

1 Corinthians 6:7

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

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?

Analysis

Now therefore there is utterly a fault among you, because ye go to law one with another. Hēttēma (ἥττημα, 'defect, defeat') signifies total moral failure—not a procedural error but a spiritual catastrophe. Litigation itself, regardless of merit, constitutes defeat. Then Paul offers a radical alternative: **Why do ye not rather take wrong? why do ye not rather suffer yourselves to be defrauded?** (dia ti ouchi mallon adikeisthe; dia ti ouchi mallon apostereisthe; διὰ τί οὐχὶ μᾶλλον ἀδικεῖσθε; διὰ τί οὐχὶ μᾶλλον ἀποστερεῖσθε;)

This echoes Jesus: turn the other cheek (Matthew 5:39-42), love enemies, go the extra mile. Adikeō (ἀδικέω, 'be wronged') and apostereō (ἀποστερέω, 'be defrauded') are passive—voluntarily absorb injustice rather than destroy brotherhood. Paul's ethic isn't naïve pacifism but cruciform witness: the cross shows God's power perfected in weakness (1 Corinthians 1:23-25). Demanding rights obliterates the witness of self-giving love.

Historical Context

Greco-Roman culture prized retribution and honor defense—losing face meant social death. Paul's call to absorb wrong was countercultural, even revolutionary. The church's early reputation for enemy love (Romans 12:14-21) and forgiveness (Ephesians 4:32) attracted converts. But Corinthian believers, steeped in honor-shame competition, preferred winning to witnessing. Paul reminds them: your real

adversary isn't fellow Christians but spiritual forces (Ephesians 6:12)—don't make brothers into enemies.

Related Passages

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Study Questions

1. What 'rights' are you demanding that prevent you from displaying Christ's self-giving love to a fellow believer?
2. How does voluntarily accepting wrong (when not involving abuse or injustice to others) demonstrate the power of the gospel?
3. When is pursuing justice appropriate, and when does it become a stumbling block to Christian witness and unity?

Interlinear Text

ἤδη	μὲν	οὖν	ὅλως	ἥττημα	ἐν	ὑμῖν	ἐστίν,	ὅτι
Now	therefore	G3767	utterly	a fault	among	you	there is	because
G2235	G3303		G3654	G2275	G1722	G5213	G2076	G3754

κρίματα	ἔχετε	μεθ'	ἐαυτῶν.	διὰ τί	οὐχὶ	μᾶλλον
G2917	ye go to law	one with	another	Why	not	rather
	G2192	G3326	G1438	G1302	G3780	G3123

ἀδικεῖσθε;	διὰ τί	οὐχὶ	μᾶλλον	ἀποστερεῖσθε;
do ye	Why	not	rather	do ye
G91	G1302	G3780	G3123	G650

Additional Cross-References

1 Peter 3:9 (Parallel theme): Not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing: but contrariwise blessing; knowing that ye are thereunto called, that ye should inherit a blessing.

Proverbs 20:22 (Parallel theme): Say not thou, I will recompense evil; but wait on the LORD, and he shall save thee.

1 Thessalonians 5:15 (Parallel theme): See that none render evil for evil unto any man; but ever follow that which is good, both among yourselves, and to all men.

Luke 6:29 (Parallel theme): And unto him that smiteth thee on the one cheek offer also the other; and him that taketh away thy cloke forbid not to take thy coat also.

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