

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 (ἵττημα, '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

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

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

ἀδικεῖσθε; διατί 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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