

★ Bickering Christians

1st - 3rd Grade
Lesson 8

Biblical Limits of the Lawsuit

As we learned last week, Paul wrote letters to many churches. God put these letters in the Bible. The books of I and II Corinthians are letters Paul wrote to the church in the city of Corinth. The Christians in Corinth were doing some things wrong. In I Corinthians, Paul tells them what they are doing wrong.

Everyone has a reputation. The reputation of this church was not good. Their actions were very sinful. To make it worse, these Christians were fighting among themselves. Paul wrote to them to tell them how Jesus wanted them to live. He told them they were very worldly.

Banning the Bickering

Bickering is arguing back and forth over small things. Have you ever done this with your brother or sister or with a friend? If so, your mom probably told you to stop it. Arguing does not please the Lord.

The people in the church at Corinth thought they were always right. They didn't think they had to listen to their pastor or leaders. They were full of pride. This is why they started bickering and fighting with each other.

Checking the Contention

Paul said in I Corinthians 1:11 that "there are contentions among you." Contention is fighting. Their arguments and fights were so bad that they took each other to the law. They sued each other. Paul told them this was wrong. He said, "I speak to your shame" (I Corinthians 6:5).

Paul told them it would be better for them to let another Christian cheat them than to go to court over their arguments. The reason they took their arguments to the law was so they could hurt the other person. They wanted to make that person look bad. They wanted to cause that person as much trouble as they could. Paul told them this was wrong. He told them that Christians should work out their own arguments. Christians should not take their arguments to an unsaved judge.

Jesus said that we should love one another as He loved us (John 13:34). He said, "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another" (John 13:35). How will unsaved people know we are saved if we are mean to each other?

Discontinuing the Divisions

Paul also told the people in this church that they were carnal:

For ye are yet carnal: for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men?

—I Corinthians 3:3

The word *carnal* means “fleshly.” It is doing what you feel like doing instead of doing what is right. Some people smoke or drink or watch bad movies because they like to do those things. But God says envying, strife, and divisions are carnal too. Envy is jealousy. Strife is fighting. Divisions means the people were taking sides and fighting with each other. They were even acting this way when they came to have the Lord’s Supper.

Paul begs them in I Corinthians 1:10 to stop their fighting:

Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment.

Conclusion

How would you feel if you were in the church at Corinth and you heard what Paul said about you? How do you feel when your mom or dad, your teacher, or your pastor tells you that you are doing something wrong? In II Corinthians 7:9, Paul says that these Christians repented of their sins. They were sorry. Instead of getting mad at Paul, they confessed their sin. And they stopped their bickering and fighting.

If we read and obey God’s Word, we will not do the terrible sins that the Corinthian Christians did. But they are a good example to us in one way. They admitted their sin. When our parents, teachers, or pastor tells us we are doing something wrong, we should listen and obey. We should change our behavior. When you do wrong, do you admit your sin and make it right? Let us always be quick to admit when we are wrong. Let us make it right with both God and those we have wronged.

Teacher’s Notes
