

GAMMA 2017

STUDY 6

1 Corinthians 6: 1-2 (The Christians and Law suits)

1. Why is it wrong to sue one another in church?

- a. In vv 5-6 it is wrong to sue each other in church because it brings shame upon the church as instead of being a beacon of light of purity to the society it shows itself in these suits to be no different. It damages the reputation of the church making it harder to reach out.
- b. It brings disputes between Christians to be decided by Non-Christians and this is an embarrassment and shameful thing as Christians washed by the blood of Christ as supposed to be holy and righteous in vv 11 and non Christians are not washed by Christ's blood and are unrighteous and are destined to not inherit God's Kingdom vv 9-10. How can disputes between the righteous people of God be decided by the unrighteous?
- c. Christians are more than competent to decide and resolve conflicts amongst themselves as they are destined to judge the angels in v3

2. Read the article attached to this study (see bottom of study) and tell us why the lady sued the church? Was it a reasonable suit? Read vv 1-4 and discuss if she did the right thing? Should the church have provided catchers?

Fallen Christian puts faith in the law

By Kelly Burke, Religious Affairs Writer

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Loraine Daly ... memory loss.

Loraine Daly arrived at church armed with her faith. But that faith proved to be misplaced when the spirit of the Lord entered her body and she hit the floor. And there was nobody there to save her.

Now Ms Daly, 40, is suing the Assemblies of God-affiliated Waterloo church, the Sydney Christian Life Centre, arguing that the church breached its duty of care that Sunday - August 8, 1996.

Ms Daly, of West Como, is claiming up to \$750,000 in damages, including future loss of earnings,

telling the NSW District Court she suffered brain damage from the fall, leaving her with disabilities including headaches, nausea, memory loss, impaired concentration and a feeling of vagueness. The court was told by Ms Daly's lawyer that the Sydney Christian Life Centre had been negligent in failing to ensure there were enough "catchers" - people appointed by the church to cushion the fall of those experiencing what is referred to within the Pentecostal movement as being "slain in the spirit".

It was also claimed that the church had failed to ensure that the catchers were in position before the Rev Tim Hall started the prayer service which usually brought on such fainting episodes. And the church had not provided falling members of the congregation with a sufficiently padded area to prevent injury. Instead, when Ms Daly's spirit was slain, she fell backwards on to a concrete floor covered only in a thin layer of carpet. Nobody came forward to assist her.

The court heard sworn statements from friends of Ms Daly who claimed her personality and behavior dramatically altered after the incident.

The Rev John Wilkinson, who, as pastor of the Sutherland Christian Life Centre employed Ms Daly as his private secretary during the late 1980s, said he believed Ms Daly had possessed "an outstanding mental capacity".

She had "a photographic memory" before the fall of August 1996, according to another witness. The court also heard, however, that Ms Daly had previously suffered similar ailments after two car accidents in 1986 and 1993. According to Dr Allan White, a Newcastle-based psychiatrist with 20 years' experience in the treatment of head injuries, her symptoms were not consistent with a permanent brain injury and it was more likely her condition was the result of anxiety and depression.

The case continues.

It was an unreasonable suit as the issue could have been settled within the church context for someone to arbitrate. Instead it brought shame to the church. The issue of people falling over because they were "slain in the spirit" is also highly troubling because if it were really true that God's Spirit was dispensed into them in a special manner then would He not also be able to protect them? How is it God will speak to His people in a special manner and cause a head injury?

Many of these cases of people who are "slain in the spirit" are actually people who faint from an emotional experience and many of these cases may not be genuine work of the Holy Spirit but man made emotional atmosphere causing some to faint. As such the church should have taken precautions to prevent injury when people faint as it had often happened and the church was negligent.

3. A few years ago a member of our church was caught stealing money from the offering bags to the tune of over RM 100000. An independent group of matured Christians found that the thief was not really repentant. Some in the church wanted to report the matter to the police and others wanted to settle the matter in the church itself with counselling. Who was right and why?

To really answer the question above we must be sure of what Paul was writing about. What kind of law suits were going on in the church? Vv 2 Why were they happening Vv 7-8

The cases involved very trivial cases for example one believer insulting the other or fighting over a piece of property we find this mentioned in vv 2
In verse 6-8 we read that the law suits were really because some of them wanted to defraud others

1 Corinthians 6:8 ⁸ *Instead, you yourselves cheat and do wrong, and you do this to your brothers.*

Thus it is clear that it was disputes between brethren in church when one party tries to get the better of another out of greed.

In the case of theft of money from the church esp of an unrepentant brother, this is a criminal breach of the law and is an offense against the state. Imagine if it were worse, one brother rapes a sister in church or even murder another brother, Christians in these cases are not allowed to set up their own courts to mete out justice. What if the death penalty was involved the state and not the church has the authority to mete out justice. So such cases of crimes must be left to the police especially in such cases where the person was not repentant we have read in 1 Cor 5 the person is to be "delivered to Satan" handed over the influence of Non Christians excommunicated.

4. So if two members of your church got involved in an argument and could not resolve the dispute how should the problem be resolved. One of them lodged a police report against the other because he had insulted her and when the leaders confronted her she replied that there was nothing wrong with what she had done after all it was not a law suit. What do you think? Can you share about disputes you might have had and how they were resolved?

5. If someone in church claims that you have insulted them and sues you for RM 1,000,000 and you are innocent of the charge. Read *1 Corinthians 6:7* ⁷ *The very fact that you have lawsuits among you means you have been completely defeated already. Why not rather be wronged? Why not rather be cheated?* Does this mean we are not to defend ourselves and just pay up?

To not defend ourselves would be a misunderstanding of the passage because Paul is making a rhetorical question. He says why not be wronged but is look at **1 Corinthians 6:8** ⁸ *Instead, you yourselves cheat and do wrong, and you do this to your brothers.* He is actually taunting these folk and asking them to be magnimous enough to allow themselves to loose when the true situation was that they were trying to bully and oppress others in church.