

The True Attitude of Christians

Actually, then, it is already a defeat for you, that you have lawsuits with one another. Why not rather be wronged? why not rather be defrauded? On the contrary; you yourselves wrong and defraud, and that your brethren. (6:7-8)

Christians who take fellow Christians to court lose spiritually before the case is heard. The fact that they have **lawsuits** at all is a sign of moral and spiritual **defeat** (*hēttēma*, a word used of defeat in court). A believer who takes a fellow believer to court for any reason always loses the case in God's sight. He has already suffered a spiritual **defeat**. He is selfish, and he discredits the power, wisdom, and work of God, when he tries to get what he wants through the judgment of unbelievers.

The right attitude of a Christian is to **rather be wronged**, to **rather be defrauded**, than to sue a fellow Christian. It is far better to lose financially than to lose spiritually. Even when we are clearly in the legal right, we do not have the moral and spiritual right to insist on our legal right in a public court. If the brother has wronged us in any way, our response should be to forgive him and to leave the outcome of the matter in God's hands. The Lord may give or take away. He is sovereign and has His will and purpose both in what we gain and in what we lose. We should gratefully accept that.

When Peter asked Jesus how often he should forgive a brother who sinned against him, the Lord replied, "seventy times seven" ([Matt. 18:21-22](#)), a figure that represented an unlimited amount. To illustrate the principle, Jesus told the parable of the unforgiving slave. After being forgiven a huge, unpayable sum by the king, the man refused to forgive a fellow slave for a pittance, and was handed "over to the torturers" by the irate king. "So shall My heavenly Father also do to you," Jesus said, "if each of you does not forgive his brother from your heart" ([vv. 23-35](#)). Because God in Christ has forgiven each of us of such great sin against Himself, no Christian has the right to be unforgiving, especially of fellow Christians. If he is unforgiving, the Lord will deliver him to chastening until he repents or is removed.

If we are **wronged** or **defrauded** we should be forgiving, not bitter. If we cannot convince the brother to make things right, and if he will not listen to fellow believers, we are better off to suffer the loss or the injustice than to bring a lawsuit against him. "Do not resist him who is evil," Jesus commanded, "but whoever slaps you on your right cheek, turn to him the other also. And if anyone wants to sue you, and take your shirt, let him have your coat also" ([Matt. 5:39-40](#)). Contrary to the world's standard, it is better to be sued and lose than to sue and win. Spiritually, it is impossible for a Christian to sue and win. When we are deprived wrongfully we are to cast ourselves on the care of God, who is able to work that for our good and His glory.

An attorney friend of mine says that over the years he has counseled dozens of Christians to drop lawsuits against each other. In some ninety percent of the cases he has been successful, and he reports that, without exception, those believers have been blessed. Also without exception, those who insisted on resolving their disputes in court became bitter and resentful—whether they won or lost their cases. If they went to court they always lost spiritually.

The Lord knows the needs of His children and will see that we have what we need. We are to "seek first His kingdom and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added" ([Matt. 6:33](#)). A Christian's primary concern should not be to protect his possessions or his rights but to protect his relationship with His Lord and with his fellow believers.