

Seriously? You Have No Excuse!

3-Year Bible Reading Plan

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Tonight I want to encourage you to open your Bibles to the book of 1 Corinthians, primarily chapter 6. Now we are going to reach a few verses back into chapter 5 and before we read this very strategic passage, allow me to remind you a couple of things about not just the church at Corinth but what we know as the book of 1 Corinthians. This was a very educated, sophisticated culture. It was a group of people who were very similar to our culture today in Western civilization, 21st century, and they're also somewhere in this fact as well, they were a very carnal group of people. In fact, back in chapter 3 he told them, he said, "You should be more mature than you are in your faith. The problem is I want to give you a filet mignon, the problem is you need cereal and milk because you have not grown spiritually as we would desire you as you have grown physically."

And so again, we have a group of people who are not where they need to be spiritually, have not grown as they should have, and carnality has seeped into their fellowship so much so that in chapter 5, there was an individual committing a sin that was so horrendous that the Apostle Paul inspired by the Holy Spirit says, "You know, not even the heathens would think of doing this." By the way, it reminds me that sometimes the ugliest, meanest, worst display of life is a believer in Jesus Christ who the devil has a hold of, and that's what was happening here at the church at Corinth, and I want to pick it up in the last two verses of chapter 5 because chapter 6 is strategic. The Apostle Paul is gonna not just speak truth, but he's gonna use an illustration, he's gonna use a straw man argument to prove his point. He says,

12 For what have I to do to judge them also that are without? do not ye judge them that are within? 13 But them that are without God judgeth. Therefore put away from among yourselves that wicked person.

1 Dare any of you, having a matter against another, go to law before the unjust, and not before the saints? 2 Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world? and if the world shall be judged by you, are ye unworthy to judge the smallest matters? 3 Know ye not that we shall judge angels? how much more things that pertain to this life? 4 If then ye have judgments of things pertaining to this life, set them to judge who are least

esteemed in the church. 5 I speak to your shame. Is it so, that there is not a wise man among you? no, not one that shall be able to judge between his brethren? 6 But brother goeth to law with brother, and that before the unbelievers. 7 Now therefore there is utterly a fault among you, because ye go to law one with another. Why do ye not rather take wrong? why do ye not rather suffer yourselves to be defrauded? 8 Nay, ye do wrong, and defraud, and that your brethren. 9 Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, 10 Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God. 11 And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God. 12 All things are lawful unto me, but all things are not expedient: all things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any.

Now tonight's title may catch you a little bit off-guard. I've entitled it, "Seriously? You have no excuse!" Now that's a harsh title but I could have titled it, "Have you lost your ever-loving mind?" It just did not seem appropriate in the context but that's exactly what the Apostle Paul is doing, he's gathered a group of believers here who should know better but they're not acting as if they do, and he's using an illustration here of something that's a struggle within them and he's speaking truths into their life, and so tonight I declare to you, "Seriously, we have no excuse."

Now this passage begins with some words of great intensity. In fact, if you'll notice in verse 1, he says, "Dare any of you." In our context today, that would be, "I triple dog dare you." In other words, "What are you thinking?" It's not literally, "I dare you," it's, "How dare you?" You've gone places you should have never gone. You've gone into territory you should have never stepped into.

Then in verse 2, "Do you not know?" This isn't asking if they do know, he's being rhetorical here saying, "Because you do not. How dare you in light of what you know and what you should know, why are you doing this?"

Then in verse 5, "I speak to your shame." Can we all agree tonight that the Apostle Paul would not have been on the bestseller list of contemporary Christian books in his day? This is not what we would call positive preaching but allow me to remind you that in the book of Hebrews 12:6, it says, "Whom the Lord chasten, he loveth." In other words, this is an expression of love as much as it hurts. So tonight, chapter 6 of 1 Corinthians is a message of love to us even though it's gonna kinda hurt, so to speak.

So what's the issue? What's really taking place here that is of such concern that he says, "How dare you? Do you know know better? I speak to your shame." It says that they were taking matters of conflict with each other, believer with believer, and they were taking it to the "court of the lost public opinion." Now I want to draw a very particular line tonight that I think we need to hear. There is a difference between a criminal offense

and a civil offense. A criminal offense is when a law has been broken. A criminal offense is when a violation has taken place. And so I want you to hear me very clearly, he is not saying that matters that involve physical harm or injustice toward somebody should just be "kept in house." Hear me clearly, in fact, that's why a lot of congregations and a lot of believers in our context today find themselves in trouble today because they thought that which was a criminal matter need not be told to the authorities, we'll just handle this ourselves singing Kumbayah and everybody's gonna be okay. Well, we can't get away with that because Romans 13 says, hey, we are still under the laws of the land.

So don't think that heinous criminal acts were taking place and the Apostle Paul is saying, "Don't go to court. Don't call the police. Just sweep it under the rug and talk about it yourselves." It's not what he's saying. The issue is when one believer has an issue with another believer, whether that be a financial issue or a relational issue, he kind of leaves the door wide open that rather than handling it themselves, they were taking as believers their concern or their issue to the secular world and settling it in the public forum and the public square. Simply put, they were airing their dirty laundry before a lost and dying world.

Then he uses an interesting illustration. The illustration is in verse 4. He says, "If then ye have judgments of things pertaining to this life, set them to judge who are least esteemed in the church." Verse 8, "Nay, ye do wrong, and defraud, and that your brethren." Does it strike you odd the illustration that he gives? If there's a problem between the two of you, you ought to have the maturity to work it out yourselves. Now I want you to understand that the illustration he's giving here is a very practical illustration because according to the mouth and the words of Jesus Christ himself in Matthew 18, he said if you have a problem with somebody else, the biblical thing to do is post it on social media for everybody to see. No. He said if you have a problem, he said you go to them. Revolutionary, is it not? In other words, face to face deal with it, confess the sin, hammer it out and deal with the consequences.

If they will not hear you, take another witness. Now that is not an amen witness of anybody who will agree with anything that you've got, that is somebody who has been defrauded by or done wrong in the same manner by the same person. And if that doesn't work out, take it to the church. Take it to the assembly. Take it to those who are a part of the bigger family. The Lord gave us the instructions of how to handle conflict and as we're gonna deal with in just a moment, most of us even as believers handle it the world's way and not the Lord's way, and what he says here is he says rather than taking it to the lost world, it would be better for you to grab somebody in the church who is of low esteem because their wisdom in the matter as a believer, is more valuable than the wisest soul in the lost pagan world.

Now this is an incredible practical example. Let me share with you why. Can you imagine how you would feel if I came to you one day and said there's an issue here among the family, we have two believers who are struggling and, well, you're lowly on the totem pole and you're not much esteemed around here, so we'd like your opinion. How would that make you feel? What if I came to you and said, well, you're not thought

of much around here so we need your advice. Do you think that would cause strife? Absolutely it would, and even if you agreed to do it, can you imagine deciding between two believers that are in your Sunday school class? You know, one's gonna love what you say and the other one's gonna despise what you say. Can we all agree that would be a church train wreck? Imagine if we called you up and said, well, we've got a matter to dispute. We need you to come and solve it and we want you to settle it between these two. It would not go well at all. What the Apostle Paul is saying is simply this: even implementing that strategy is better for the church than going out and airing it to the lost world. Jesus gave us the pattern to do it, the Apostle Paul is using this illustration, even if we pull somebody out of the back corner of the church and had them decide the matter, that's a better strategy than what you are doing.

That's the practical but here's the philosophical and here's what you need to hear about this illustration. The Apostle Paul is making it very clear that even the least esteemed believer has more spiritual insight than the smartest lost person. So how dare we run to the lost world to get their opinion on matters? When we're struggling with something or we have issues or we're concerned about what do we do here, or we're having conflict with this, why do we run to the latest greatest bestseller that's on the New York Times list? Why do we seek some professional who's the expert in their field? He says you would be better off getting someone who is a babe in Christ because at least they know Christ, they're filled with the Holy Spirit, and they've got more godly discernment than whoever it is that wrote that book that you just went and got off the bestseller list.

It's a powerful illustration for all aspects of our life, that even those in their infancy of spiritual growth have greater spiritual insight than the lost world with the plethora of degrees and experience. But then there's some instruction. It says in verse 9, it says, "Do you not know that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God?" In other words, those who you're running to, those who you're seeking advice from, those who you're gleaning wisdom from, "be not deceived," and I'm gonna read this kind of as a description of them, they are "fornicators and idolaters and adulterers and effeminate and abusers of themselves with mankind. They are thieves. They are covetous. They are drunkards. They are revilers. They are extortioners and they shall not inherit the kingdom of God. Such were some of you but you are washed, you are sanctified, you are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God."

Very simply the instructions that the Lord is giving us here in 1 Corinthians 6 is this, that if you need wisdom and if you need guidance, and you need direction about matters of life, that the best approach is to go obviously to Scripture and those who know the Lord than to the wisdom of this world. And I want you to think about this, why would we seek marital advice from the lost pagan world? Why? Marriage is a biblical institution that we've made a civil contract. Why would we seek child rearing advice from lost pagans? Hurts, doesn't it? Because they've got 13 degrees. They've got academic prowess. They know what they're doing. They probably don't even have kids themselves. We are supposed to raise children in the fear and the admonition of the Lord, not according to the New York Times bestseller. Marriage between a man and a woman who know the Lord is completely different between two who have a civil agreement out in the lost world. Why

would we seek financial advice from people who are 20+ trillion dollars in debt when the Bible says, "Do you not know the debtor is slave to the lender?" In other words, it doesn't matter what illustration you bring up, he is saying why do you run to these people for advice?

Let me make it real practical. How often do we seek guidance from those who bring us the newscast every day? Can I tell you what I think of their opinion? I don't. I don't care what their editorial is, they don't know the Lord, they're not filled with the Holy Spirit, they're as lost as a goose in a hurricane. They don't know what's happening. You're better off seeking the advice from a sixth grader who's been saved six months than them. Why? Because at least they have the Holy Spirit in their lives.

I've got news for you, social media is the biggest waste of time you've ever done. Do you know why? Because nobody knows anything about anything. Those folks are clueless. Can I tell you what I despise about social media? It equalizes the platform, it gives people with non-credentials equal platform with those who have it. And what do you care what Hollywood thinks of marriage? What do you care what these people think about how to raise your children? And yet we are bombarded with this stuff.

Now I know this isn't fun but now do you hear what the Apostle Paul is doing? How dare you go to the newscasters for advice on how to live your life? How dare you go to social media to figure out how to respond to my spouse? How dare you go to the latest whatever bestseller to know how to raise children? He's saying these folks are fornicators, they're adulterers, they're, why would you take their advice?

Well, guess what, we're not any different than the people of Corinth, are we? Because oftentimes we'll sing, "Jesus loves me, this I know, for the Bible tells me so," but I'm gonna go read this book and listen to this podcast to figure out how to do this other stuff. Do you know the Bible says earlier in 1 Corinthians that the wisdom of the world is nothing with God? That even the base things of God are higher than the wisdom of the world?

Here's the last thing. Why is this so important? Look in verse 12, "All things are lawful unto me but all things are not expedient. All things are lawful for me but I will not be brought under the power of any." He says just because the lost pagan world says it's okay does not mean it is. Just because they've defined marriage differently than Scripture doesn't mean, well, that's just what the lost say, it's okay. Just because the lost says it's okay to exterminate a child in the womb does not make it okay. Just because it's on the legal books doesn't mean it's in this book. And he says all things may be lawful for me, that doesn't mean it's expedient. All things may be legal and I'm not gonna go to jail for it but it doesn't mean it's a smart and wise decision.

I want you to back up to verse 13 of chapter 5. Why is this so important? "But them that are without God judgeth. Therefore put away from among yourselves that wicked person." Why is this so important? Because the world is watching. The world is observing. The world is listening and whether you know it or not, they're watching how

do you operate as a believer? How do you make decisions? How do you speak words? How do you do this? How do you do that? And when we, the believers, implement the same strategy as the lost world, they simply go, well, I guess there's just no difference than them and us except we get to sleep in on Sunday. That's the difference. In other words, what's the distinction? What's the difference? All things are lawful, not all things are expedient, that's kind of the conclusion of. He says the world is watching and God is judging. We have an entire lost world out there who whether you know it or not is watching the decisions that you make, the words that you speak, and all those things of life, and all throughout Scripture we're called to be different, distinct, holy, peculiar. I've got news for you, my kids don't like it when I say this but if you're gonna be a Bible believing Christian, the world's gonna think you're just a little off center. You're just gonna be a little different. You're gonna be a little weird. You're gonna be a little odd. I've got news for you, when you're going step by step with the world, you may not be where you're supposed to be with the Lord.

Just because it's legal doesn't mean it's right. Do you see the laws that our country is passing right now? If we conformed our Christianity to what Congress is passing, dear Lord, we'd be ineffective. But we've been called out, we've been called out to be separate, to be distinct, and so seriously, you don't have any excuse. What are you thinking? Why would you listen to the advice and direction of a lost pagan voice over the clear direction of God in all matters?

Jesus loves me so, for the Bible tells me so. You know that's not the only instruction in the Bible, right? Do you know what the next chapter talks about in chapter 7? Marriage. It talks about our home. Then in chapter 8 it talks about how to interact with the lost world and how to interact with other individuals, and pretty soon you get into spiritual gifts. In other words, he's setting this as the tone saying it doesn't matter what the issue is, that believers in Jesus Christ and Scripture are the best guide in all decisions. Case closed.

How dare you, in the words of Paul, run to the world? Do you not know better the words of Paul? I speak to your shame, the words of Paul. Maybe tonight as harsh as the message is, maybe we ought to turn off all those other voices and turn on his voice because he is always going to guide us in the proper way, and the last time I checked, the world always leads us to death and destruction.

As we close tonight, remember whom the Lord chasteneth, he loveth. Anytime there's discipline enacted in our home, I think it's kind of like the Lord does in our lives, this phrase is used, "We love you too much to let you keep acting this way." The Lord loves you too much to let you act like the Corinthians were acting.