

Bickering Christians

4th - 6th Grade
Lesson 8

Biblical Limits of the Lawsuit

In our last lesson, we learned about the book of Romans. The Christians in Rome were very few, but they had very great faith. A man named Nero persecuted the Christians in Rome. He was a ruler of the Roman Empire. Even though they were being persecuted, they were faithful Christians.

This lesson is about the Christians in a place called Corinth. The Christians in Corinth were not being persecuted like the Christians in Rome. The Christians in Corinth were not being faithful to God. They were serving other gods and idols. They did things that were so wicked that many people wouldn't even talk about it. The Christians in Corinth were fighting with each other. This lesson is about what Paul told the Christians in Corinth about their behavior towards each other.

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

Banning the Bickering

The word *bickering* means, “bad tempered arguing about something unimportant.” In the year 64 AD, the city of Rome burned in a great fire. The emperor, Nero, blamed the Christians in Rome for the fire. He persecuted the Christians and killed many of them. Even though the Christians there were going through hard times, they were not bickering or fighting. The Christians in Corinth were not being persecuted at all. They lived very comfortably in their city. They thought they were very wise, and they bragged about their ability to argue. They were bickering about things that were not important.

The Corinthian Christians thought that they were wiser than everyone else. But, Paul told them that God chose the “foolish” to serve Him and not those who were wise. The Corinthians were not wise about the things of God. They did not study the Bible. They were wise in their own eyes about things of the world.

He is proud, knowing nothing, but doting about questions and strifes of words, whereof cometh envy, strife, railings, evil surmisings.

— I Timothy 6:4

The Corinthian people were fighting about things that really did not matter. They were focusing on what was important to them right at that moment. They should have been focusing on the future. Some day, if we know Jesus as our personal Savior, we will spend forever with Him

in heaven. When things happen on earth that are not important, we should not bicker about them with fellow Christians.

Checking the Contention

We learned that bickering is arguing about unimportant matters. I Corinthians 1:11 talks about contention. What is contention? Contention is fighting. This kind of fighting is stronger than bickering. Some Christians in Corinth were getting so angry that they were taking their Christian brothers and sisters to the court of law. This is a very bad testimony for Christians.

The Bible is very clear about lawsuits between believers. I Corinthians 6:6-8 says that they are wrong. It is against the Bible for one Christian to take another Christian to court over something. When a Christian does this, he offends others and hurts people in the church.

Jesus told the people to “love one another.” But the Christians in Corinth were not doing this at all. The Corinthian people were being very prideful. The Bible tells us that when we have pride, then we will fight with others.

Only by pride cometh contention: but with the well advised is wisdom.

—Proverbs 13:10

Discontinuing the Divisions

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

Carnal means “flesh.” In another lesson, we learned that Christians are supposed to do what helps the Spirit, not the flesh. The Bible tells us in the verse above that the Corinthians were fighting about things that were carnal and pleasing the flesh. Other activities that please the flesh and hurt the Spirit would be alcohol, drugs, bad music, and immorality.

Paul wrote that there were “divisions” among the Corinthian people. That means they were not thinking the same way. They couldn’t agree on one way to get the work done. These divisions were causing people to fight. They were even divided about how to celebrate the Lord’s Table.

Paul told the Corinthians how to fix their divisions. He told them that they needed to focus on Christ. They needed to listen to the preaching and teaching of the Word of God.

Conclusion

The Corinthians were fighting about many issues for many reasons. But the main problem with all of their fighting and bickering was that they were not focusing on Jesus. When Christians focus on people instead of Jesus, they make a big deal out of minor issues. The Bible is definitely clear about Christians going to court with other Christians. It is wrong. If we focus on loving people rather than fighting about minor matters, we can serve God better and get along with our brothers and sisters in Christ, which brings honor to our Savior.