

1 Corinthians 6:1-11

“Making Your Position Your Practice”

Judgment: a touchy, almost taboo topic amidst believers and amongst the world today. and I'm not speaking of the final judgment on that day when the dead both small and great stand before the throne of God and will be judged according to their works, (though that could certainly be included in the arena of touchy/taboo topics.) But I'm speaking of judgment in the sense that I deem “that” situation to be wrong, or you discern the actions of a particular individual or group of people to be sin. Those circumstances that seem to cause people to rise up in utter disdain and cry out, “Who are *you* to judge *me*?” and It's true that often time's people will stand in an exalted/holier than thou posture over people, condemning them in such a way as if to say that they're better than I am, or than you are. and Certainly that's wrong, and that's sinful, it just drips with pride and God hates pride. But it seems that due to the overly defensive, overly sensitive position that those offended have taken over the years and throughout especially this generation in our particular culture that believers have sort of recoiled back into a spiritually fetal position whereby we refuse to confront sin and call sin out for what it is.

But today I want to examine for just a minute as we prepare to head into our passage this idea of judging and judgment from a biblical perspective. What is our role, what is our responsibility as believers in recognizing right from wrong? What does the word, “Judgment” mean? Well, I looked it up in the dictionary and it said that judgment was *a formal utterance of an authoritative opinion*. and That's not a bad definition, but it definitely doesn't capture the biblical essence of the word. Another definition said *the process of forming an evaluation by discerning and comparing*. and That's closer still, but yet it lacks in some ways. Because though judgment carries an authoritative weight, it's not an “opinion” biblically speaking, it's a fact according to the standard of God's Word. That's why I liked the definition that spoke of judgment as the process of forming an evaluation by discerning and comparing. Because as a believer I compare my life to the written Word of God, and thereby I'm able to discern, or judge my actions, attitudes, and general lifestyle as acceptable or un-acceptable accordingly.

You see; understand that as I judge a situation, or you judge a particular circumstance that it's not as though we're getting out our robes, taking the bench and according to our own opinion forming a standard of what we deem to be acceptable or non-acceptable. I'm not the judge, you're not the judge, God is the judge, His Word sets the standard. and We're simply coming into agreement with what God has already stated and upholding the standard, the absolute that He's laid out in His Word. It's true that as a believer I have no right to impose *my* standard, but I have a *responsibility* to uphold *God's* standard as recorded in His Word.

and So I want you to realize that there's nothing wrong with having, or adhering to absolutes, as a matter of fact it's right. The world wants you to subscribe to relativism (what's right for me may be wrong for you and visa versa but that doesn't make a situation or a particular act inherently wrong or sinful in and of itself.)

But God makes it very clear, and His Word draws a very distinct line in the dirt and says, this is wrong, this is right, this is acceptable, this is non-acceptable, and in the light of non-acceptable behavior, lifestyles, habits and conduct, there are penalties that ensue.

People take this one scripture, and they say, “Jesus said, ‘*Judge not, that you be not judged.*’” Matt 7:1 and They try to use it against you so as to keep people neutralized from being able to uphold the simple standard of right and wrong according to God’s Word (which completely violates the context).

Jesus never intended that we turn a blind eye to sin, or accept willful transgression in the name of tolerance or “wrong for me, right for you, only God can judge” type justification.

Yes, only God *can* judge, and He has, and He’s given us those standards in His Word, and He expects that we uphold those judgments. Jesus also said, “...*why, even of yourselves, do you not judge what is right?*” Luke 12:57 and Again, “*Do not judge according to appearance, but judge with righteous judgment.*” John 7:24 The pre-assumed position of both of those Vs being that there are times when judgment is necessary, but those Vs aren’t quoted too often. All through out God’s Word judgment calls are made in both the OT and the New. and As we consider this morning these 1st 11 Vs of 1st Cor Ch 6, the topic at hand (as you may’ve surmised by now) is judgment. Calling sin for what it is and dealing with it accordingly with in the confines of the local church body.

The topic arose in Ch 5, a man who was having an ongoing adulterous affair with his step mom, of which everyone knew it and no one was willing to confront it or do anything about it. No one was willing to stand up and judge the situation for the sin that it was and deal with it accordingly as it pertains to church discipline. “Purging out the old leaven that they might be a new lump.” **Which is to say that sin is infectious and if it’s not dealt *with* and purged *from* the body it’ll spread like cancer. and We’re not speaking about someone who’s stumbled once, or has a struggle they’re dealing with but are thoroughly grieved and desperate to lead a repentant life before the Lord. We’re talking about the guy, or the gal who knows that what they’re doing is unscriptural, they just really don’t care, they’d rather remain in their sin than repent and lead a holy life as unto the Lord.** Paul says, “Put that person out of the fellowship,” now we’re not talking about non-believers, non-believers you can expect to act like non-believers. You see look at Vs 9 and following of Ch 5 (read).

and Now with in the context of being able to judge a situation with righteousness and according to godliness Paul wants to continue on as to our role in preserving the purity and integrity of the body of Christ. **That when situations and circumstances arise with in the body, we’re to deal with it accordingly, judge the matter with integrity and don’t go to the world with it. It shames not only the people with the problem specifically, but the body of Christ generally, being unable and too immature to resolve the matter with the love of God and the Spirit of God and the Word of God to guide us.** It displays us before the world as utterly selfish, unloving, unforgiving and unable to submit to the principles and precepts of the Word of God. In short it blows our witness and we become a joke to them. Notice

Vs1

You see apparently not only was there disorderly conduct and disgraceful activity going on with in the confines of the church inwardly, but there were law suits that were taking place publicly between people in the congregation. and They (much like modern day U.S.A.) were a sue happy city, and not having movies, TV's, game systems, or golf courses like we have today to entertain us, a hot spot for local entertainment was the court room. People would show up in droves to hear the cases, listen to the lawyers (remember they were huge fans of eloquence and articulate oratory skills). So if you went to court the whole city knew your business. and Paul here is shocked, he's chagrined, he's genuinely surprised. He says in essence, "How dare you, having a matter against one another, take one another to a secular court rather than working it out between yourselves or with in the confines of Christian arbitration?" He's saying this is irony at its worst, the just seeking justice from the unjust. and He's saying, "Can't you see something in that equation that just doesn't seem to flow, seeking justice from the unjust?"

Now I want to make a couple things clear, Paul is not saying that it's never right or good for a Christian to go to court, or take someone to court. Paul himself appealed to the legal system more than once, demanded a trial before Caesar in Acts 25 when he felt like he was getting a bum wrap in his current crisis.

Nor is he saying that a secular judge is completely immoral or unintelligent, unable to discern right from wrong, this isn't a slam to the legal system of the secular society but rather to the church for being unable, or unwilling to deal with a problem that's arisen with in the body. The idea here is how much more should the people of God be able to arbitrate a situation, discerning right from wrong than someone in the world? It doesn't make solid spiritual sense to seek a judgment of right from wrong from a man who has no spiritual discernment. Remember these Vs? "...the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. But he who is spiritual judges all things, yet he himself is rightly judged by no one." 1 Cor 2:14-15 You see the man or the woman who has the Spirit of God working in them, at rest upon them, flowing through them is going to have a much keener awareness and higher degree of discernment when it comes to right and wrong. and Again Paul's not saying that a non-believing judge won't ever recognize right from wrong, but rather how much more should the child of God be able to discern those things? So why seek a righteous judgment from the unrighteous? So if there's a matter that arises between you and your brother, take up with him 1st, if you can't get resolve, take it to the church leaders, seek Christian arbitration, but don't seek secular litigation.

Now if it's a non-believer, again that's a different situation, he won't give heed to the church so you'll more than likely have no choice (again Paul himself utilized the secular legal system when he had to) but when it comes to a brother or sister in Christ, keep it secured with in the church. and I suppose I should clarify that this isn't speaking of criminal law, capital punishment, things of that nature, in the book of Romans the Holy Spirit makes it quite clear that government is established for those things. We're speaking here along the lines of civil suits, matters of money, or property, a violation of rights, things of that nature.

Vs2-3

You might note how many times the words “Judge,” “Judged,” and “Judgment” are used in these Vs. Throughout these 1st 7 Vs they’re used or referred to at least 8 times. The idea obviously being that there are times it’s necessary to judge a situation, to call it out for what it is, be it right or wrong, don’t be afraid to stand on the clear cut position that God’s Word takes concerning a matter. He says, “Don’t you know that the saints will judge the world?” (You might also note how many times Paul utters the phrase, “Don’t you know,”) the implication being these are things that we *should* know and be responding to accordingly or in light of. “The saints will judge the world.” Who are the saints? Are they a select elite few, say the top 2 % of the world’s believers? No, if you’ve given your heart to Christ, the bible identifies you as a saint of God, a holy one of God, you’re either a saint or you ain’t and if you’re in Christ, you’re a saint. Well, in what way will we judge the world? Honestly, I don’t know. There are those who say that we really won’t judge in the sense of condemning anyone personally, but that Christ is the judge, we being in Christ identify with Him in that judgment. **There are others who say this is a reference to the millennial kingdom whereby we will rule and reign with Christ for 1,000 yrs on the earth. I lean that way, but it’s really peripheral to the point, so is this statement in Vs 3, “Do you not know that we shall judge angels?”**

and Again we’re not referencing here the holy/faithful angels, but rather those fallen angels, or demonic forces who rebelled against God. and Again in what capacity we’ll be judging the bible doesn’t say, but it’s fascinating to think that we being created a little lower than the angels are in Christ given a position that is in some way higher than the angels. and I have no doubt that there is a particular angel that that really offended. **Lucifer, there he was perfect in all his ways, until iniquity was found in him, he said in his heart that he would ascend into heaven, that he would exalt his throne above the stars (the angels) of God, that he would sit on the mount of the congregation on the farthest sides of the north, that he would ascend above the heights of the clouds, that he would be like the Most high.** Yet he was brought down, now to be in some way judged even by those created a little lower than the angels. We read in Isaiah, *“Those who see you will gaze at you, And consider you, saying: ‘Is this the man who made the earth tremble, Who shook kingdoms, Who made the world as a wilderness And destroyed its cities, Who did not open the house of his prisoners?’ ”All the kings of the nations, All of them, sleep in glory, Everyone in his own house; But you are cast out of your grave Like an abominable branch, Like the garment of those who are slain, Thrust through with a sword, Who go down to the stones of the pit, Like a corpse trodden underfoot.”* Isa 14:16-19 and So we can only imagine the perverse, proud pleasure that Satan gets from every individual soul that goes to hell as one more person who won’t sit in judgment over him.

But Paul here is making a primary point (both of the others being peripheral, judging the world and judging angels). He’s magnifying the honor, privilege and position that we’ve been called to so as to minimize the situation they’re confronted with now so that they might just buckle down, stand up and deal with it. “Look, you’re going to judge the world, you’re going to judge angels, and you’re incompetent to discern the trivial things of this life?” and The situation may’ve seem huge to them, but Paul is saying that compared to the eternal nature of things they’ve been called to, *anything* that deals with the temporal things of this life that are passing away is but a small thing.

Vs4

This takes us full circle back to Vs 1, you're being prepared for such a glorious destiny, dealing with things pertaining to eternity. Why then go to the unrighteous to seek a righteous judgment, the unjust to seek justice?

Vs5-6

Now again remember that the Corinthians were way in to what they considered wisdom, Paul spent a significant chunk of the 1st Ch seeking to demonstrate to them the difference between the wisdom of man (which is foolishness to God) Vs the wisdom of God (which is foolishness to man) look back at Vs 20 of Ch 1 (thru 24).

The Greeks seek wisdom, these are the things that the Corinthians literally prided themselves on, considering themselves a wise people, able to be rational and reasonable. Now Paul with a sense of irony here says, "and You guys can't figure this stuff out?! W/the love of God *ruling in* you, the Spirit of God *resting upon* you, and the Word of God *reigning over* you, and yet you can't resolve a simple matter of right and wrong? So you go to court to allow the non-believer to decide between you what's right and what's wrong." What's this saying to you and me? That we should be able to resolve our differences, and if it's something that seems so beyond our ability to reconcile on our own that we should be able to subject ourselves to some godly overseers and allow them to discern the situation on our behalf and whether the outcome works for us or against us we'll let it end right there. "Well what if they decide wrong?" Then you commend the situation into God's care and trust that He'll vindicate you, if not now then in eternity.

Here's the deal, I don't always have to be right, nor do you always have to receive your rights. Jesus didn't come to this earth to get His rights, He came to get His wrongs and that's exactly what He received. and He was made sin for us that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him. and Now if He was perfect in every respect of the Word yet was treated wrong, got a bum wrap, drew the shortest straw (so to speak), what gives me the audacity to think that I always deserve better? Yet there's a disease that's rampant in our society whereby we're addicted to our rights, and we refuse to give up our rights. Hey, God knows, trust Him with it, notice.

Vs7

You see it's a total shame, and utter failure already (you want to win your case, but to take a brother to court is already a failure, because there's a much bigger picture here). and The fact that things have already escalated to the point whereby I'm so furious with you that I refuse to reconcile with you and want to go to court with you, I've already lost the higher stakes. You see the bible says, "*If it is possible, as much as depends on you, live peaceably with all men. Beloved, do not avenge yourselves, but rather give place to wrath; for it is written, 'Vengeance is Mine, I will repay,' says the Lord.*" Rom 12:18-19 **So if I'm to live peaceably with all men generally, how much more does that apply to my bro or sister specifically?** Jesus said, "*Blessed are the merciful,*" Matt 5:7 and Again, "*Blessed are the peacemakers,*" Matt 5:9 not the peace breakers. The bible teaches us to be compassionate, slow to anger, that we're to, "*...be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God in Christ forgave you.*" Eph 4:32

God didn't forgive me of some things, but not the really really offensive and unfair things, no, God forgave all my sin, regardless of the hideous, heinous, and self serving nature of it. So when I let things escalate to a point whereby I'm prepared to take you to court over a matter of money, or property, or personal rights, I've already failed on all those points.

It's true, I may be right, but better for the right one to suffer wrong than to blow our witness of the character of Jesus and bring shame to the body of Christ. Remember what Peter said? He said, "*For this is commendable, if because of conscience toward God one endures grief, suffering wrongfully. For what credit is it if, when you are beaten for your faults, you take it patiently? But when you do good and suffer, if you take it patiently, this is commendable before God.*" 1 Peter 2:19-20 and In Ch 3 he said, "*For it is better, if it is the will of God, to suffer for doing good than for doing evil.*" 1 Peter 3:17 Isn't that what forgiveness is all about? You don't forgive someone who hasn't in some way wronged you. You see it sounds real spiritual when we sit and talk about it on Sunday morning, but when a real case scenario comes into play we suddenly come face to face with the difficulties of dying to self, crucifying the flesh and all that, it's tough.

and So in these 1st 7 we get the impression that Paul is talking to the one who was wronged, now in these remaining Vs he speaks to the one who has wronged. 1st of all to the one who's been wronged, better to forgive and be cheated than to shame the body of Christ and blight our witness. To the one who *did* the wrong, you need to know gravity of the nature of your offense.

Vs8

The idea here being that there's no place for dishonest dealings *by* Christians, much less dishonest dealings *amongst* Christians.

Vs9-10

So this is a strong warning (as to the seriousness of the sin) to the one who's done the wrong. Paul is saying the only reward you may receive for your fraudulent, deceptive behavior is an eternity with the unrighteous, because the unrighteous don't inherit the kingdom of God. and He's not saying that he's not saved per-say, but what he is saying is that he won't acknowledge an empty confession of faith that doesn't have a lifestyle that accommodates the confession. Which is to say that if you can make a habit of ripping people off with out remorse or repentance than one would have to question whether you're saved in the 1st place. Because that type of behavior in no way, shape or form models Christ, or Christ in you. James said it like this, "*For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also.*" James 2:26 Now as we well know good works won't save anyone, but saving faith will produce good works. Not the works of fornication, or adultery, or idolatry, or thievery, drunkenness, extortion, reviling and the like.

Now there is something we need to point out before we close up. This list is pretty self explanatory, but I want you to notice that Paul mentions both homosexuals, and sodomites, because there are those who would want to justify homosexuality saying that the bible condemns homosexual prostitution, but not a "loving, caring homosexual relationship," but with in this context it's very clear.

Paul uses 2 words that really encompass any and all homosexual activity. This 1st word, “Malakos” perhaps translated “effeminate” in your bible speaking of homosexual activity up to and including homosexual prostitution, this 2nd word “Arsenokoites” speaking of abusing oneself with mankind, lying with a male as with a female, speaking of homosexual activity in general. **and Don't be deceived thinking that Paul was living in a different day, homosexuality was running rampant in his day, 14 of the 1st 15 Roman emperors were either homosexual or bisexual. When Paul was writing this Caesar Nero was preparing to marry a boy named Sporus whom he had castrated and took him to be his wife. Later on Nero lived with another man and was declared to be *his* wife. So this wasn't something foreign to him, or that he just wasn't familiar with. So we realize its sin right along with these other things.**

Which brings me to another point, many people want to isolate homosexuality as some especially abominable sin in God's eyes, but according to this list (though it's certainly an abomination) so is drunkenness, or fornication, or thievery, extortion, and on and on we could go. **So that if you're a fornicator, or a drunkard, or a reviler, or covetous, you have no right to point out the homosexual as being in some way worse shape before God than you are. and So Christians err when they excuse homosexuality, and deny that it's sin, yet they err equally to single it out as a sin that God is uniquely angry with.** There isn't any of these types of things that if they define your life will be excused or that you'll receive general amnesty from before God being granted access to heaven. No body lives a perfect life, but if one or more of these kinds of things define the practiced pattern of your life, don't be deceived you're not headed for heaven. (Some people are deceived, think it's ok, it's not ok) Jesus came to save His people *from* their sins, notice.

Vs11

You see Paul places these things in the past tense with regards to the believer, “and such were some of you.” We were slaves of sin, but Jesus has made us free, and if the Son makes you free you will be free indeed. You were washed, washed through the renewing and regeneration of the Spirit (Titus 3:5), sanctified, that is set apart from the world, called out to no longer lead a life in the flesh for the lusts of men, but for the will of God. Set apart *from* the world *unto* the Lord, and a life of holiness. and Justified, that is not only were you declared *not guilty* before the throne of God, but you were declared, *just*, not only was your sin deficit zeroed out, but you were accredited with the very righteousness of Christ. You see this is your position, now allow the love of God, the Spirit of God, and the Word of God by the grace of God make it your practice.

Prayer Points:

God we thank You for the washing, sanctifying, justifying work of the cross of Jesus Christ and the presence of the Holy Spirit in our lives. May we lead our lives in true surrender to You that our practice might be true to our position in You. **Lord we all fall so radically short but want repentant hearts and willing spirits that are eager to submit to You. and Father I pray for anyone who may be struggling with a situation right now whereby they feel that a brother or a sister has done them wrong.** That You might strengthen them to deal with it according to the direction of Your Word, and that the brother or sister who's wronged them might repent and make that situation right. We thank You for Your forgiveness towards us, help us to show that same forgiveness to others.

There in that last Vs we read that phrase, "and Such *were* some of you." Perhaps in this place today such *are* some of you, you've not repented, you've not given your life to Christ. Perhaps you've thought that these were the very reasons you couldn't give your life to Christ. Yet the bible teaches they're the very reasons we *need* to give our lives to Christ. So that He might wash you, sanctify you, and justify you. **God wants to cleanse you today, though your sin be as scarlet He'll make you white like snow, He wants to set you apart from a life that's set in motion against Him, that you might lead a life given over to Him.** and He wants to justify you, that word "justified" means just what it sounds like, "Just as if I'd" never sinned at all. How's that, through faith in Christ, just believe in Jesus Christ give your heart to Jesus, and He'll give you new life.