

MARCH 27, 2022
LIFE GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS
GROWING THROUGH GRIEVANCES
1 CORINTHIANS 6:1-11
WINTER QUARTER WEEK 11 OF 13

Getting to Know Each Other Better

1. What book or books are you reading these days? Why?

Currently I am reading *Emotional Survival for Law Enforcement*, by Kevin Gilmartin. Why? A good friend of mine who is retired PD gave it to me to read. He recommended it, thought I could learn from it, so I am reading it.

How about you?

Renewed by Grace/Equipped as Disciples

Read 1 Corinthians 6:1-11

The flow for the discussion this week looks like this -

- Talk about how you typically respond when you are wronged and when you have a legitimate grievance against someone who is a Christian. My assumption is that this has happened to all of us.
- Talk about how Paul wants us to respond.
- Talk about what goes through your mind when you respond the way you should.

2. When you are wronged, and you have a legitimate grievance, how do you respond? Why? Are any of those ways similar to the ones brought out in the message? Why?

Here are the ways Ryan brought out in his message -

- Sue
- Insist upon your rights
- Seek to get revenge. Think Hatfields and McCoys. Think “an eye for an eye.” Think, “I’ll make you pay for this.”
- Gossip. You might not be able to make them pay in dollars and cents, but you can tell everyone what they did to you, and you can ruin their reputation. You can make them pay even if they don’t have to pay.

Do you typically respond in any of these ways? Why? Or, are there other things you do? Why?

Here are some other questions which might help -

- Does your response have anything to do with the severity of the grievance? Why?
- What qualifies as a significant grievance for you? Why?
- Would you say you have a strong sense of personal justice? Why? How does this influence your responses to being wronged?
- Is it okay to seek to ruin someone’s reputation when you’ve been wronged? How much do you keep things to yourself?

3. Re-read verses 7-8.

- **Paraphrase them in your own words.**
- **What is Paul saying?**
- **What is he not saying?**

- **Are there limits to this? Why? And what might some of them be?**

As I look at the text, these verses are the most important ones. Paul spends verses 1-6 saying, "Hey look, if you end up having a dispute with a Christian brother or sister, deal with it internally rather than externally." Then in verses 7-8 he says, "Hey look, you shouldn't even get to the point that you are initiating lawsuits against each other. If you're doing that, you're already defeated. It would be better just to absorb the punch and to move on."

Filing a lawsuit against a Christian brother or sister is not a sin. Paul doesn't use the word for sin. He uses the word for *defeat, loss, failure, shortcoming*. And the word he uses is only used twice in the NT (the other place being Romans 11:12, which says, "Now if their wrongdoing proves to be riches for the world, and their failure, riches for the Gentiles, how much more will their fulfillment be!") The NIV Study Bible says this - "*completely defeated*. Most likely by greed, retaliation and hatred, instead of practicing unselfishness, forgiveness and love - even willingness to suffer loss." The NIV Study Bible note sure sounds like sin to me, but I go back to the fact that he doesn't use the word for sin.

My assumption is that Paul is talking about what we would consider to be civil suits, and maybe even things which would tend to end up in Small Claims Court. Laws were broken (maybe a breach of contract), but there doesn't seem to be a criminal element to it (or else I would assume that the Roman authorities would be involved), and it doesn't seem to be that the motivation for pursuing the lawsuit is justice as much as it is retaliation and taking matters into their own hands in order to make someone pay.

Paul assumes disputes will happen (6:1) and he assumes that decisions will have to be made and judgments rendered (6:4). He wishes that they wouldn't happen (6:7-8), but he knows they will and so he gives them guidance on how to solve their problems in godly ways in order to stay out of the courts. But sometimes believers do have to go to court because they couldn't work it out inside the church, and when they do, it's to their shame (6:5-6). (For instance, in order to obtain a divorce one must sue for it. I could be wrong, but I don't know that you can divorce someone without going to court. If I'm wrong, please forgive me.)

What is Paul saying? I think he's saying you really shouldn't file lawsuits against each other because it brings shame on the church. I think he's saying that the church should have a mechanism for resolving conflicts internally, which by the way, EFCC does. I think he's saying that believers really need to watch and guard their hearts when they do have disputes with each other, and especially if and when they go to court in the public realm. I think he's saying that it might be better to take the loss for the sake of the reputation of the church (Why not just be wronged and cheated?).

What is Paul not saying? I do not think Paul is saying that believers should never sue each other. Sometimes it comes to that.

How do you determine limits to all of this?

- One test to use is the test of the attitude of your heart toward the other person. Is your reason for filing the lawsuit in the public arena one of greed, retaliation or hatred?
- Another test is to ask if you could see Jesus initiating this lawsuit?
- Another test is to consider how much money you are talking about?

- Another test is to consider the damage that has been done.
- Are there other tests you can come up with that would help you?
 - Love your neighbor as yourself (James 2:8).
 - Do unto others as you would have them do unto you (Luke 6:31).
 - Whatever you do, do everything for the glory of God (1 Corinthians 10:31).

4. When you do have a legitimate grievance, and you choose to let it go, what is behind your decision? Why? Are any of your reasons similar to the ones brought out in the message? Why?

Here are the reasons Ryan listed -

- Letting a grievance go is a powerful opportunity to return to God in prayer. (Psalm 56:5-8)
- Letting a grievance go is a powerful opportunity to trust in God's justice. (1 Corinthians 6:10)
- Letting a grievance go is a powerful opportunity to win hearts.
- Letting a grievance go is a powerful opportunity to receive and extend God's grace.
- We grow as disciples when grace is our response to grievances.

Sent in Love

5. What is one way you will apply the text this week?