul also knew that disputes among Christians also occur. In Acts 15 Paul and Barnabas had their own sharp disagreement!

#### What *is* important though is that disagreements between Christians should not be brought to non-Christians (1b).

### Proof (DQ#2): Now *why* does Paul say this? Why should we solve conflicts among believers ourselves? This is the question addressed in your printed sermon outline. What’s so bad about going to non-Christians as long as they are impartial in judging?

### Preview: Today we’ll see two basic reasons to have Christians alone arbitrate. The first relates to our competency, the second to our witness. First…

Why?

• Comp

• Witness

# I. We are more competent than unbelievers to solve Christian disputes (2-6, 9-11).

MP

 [Believers have a better ability to judge Christian conflicts than unbelievers have.]

## We will judge even more difficult cases in the future (2-3).

6:2a

Our Future

Rule of Christ

### But *when* will saints judge the world? We will *judge the world* in the millennium, so we ought to be able to judge a single church now (2).

#### We often think of Jesus alone judging the world, but Revelation 19-20 says that after his return the world will still exist for 1000 years before Heaven.

Black

#### Our judging will occur from thrones in our 1000 reign (Rev. 20:4) when saints will rule on the earth with Christ (Rev. 5:10).

Rev 20:4

#### Each of us will have our own realm of judgment—I’ve already put in my request to rule over Hawaii! :–)

#### We don’t have a lot of information in Scripture on how all this will take place, but the point is clear here—since we will judge the entire world in the millennium, we ought to be able to judge a single church now. It’s time to get some practice!

### We will also *judge angels* in the future, so we ought to be able to judge people now (3).

Satan’s fall 1

#### Scripture says one third of God’s angels rebelled against Him and became demons.

Satan’s fall 2

#### But all demons are not equally bad—so He will give *us* the responsibility of meting out the appropriate judgment to them!

#### Now if we’re preparing to judge angelic beings in the spiritual realm—which will be a pretty heavy assignment—then we ought to be able to judge local church matters now without getting unbelievers involved.

Judge Demons

(But aren’t professional judges more experienced in these matters since they deal with them every day? No, Paul goes on to say…)

## Even inexperienced Christians judge church affairs better than non-Christians (4-6).

4-6

### Even not-so-influential members judge better than unbelievers (4).

• 6:4 Influential

#### They understand what God’s Word says on conflict resolution.

#### But 1 Corinthians 2:14 says the natural man cannot understand the things of God.

##### Swindoll gives an insightful word here (ibid, 86):

##### “Paul isn’t putting down unbelievers when he says ‘judges who are of no account in the church.’ He just wants to show that the unsaved don’t have the spiritual insight available to believers. Asking a non-Christian for godly advice is like seeking marriage counseling from someone who been divorced several times or entering a writing contest with judges who cannot read. The idea is not only absurd, but, as Paul says, it’s shameful (v. 5).”

#### Some years ago in Singapore a church did a very unique thing.

##### There were two groups in the congregation divided over certain matters and these groups could not agree.

##### They could have sued one another for the church property, staff positions, money, etc.

##### Yet instead they chose a better route—to keep the matter within God’s family. Three well-known, impartial, and respected Christian leaders were selected to arbitrate and both groups agreed to abide by their decision.

##### In the end the two groups separated, but they did abide by the decision of the outside panel. What could have been very ugly stayed away from the eye of the press and the watching non-Christian world.

### Even not-so-wise Christians judge better than unbelievers (5-6).

• 6:5-6 Wise

#### I can hear some say, “But don’t you know that Singapore’s Justice System has been rated top in the world?

#### Yes, and I thank God for this!

##### But these surveys only compare secular justice systems with one another—it didn’t survey a group of godly believers on how well they handled disputes.

##### The real issue is not the fairness of the system.

##### In Paul’s mind, the issue is whether *unbelievers* render these judgments.

(Let’s jump to verses 9-11 and see what Paul says [read it]. How does verse 9’s indictment against the wicked inheriting salvation relate to lawsuits?)

## Salvation and sanctification are more important in making judgments than expertise (9-11).

SP C

### Being an expert but unbelieving judge doesn’t mean you’re free from a debauched life (9-10).

### In contrast, the church is saved and sanctified—and thus more able to discern between believers (11).

### Now why *do* we go to unbelievers for judgment? There’s a lot of reasons…

Why go to unbelievers?

#### We’re more concerned about our wealth than our witness.

• Wealth

#### We want to vindicate our pride rather than our Prince.

• Pride

#### We think the unjustified are more just than the justified!

• Justice

#### We think that the court system will be more equitable.

• Equity

#### We think that the court system will be faster. Maybe. But in our efficiency-oriented society we often get duped into thinking that faster is always better.

### Despite the seeming reasonableness of these excuses, the bottom line is that God says not to go to unbelievers for judgment.

(So we’ve seen that one reason we should solve conflicts among ourselves is simply because we have the necessary equipment—making us more competent than unbelievers to settle disputes. Verses 7-8 provide a second reason not to bring these matters before the unsaved. Paul says…)

# II. It’s better to suffer personal loss than for the whole church to lose its witness (7-8).

MPI

MPII

**[Christ’s reputation is more important than yours—or mine!]**

**[Jesus said you are the light of the world—and for the world to see His light in us, it just may cost us something.]**

Lighthouse

## Better that *one Christian* be wronged than *the church* be wronged from litigating saints (7).

### I was once tempted to sue another Christian. He had sold Susan and me a new home with the promise that he would put up a side and back fence. I waited… and waited… and waited for months. He kept promising but no fence was forthcoming—but lots of varmints from the field behind us were!

Win by losing (6:7)

### Since a lawsuit would have damaged my testimony (especially since I was the new pastor in the area!), I built my own fence with my neighbor. I was wronged but by God’s grace He helped me do right—even though it cost me time and money—and back aches!

(So it’s better to be wronged than to be wrong! Also…)

## Better to *be cheated* than to lose ministry opportunities by cheating other Christians (8).

### This is especially difficult for American Christians to grasp. The USA has 5% of the world’s population but 70% of the world’s lawyers! I think church attendance has continued to decline by generation mostly because believers aren’t living like believers.

USA Attend

• 6:8

###  [New Era fiasco]

Black

#### In the early 1990s an organization called New Era offered Christian organizations in the US an amazing promise.

#### New Era had an anonymous donor who would match any gifts from Christian organizations within six months.

#### So we told our donors. One gave $1000 that was sent to New Era and processed. Six months later…wala! $2000 showed up in our support account.

#### Others gave to our mission $10,000 and $20,000 was soon returned.

#### In fact, dozens of mission agencies got in the action so that tens of millions of dollars were sent to New Era and doubled.

#### Until the bubble burst. The leader was caught—and indicted for fraud. When the truth came out, there really was no anonymous donor. The leader simply used the money of one organization to pay another in an escalating scenario to build enough trust so that the big money would come in, but then the whole system came crashing down and my mission alone (WorldVenture) lost over a million dollars.

#### So the government stepped in and froze the remaining money until it could be determined who gets what in settlement.

#### Now what typically happens in a situation like this is that every organization sues one another over their rightful piece of the pie. Our mission lost a million but others lost much more—so how would the remaining funds be allocated?

#### Instead of meeting to sue, these missions all met to sew! They agreed on the criteria for the return of the remaining funds. This had many wonderful results:

##### Not a single lawsuit came about between these many mission agencies.

##### It saved millions of dollars in legal fees.

##### It assured that unbelievers would not have to settle disputes among believers.

##### It was an incredible testimony to the watching, unbelieving legal experts. They had never seen so large a settlement handled in such a peaceful, selfless way. They’re probably still scratching their heads!

##### God was glorified in what could have been a great victory for the enemy.

(So 1 Corinthians 6 says believers should solve their disputes without going to the unbelieving world. Nice principle, but life is a bit more complicated now than it was in Paul’s day. So…)

MPII

MPI

# III. Let’s apply this principal to some special situations today.

MP
Q&A

 [I can think of five relevant questions related to whether Christians sue or sew. First…]

## What if you’re legally right?

• Legal

### It’s interesting that Paul doesn’t even get into this messy question. You know, sometimes it’s hard to tell who’s right in a dispute.

### Often our concern is that we are right.

### But God’s concern is that we are right with people!

### He is a relational God—a reconciling God!

• Criminal

## What if the issue is a criminal offense?

### I heard the story of a man in a church who was sexually abusing two minor girls in the congregation. That’s not just a dispute. It’s against the law.

### I would hope in such a situation that the church would do all it could towards reconciliation but also let the governing authorities prosecute the criminal.

(Another question. OK, so you shouldn’t sue a believer *himself* or take *him* to court, but…)

## Is it OK to claim against a Christian’s insurance company?

• Insurance

### Would submitting an insurance claim against another believer’s insurance company also be an example of going “to law against another” believer, thus violating verse 6?

### Let’s say that both Lewis and I park outside here.

#### In this tight spot and in a hurry, I accidentally step on the accelerator instead of the brake and smash my BMW into Lewis’s Mercedes (ha ha). Should we claim against one another’s insurance companies?

#### I think this is allowable. We both have paid our premiums in order to protect us from mistakes like this.

### While I was in seminary Susan once got a great job as an administrative assistant at a real estate development corporation. In fact, her boss was a Christian.

#### But within ten months something snapped in him and he fired Susan. She was pregnant, looking for a new job, and we had only $6.12 in our bank account, so Susan applied for $400 of government unemployment insurance.

#### He felt it was unethical to claim insurance so he took us to court! We disagreed, saying this was the whole purpose of insurance—to help us through times of need.

## Can Christian sue non-Christians?

• Unbel

### Nothing in Scripture prohibits it, but Jesus did say when someone hits you on the right cheek, turn to the other and when asked for your shirt, give him your cloak as well.

### On the other hand, Jesus also said not to throw your pearls before swine, so there seems to be a balance here.

### A young motorcyclist once smashed into my car and drove off, but a witness told me who did it, so I called him up. He promised to pay the $650 in repairs but after months never paid a cent. He was an unbeliever so I felt no scriptural prohibition and sued him. In the end I got only $100 and it wasn’t even worth the effort. I bought junk parts and bolted them on my car myself. Now I wish I hadn’t sued him in the first place.

• Defend

## A Final Question: Can we defend ourselves if another believer litigates against us?

### Verse 7 says it is better to be wronged than to have ungodly people solve our problems.

### But does that mean we should get walked all over?

### Suppose someone in this room gets angry at this church and sues us for $40 million in an attempt to destroy this church.

#### Should we say, “Jesus said in Matthew 5:42, ‘Give to the one who asks you.’ That means we should hand our money over to him, right?”

#### Here also we must keep certain things in balance. It’s one thing to lose some money personally, but it’s another thing to allow someone to destroy God’s work while we stand by idly. In this case church discipline would be appropriate too.

Black

(The list of questions on this matter is endless. I’ve only addressed five to stimulate your thinking. But let’s not miss the big picture here…)

# Conclusion

### Disputes between believers must be solved by believers (Main Idea).

CIC Covenant

MI

### The justified should never go to the unjustified for justice (restated MI)!

### Remember that all members have already committed to resolve conflicts among believers only in our Church Covenant. Let’s recite Article xiv together: “As members of one body, we pledge to… resolve all conflicts with arbitration only among believers without recourse to the secular courts.”

### Did you notice the title of this message: “To Sue or to Sew”? Do you understand it now? God wants Christians to unite—litigating before those who do not hold our values will only tear our wounds wide open rather than enable us to sew them up and heal. I have given you 15 illustrations of this in this sermon.

• or Sew

Sue?

### How does all this relate? “What I can do now to better solve conflicts is…”

• Table

#### If you have a marriage or business or any other problem with a believer, go to Christians for counsel and mediation—from beginning to end.

Black

#### If you have an unresolved problem here at CIC, follow the steps of Matthew 18:15-17 rather than go to the so-called experts. Our leaders can help after step 1.

#### For you parents, I think a related principle here is to help your kids resolve conflict by themselves. As Susan and I raised our sons, we made it a point not to be arbitrators. We just gave them time alone and then later asked if things were resolved. Our sons are great friends now, as they have had to resolve issues between them.

#### We’ll never avoid relational wounds among us altogether in this life—but we can follow God’s prescription for healing.

#### Whatever we do, let’s never dishonor the Lord by taking our problems to those who will divide us.

Grace Baptist Church Dr. Rick Griffith

20 Sep 1998 Message #7

Simple Deductive 40 Minutes

**To Sue or to Sew**

***1 Corinthians 6:1-11***

**Topic:** Lawsuits

**Subject:** Disputes between believers

**Complement:** must be solved by believers

**Purpose:** The listeners will not initiate lawsuits against other believers.

# Introduction

### Interest: The past two weeks I’ve counseled several Christians over conflicts between them and other believers:

#### One couple expressed grief that another couple has been very unfriendly and antagonistic towards them.Hoffs/Coxs

#### One single man has had conflict with his girlfriend over whether he should marry her, given their doctrinal differences.John@GBC

#### Another family feels unjustly treated by another person in their church.Joey

#### One Christian wanted to sack another believer over work-competency issues. This climaxed in him suing a Christian organization on Thursday. Cox/Pallatt/litigation

#### An SBC student was asked by his church to be separated from his future missionary wife for their first year of marriage so he can pastor this church to pay them back for supporting him through school—the student disagreed.KenChan/HKchurch

### Need: Have you ever had any conflicts with other believers? No? May God forgive you for not telling the truth!

#### Sometimes in the family of God we see things differently due to our different giftedness, background, priorities, spiritual condition, etc.

#### Sometimes theological differences provide seed for conflict.

#### We don’t always agree—from curtains to car parks to care groups to cuisine!

#### I even heard of one church that split over the colour of the carpet!

### Yes, conflict is inevitable—that is, as long as blood is flowing in your veins! So if you can bleed physically today then it’s only a matter of time before you will bleed emotionally due to disagreements with other believers.

### MI: But in your bulletin outline you’ll see the key concept in the text we’ll look at today: Conflicts among Christians are family matters—not for unbelievers to solve. This is clearly taught in 1 Corinthians 6:1.

#### Here Paul acknowledges that disputes between Christians do occur (1a).

##### Paul is not so naive to think this doesn’t happen.

##### After all, in Acts 15 Paul and Barnabas had their own sharp disagreement!

#### What *is* important though is that arguments between Christians should not be brought to non-Christians (1b).

### Proof (DQ#2): Now why does Paul say this? Why should we solve conflicts among believers ourselves? This is the question addressed in your bulletin sermon outline. What’s so bad about going to non-Christians as long as they are impartial in judging?

### Preview: Today we’ll see two basic reasons to have Christians alone arbitrate. First…

# I. We are more competent than unbelievers to solve Christian disputes (2-6, 9-11).

 [Believers have a better ability to judge Christian conflicts than unbelievers have.]

## We will judge even more difficult cases in the future (2-3).

### But *when* will saints judge the world? We will *judge the world* in the millennium, so we ought to be able to judge a single church now (2).

#### This judging will occur from thrones in our 1000 reign (Rev. 20:4) when saints will rule on the earth with Christ (Rev. 5:10).

#### Each of us will have our own realm of judgment—I’ve already put in my request to rule over Hawaii! :–)

#### We don’t have a lot of information in Scripture on how all this will take place, but the point is clear here—since we will judge the entire world in the millennium, we ought to be able to judge a single church now. It’s time to get some practice!

### We will also *judge angels* in the future, so we ought to be able to judge people now (3).

#### Scripture says one third of God’s angels rebelled against Him and became demons.

#### But all demons are not equally bad—so He will give *us* the responsibility of meting out the appropriate judgment to them!

#### Now if we’re preparing for judging angelic beings in the spiritual realm—which will be a heavy assignment indeed—then we ought to be able to judge local church matters now without getting unbelievers involved.

(But aren’t professional judges more experienced in these matters since they deal with them every day? No, Paul goes on to say…)

## Even inexperienced Christians judge church affairs better than non-Christians (4-6).

### Even not-so-influential members judge better than unbelievers (4).

#### They understand what God’s Word says on conflict resolution.

#### But 1 Corinthians 2:14 says the natural man cannot understand the things of God.

#### That’s why in one situation in Singapore the church did a very unique thing.

##### There were two groups in the congregation divided over certain matters and these groups could not agree.

##### They could have sued one another for the church property, staff positions, money, etc.

##### Yet instead they chose a better route—to keep the matter within God’s family. Three well-known, impartial, and respected Christian leaders were selected to arbitrate and both groups agreed to abide by their decision.

##### In the end the two groups separated, but they did abide by the decision of the outside panel. What could have been very ugly stayed away from the eye of the press and the watching non-Christian world.

### Even not-so-wise Christians judge better than unbelievers (5-6).

#### I can hear some say, “But didn’t you see the *Straits Times* September 14, 1998 article? Singapore’s Justice System has been rated top in the world?

#### Yes, I saw it. In fact, it’s right here in my hand! And I thank God for this!

##### But this survey only compares secular justice systems with one another—it didn’t survey a group of godly believers on how well they handled disputes.

##### The real issue is not the fairness of the system.

##### In Paul’s mind, the issue is whether *unbelievers* render these judgments.

(Let’s jump to verses 9-13 and see what Paul says. How does this indictment against the wicked inheriting salvation relate to lawsuits?)

## Salvation and sanctification are more important in making judgments than expertise (9-11).

### Being an expert but unbelieving judge doesn’t mean you’re free from a debauched life (9-10).

### In contrast, the church is saved and sanctified—and thus more able to discern between believers (11).

### Now why *do* we go to unbelievers for judgment? There’s a lot of reasons…

#### We’re more concerned about our wealth than our witness.

#### We want to vindicate our pride rather than our Prince.

#### We think the unjustified are more just than the justified!

#### We want to spare rumors in the church about us—so we bring them outside.

#### We think that the court system will be more equitable.

#### We think that the court system will be faster. Maybe. But in our efficiency-oriented society we often get duped into thinking that faster is always better.

### Despite the seeming reasonableness of these excuses, the bottom line is that God says not to go to unbelievers for judgment.

(So we’ve seen that one reason we should solve conflicts among ourselves is simply because we have the necessary equipment—making us more competent than unbelievers to settle disputes. Verses 7-8 provide a second reason not to bring these matters before the unsaved. Paul says…)

# II. It’s better to suffer personal loss than for the whole church to lose its witness (7-8).

 **[Christ’s reputation is more important than yours—or mine!]**

## Better that *one Christian* be wronged than *the church* be wronged from litigating believers (7).

### I was once tempted to sue another Christian. He had sold Susan and me a new home with the promise that he would put up a side and back fence. I waited… and waited… and waited for months. He kept promising but no fence was forthcoming—but lots of varmints from the field behind us were!

### Since a lawsuit would have damaged my testimony (especially since I was the new pastor in the area!), I built my own fence with my neighbor. I was wronged but by God’s grace He helped me do right—even though it cost me time and money—and back aches!

(So it’s better to be wronged than to be wrong! Also…)

## Better to *be cheated* than to lose ministry opportunities by cheating other Christians (8).

### Why is it better for a believer to be cheated money or ministry positions than to take another Christian before unbelievers?

#### Many times these cases aren’t initiated for money or being economically depressed. That’s why the rich generally sue more than the poor.

#### Instead, there is a pride factor here—the need to prove that we are right—and if we can get some money out of it, we feel justified.

### [New Era fiasco]

#### In the early 1990s an organization called New Era offered Christian organizations in the US an amazing promise.

#### New Era had an anonymous donor who would match any gifts from Christian organizations within six months.

#### So we told our donors. One gave $1000 that was sent to New Era and processed. Six months later…wala! $2000 showed up in our support account.

#### Others gave to our mission $10,000 and $20,000 was soon returned.

#### In fact, dozens of mission agencies got in the action so that tens of millions of dollars were sent to New Era and doubled.

#### Until the bubble burst. The leader was caught—and indicted for fraud. When the truth came out, there really was no anonymous donor. The leader simply used the money of one organization to pay another in an escalating scenario to build enough trust so that the big money would come in, but then the whole system came crashing down and my mission alone (CBInternational) lost over a million dollars.

#### So the government stepped in and froze the remaining money until it could be determined who gets what in settlement.

#### Now what typically happens in a situation like this is that every organization begins to sue one another over their rightful piece of the pie. Our mission lost a million but others lost much more—so how would the remaining funds be allocated?

#### Instead of meeting to sue, these missions all met to sew! They agreed on the criteria for the return of the remaining funds. This had many wonderful results:

##### Not a single lawsuit came about between these many mission agencies.

##### It saved millions of dollars in legal fees.

##### It assured that unbelievers would not have to settle disputes among believers.

##### It was an incredible testimony to the watching, unbelieving legal experts. They had never seen so large a settlement handled in such a peaceful, selfless way. They’re probably still scratching their heads!

##### God was glorified in what could have been a great victory for the enemy.

(So 1 Corinthians 6 says believers should solve their disputes without going to the unbelieving world. Nice principle, but life is a bit more complicated now than it was in Paul’s day. So…)

# III. Let’s apply this principal to some special situations today.

 [I can think of four relevant questions related to whether Christians sue or sew. First…]

## What if you’re legally right?

### It’s interesting that Paul doesn’t even get into this messy question. You know, sometimes it’s hard to tell who’s right in a dispute.

### Often our concern is that we are right.

### But God’s concern is that we are right with people!

### He is a relational God—a reconciling God!

(Another question. OK, so you shouldn’t sue a believer *himself* or take *him* to court, but…)

## Is it OK to file a claim against a Christian’s insurance company?

### Would submitting an insurance claim against another believer’s insurance company also be an example of going “to law against another” believer, thus violating verse 6?

### Let’s say that William Lenn was triple-parked outside in typical Grace Baptist fashion.

#### In this tight spot and in a hurry, William accidentally steps on the accelerator instead of the brake and smashes into Tony Chan’s car. Should they claim against one another’s insurance companies?

#### I think this is allowable. They both have paid their premiums in order to protect them from mistakes such as this.

### While I was in seminary Susan once got a great job as an administrative assistant at a real estate development corporation. In fact, her boss was a Christian.

#### But within ten months something snapped in him and he sacked Susan. She was pregnant, looking for a new job, and we had only $6.12 in our bank account, so Susan applied for $400 of government unemployment insurance.

#### He felt it was unethical to claim insurance so he took us to court! We disagreed, saying this was the whole purpose of insurance—to help us through times of need.

## Can Christian sue non-Christians?

### Nothing in Scripture prohibits it, but Jesus did say when someone hits you on the right cheek, turn to the other and when asked for your shirt, give him your cloak as well.

### On the other hand, Jesus also said not to throw your pearls before swine, so there seems to be a balance here.

### A young motorcyclist once smashed into my car and drove off, but a witness told me who did it, so I called him up. He promised to pay the $650 in repairs but after months never paid a cent. He was an unbeliever so I felt no scriptural prohibition and sued him. In the end I got only $100 and it wasn’t even worth the effort. I bought junk parts and bolted them on my car myself. Now I wish I hadn’t sued him in the first place.

## A Fourth Question: Can we defend ourselves if another believer litigates against us?

### Verse 7 says it is better to be wronged than to have ungodly people solve our problems.

### But does that mean we should get walked all over?

### Suppose someone in this room gets angry at this church and sues us for $40 million in an attempt to destroy this church.

#### Should we say, “Jesus said in Matthew 5:42, ‘Give to the one who asks you.’ That means we should hand our deed over to him, right?”

#### Here also we must keep certain things in balance. It’s one thing to lose some money personally, but it’s another thing to allow someone to destroy God’s work while we stand by idly. In this case church discipline would be appropriate too.

(The list of questions on this matter is endless. I’ve only addressed four to stimulate your thinking. But let’s not miss the big picture here…)

# Conclusion

### Disputes between believers must be solved by believers (Main Idea).

### The justified should never go to the unjustified for justice (restated MI)!

### Did you notice the title of this message: “To Sue or to Sew”? Do you understand it now? God wants Christians to unite—litigating before those who do not hold our values will only tear our wounds wide open rather than enabling us to sew them up and heal. I have given you 15 illustrations of this in this sermon.

### How does all this relate?

#### If you have a marriage or business or any other problem with a believer, go to Christians for counsel and mediation—from beginning to end.

#### If you have an unresolved problem here at GBC, follow the steps of Matthew 18:15-17 rather than go to the so-called experts. Our leaders in particular can help.

#### We’ll never avoid relational wounds among us altogether in this life—but we can follow God’s prescription for healing.

#### Whatever we do, let’s never dishonour the Lord by taking our problems to those who will divide us.

**Preliminary Questions**

**Verses Questions**

Context What did the author record just prior to this passage? Paul just told them to discipline a man involved sexually with his stepmother.

Purpose Why is this passage in the Bible?

Background What historical context helps us understand this passage?

1 Why is Paul’s criteria ungodly vs. saints for those who make a judgment—why not professional judges vs. laymen?

 Why does Paul use deductive reasoning again as he did in chapter 5—stating the point first and then supplying reasons for his point? Paul wanted to be perfectly clear!

2 When will saints judge the world? This judging will occur from thrones in the millennium (Rev. 20:4) when saints will rule on the earth with Christ (Rev. 5:10).

3 When will saints judge angels?

4 Who would be men of little account in the church?

5 Why does Paul admit that he wants to shame the Corinthians? What good will shame do?

6 Would submitting an insurance claim against another believer’s insurance company also be an example of going “to law against another” believer?

7 Why is it better for a believer to lose money than to take another Christian to court? Typically these cases are not initiated due to need for money or being economically depressed. Instead, there is a pride factor here—the need to prove that we are right.

9 How does this indictment against the wicked inheriting salvation relate to lawsuits?

11 Is Paul implying that being justified in terms of salvation means that we need not be justified in terms of legal matters?

**Tentative Subject/Complement Statements**

Disputes between believers must be solved by believers.

The justified should never go to the unjustified for justice!

Conflicts among Christians are family matters—not for unbelievers to solve.

**Possible Illustrations**

Hypothetical—Suppose two Christians get into an automobile accident. Should they claim against one another’s insurance companies?

New Era fiasco—not a single lawsuit came about between these many mission agencies.

Joey & Hsueh Tsing (daughter Joanna) vs. the GBC dentist

Tom vs. Susan at Parkford Companies

Temptation to sue Bob over the incomplete fence on Springtide Drive.

My lawsuit against Mark over the car damage

Singapore Justice System has been rated top in the world (*Straits Times* Sept 14, 1998 article)

—The issue is not the fairness of the system.

—the issue is whether judgments are rendered by unbelievers.

Why do we go to unbelievers for judgment?

—We are more concerned about our pocketbook than our witness.

—We want our pride to be vindicated as showing we were right.

—We think that unbelievers are more competent to judge matters.

—We want to spare rumours in the church about us.

—We think that the court system will be faster.

—We think that the court system will be more equitable.

How were lawsuits conducted in ancient Corinth?

LAWSUITS

ARGUMENTS

CONFLICT

**To Sue or to Sew**

***1 Corinthians 6:1-11***

**Exegetical Outline**

***Exegetical Idea:* The reasons disputes between believers must be solved by Christians are because they are more competent and will cause less shame to the body.**

# I. (1) The ones to solve disputes between believers must be Christians.

## A. Paul acknowledges that disputes between Christians do occur (1a).

## B. Arguments between Christians should not be brought to non-Christians (1b).

# II. (2-11) The reasons believers’ disputes must be solved by Christians are because of the church’s competency and witness.

## A. Believers are more competent than unbelievers to solve Christian disputes (2-6, 9-11).

### 1. Believers will judge even more difficult cases in the future (2-3).

#### a) We will judge the world in the millennium, so we ought to be able to judge a single church now (2).

#### b) We will judge angels in the future, so we ought to be able to judge people now (3).

### 2. Even inexperienced Christians make better judges than non-Christians (4-6).

#### a) Even non-leadership caliber members judge better than unbelievers (4).

#### b) Even not-so-wise Christians judge better than unbelievers (5-6).

### 3. Salvation and sanctification are more important in making judgments than expertise (9-11).

#### a) Even expert but unbelieving judges aren’t saved which leads them to debauched lives (9-10).

#### b) In contrast, the church is saved and sanctified—and thus more able to discern between believers (11).

## B. It’s better to suffer a personal loss than to have the whole church lose its witness (7-8).

### 1. Better that one Christian *be wronged* than the church be wronged from litigating believers (7).

### 2. Better to lose money than to lose ministry opportunities by cheating other Christians (8).

**Homiletical Outline** (Simple deductive form)

# Introduction

### 1. Interest: The past two weeks I’ve counseled several Christians over conflicts between them and other believers:

#### a) One couple expressed grief that another couple has been very unfriendly and antagonistic towards them. Hoffs/Coxs

#### b) One single has conflict over whether he should marry another believer with doctrinal differences.John@GBC

#### c) Another family feels they have been unjustly treated by a Christian professional.Joey

#### d) One Christian wants to sack another Christian over personality and work-competency issues.Cox/Pallatt

#### e) An SBC student has been asked by his church to be separated from his future missionary wife for their first year of marriage to pastor the church.KenChan/HKchurch

### 2. Need: Have you ever had any conflicts with other believers? No? You liar!

### 3. MI: Conflicts among Christians are family matters—not for unbelievers to solve (6:1).

#### a) Paul acknowledges that disputes between Christians do occur (1a).

#### b) But arguments between Christians should not be brought to non-Christians (1b).

### 4. Proof (DQ#2): Why should we solve conflicts among believers ourselves?

# I. We are more competent than unbelievers to solve Christian disputes (2-6, 9-11).

## A. We will judge even more difficult cases in the future (2-3).

### 1. We will judge the world in the millennium, so we ought to be able to judge a single church now (2).

### 2. We will judge angels in the future, so we ought to be able to judge people now (3).

## B. Even inexperienced Christians make better judges than non-Christians in church affairs (4-6).

### 1. Even non-leadership caliber members judge better than unbelievers (4).

### 2. Even not-so-wise Christians judge better than unbelievers (5-6).

## C. Salvation and sanctification are more important in making judgments than expertise (9-11).

### 1. Even expert but unbelieving judges aren’t saved which leads them to debauched lives (9-10).

### 2. In contrast, the church is saved and sanctified—and thus more able to discern between believers (11).

# II. It’s better to suffer a personal loss than to have the whole church lose its witness (7-8).

## A. Better that one Christian *be wronged* than the church be wronged from litigating believers (7).

## B. Better to lose money than to lose ministry opportunities by cheating other Christians (8).

# III. Let’s apply this principal to some special situations today.

## A. Insurance

## B. Divorce

## C.

# Conclusion

### 1. Disputes between believers must be solved by believers (MI).

### 2. The justified should never go to the unjustified for justice (restated MI).

### 3. Did you notice the title of this message: “To Sue or to Sew”? Do you understand it now?

### 4. Applications

#### a) When you have a marriage or problem, go to Christians for counsel (not even parents who are believers?).

#### b) If you have an unresolved problem here at GBC, follow the Matthew 18:15-17 guidelines rather than going to the so-called experts.

**Introduction**

1. Conflicts among Christians are family matters—not for unbelievers to solve (6:1).

2. Question: Why should we solve conflicts among believers ourselves?

**I. We are more competent than unbelievers to solve Christian disputes (2-6, 9-11).**

A. We will judge even more difficult cases in the future (2-3).

B. Even inexperienced Christians make better judges than non-Christians (4-6).

C. Salvation and sanctification are more important in making judgments than expertise (9-11).

**II. It’s better to suffer a personal loss than to have the whole church lose its witness (7-8).**

A. Better that one Christian *be wronged* than the church be wronged from litigating believers (7).

B. Better to lose money than to lose ministry opportunities by cheating other Christians (8).

**III. Let’s apply this principal to some special situations today.**

A. What if you’re legally right?

B. Is it OK to file a claim against a Christian’s insurance company?

C. Can Christian sue non-Christians?

D. Can we defend ourselves if another believer litigates against us?

**Conclusion**

Disputes between believers must be solved by believers (Main Idea).



**Rick Griffith**

21 October 2012

*Message 7 of 24 in “Becoming Who We Are” 1 Corinthians Series*

**To Sue or to Sew**

***1 Corinthians 6:1-11***

**Introduction**

1. Conflicts among Christians are **\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ *family*** matters—not for unbelievers to solve (6:1).

2. Question: Why should we solve conflicts among believers ourselves?

**I. We are more \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ *competent* than unbelievers to solve Christian disputes (2-6, 9-11).**

A. We will judge even more difficult cases in the future (2-3).

B. Even inexperienced Christians are better judges than non-Christians in church affairs (4-6).

## C. Salvation and sanctification are more important in making judgments than expertise (9-11).

**II. It’s better to suffer personal loss than for the whole church lose its \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ *witness* (7-8).**

A. Better that one Christian *be wronged* than the church be wronged from litigating saints (7).

B. Better to lose money than to lose ministry opportunities by cheating other Christians (8).

**III. Let’s apply this principal to some special situations today.**

A. What if you’re **\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_*legally*** right?

B. What if the issue is a **\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ *criminal*** offense?

C. Is it OK to claim against a Christian’s **\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ *insurance*** company?

D. Can Christians sue **\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ *unbelievers***?

E. Can we **\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ *protect*** ourselves if another believer litigates against us?

**Conclusion**

1. Disputes between \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ ***believers*** must be solved by believers (Main Idea).

2. What I can do right now to better solve conflicts is…

**Home Group Questions:**

1. Read the entire passage of 1 Corinthians 6:1-11 aloud. Look for as many reasons as you can for believers to solve disputes among themselves.

2. Do verses 9-11 mean that no immoral or deceitful person can go to heaven? If not, then what do these verses actually mean?

3. When have you seen conflicts among Christians be decided by unbelievers? What happened to the parties concerned? What happened to their Christian witness?

4. What relationship do you have now that could eventually become a matter that non-Christians could decide? What should you do about it now?