

# EQUIPPING THE SAINTS

“...FOR THE EQUIPPING OF THE SAINTS FOR THE WORK OF SERVICE...” ~ EPHESIANS 4:12

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## **DON'T BE DECEIVED: “THE UNRIGHTEOUS WILL NOT INHERIT THE KINGDOM OF GOD”**

By Andrew Dow

In last week's article we looked at the danger of being deceived. Deception is so prevalent that Scripture often warns, **“Do not be deceived”** (1 Cor 6:9; 15:33; Gal 6:7; Jam 1:16; cf. Luke 21:8). The statements surrounding these warnings are important because, while they are simple, they involve deception from Satan. Therefore, it would be wise for us to give special attention to such passages.

Let's begin by examining 1 Corinthians 6:9–11: **“Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived; neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor homosexuals, nor thieves, nor the covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers, will inherit the kingdom of God. Such were some of you; but you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God.”**

### **The Context of the Passage**

This text falls in a section of the book (1 Cor 1–6) where Paul is responding to issues he had heard concerning the church in Corinth. **“It is actually reported,”** Paul writes, **“that there is immorality among you, and immorality of such a kind as does not exist even among the Gentiles,**

**that someone has his father's wife"** (1 Cor 5:1). This immoral person, according to the inspired apostle, should have been removed from the church (1 Cor 5:2–3). Paul expected these Christians to judge the sinner and remove him from their midst: **"Do you not judge those who are within the church? ... Remove the wicked man from among yourselves"** (1 Cor 5:11-13).

Chapter six creates an unfortunate break in Paul's argument. Paul continues to address this same issue: the Corinthians' inability to judge among themselves. Paul asks, **"Is it so, that there is not among you one wise man who will be able to decide between his brethren...?"** (1 Cor 6:5). The Corinthians should have been wise enough to make a judgment. They should have recognized the wickedness of immorality and dealt with it appropriately.

### **A Closer Look At The Text**

While addressing the issue of immorality in the church, and the Corinthians' inactivity toward the situation, Paul asks a rhetorical question: **"Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God?"** (1 Cor 6:9a). Paul is implying that they *should* know! When Paul writes, **"Do not be deceived"** (1 Cor 6:9b), one can sense a strong use of sarcasm. Paul should not have to remind them of this! By not judging the immoral man, the Corinthians were accepting his sin. Paul has to step in and say, *"Seriously? Who has deceived you into thinking this immoral man is right with God?"*

Paul then provides a list: **"Do not be deceived; neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor homosexuals, nor thieves, nor the**

**covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers, will inherit the kingdom of God**” (1 Cor 6:9b-10). It’s important to understand when we encounter lists in the Bible that they are rarely complete lists. For instance, Paul concludes the works of the flesh by saying, **“and things like these”** (Gal 5:21). Paul is not providing the complete list of those who will not inherit the kingdom of God here, rather he is giving us a representative list. In fact, Paul specifically targets sins with which the Corinthians had previously struggled (cf. 1 Cor 6:11).

**“Such were some of you,”** he writes, **“but you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God”** (1 Cor 6:11). The Corinthians, like all who have come out from the world and into Christ, had sinful backgrounds. However, they were no longer like that; they had changed! Paul’s point is simple: Change is required to inherit the kingdom of God. Since the immoral man had not changed, they should have judged him to be in sin and taken appropriate disciplinary action.

### **Once Saved, Always Saved?**

This passage speaks to the calvinistic *“once saved, always saved”* idea. It is not hard to see why this doctrine is so popular. It is a comfortable, easy to teach doctrine that paves the way for a do-it-your-own-way religion.

The Corinthians had been deceived. Instead of removing the one who had engaged in immorality, they treated him as if his situation had not changed. If we’re not careful, we can be deceived into believing this lie as well. God demands conformity to His commandments (cf. Matt 7:21–23, 24–27; 28:29–20). The danger of falling away is real

