

## *“Such Were Some of You”*

Prepared by Patrick J. Griffiths © - [pastorpat@waukeshabile.org](mailto:pastorpat@waukeshabile.org)  
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*“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.” (1 Cor 6:11)*

Read 1 Cor 6:9-11

Our paragraph follows on the heels of a strong statement against defrauding and wronging someone through lawsuits (vv. 1-8). Verses 9 and 10 tell us who “will not inherit the kingdom of God.” The list is interesting with the addition of “swindler” in the context of “idolaters” and “men who practice homosexuality.” This is especially interesting because of the previous paragraph. I would probably define “swindlers” as those who defraud their brothers and sisters in Christ through inappropriate lawsuits.

The word “swindler” is used as an adjective five times in the New Testament (Mt 7:15, Lk 18:11, 1 Cor 5:10, 11, 6:10). Its occurrences in First Corinthians 5:10, 11, and 6:10 are stark and sobering. The verb is used thirteen times and means to “take by force” (Mt 11:12, 13:19, Jn 10:12, 28, 29, 1 Thes 4:17, Jude 23).

It is crucial to understand the nature of the actions in verses 9 and 10. Paul is not referring to a point in time action, but rather patterns of life. When one’s life is characterized by such sins as those evidenced in verses 9 and 10, then such is an indication of an unregenerate heart. These people will not inherit the kingdom of God, not because they practice such things, but because they are unregenerate and their unregenerate heart manifests itself in actions that are inappropriate of someone who is saved.

Notice how Paul turns the corner in verse 11, “Such were some of you.” What they once were, they no longer are, but still have. Any believer can act in such a way as to reveal what they once were. Any believer is capable of committing the acts of “fornication, idolatry, adultery, being effeminate, homosexuality, thievery, covetousness, drunkenness, revelry, and cheating.” Our old, fallen nature still contains all of these sins. But this no longer identifies us as the people of God. These actions no longer identify our character or person. For a believer to be “caught in any transgression” (Gal 6:1) is tragic and unfortunate, but possible. Yet the real tragedy occurs when confession and repentance do not take place. Remember, this is what was happening in chapter 5. It was because of this Paul called such an individual a “so called brother” (5:11). Paul’s warning in 6:9 and 10 is dramatic, “They will not inherit the kingdom of God.”

“Such were some of you” . . . but. Three times Paul uses the strongest contrasting connector available to him with “**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.”

Remember, Paul did not identify the Corinthian believer by their performance, but by their position. Paul recognized that they could only be one of two things. They were either *in*

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*Adam* or *in Christ*, but not both. Paul identifies his audience as being “washed, sanctified, and justified.” Is Paul celebrating three distinct actions or is he expanding on one thought? Washed is used only twice in the New Testament, here and in Acts 22:16 and it means to wash fully. The verb “sanctified” is found in 26 verses. Paul uses it in 1:2 and 7:14. The same root word is found in 1:30. It means to make holy through separation by consecration. Justified is a common word meaning “righteous.” Paul has already referenced this idea in 1:2, 30 and 5:7.

All three descriptions, washed, sanctified, and justified, are pieces of the same grand thought. All who are washed are sanctified and justified and this is equally true for the other two. No one is washed who is not also sanctified and justified. Paul is celebrating the greatness of what they now have and who they now are in Christ.

As believers, let us not kid ourselves into believing our practice can ever be separated from our position. Just as sanctification follows justification, so also practice follows position. How thankful we are to be to know that there is a past tense to the believer’s life . . . “Such were some of you.” Hallelujah!