

1 Corinthians 11:9

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Neither was the man created for the woman; but the woman for the man.

Analysis

Neither was the man created for the woman; but the woman for the man—

Paul moves from source (v. 8) to purpose. Διὰ τὴν γυναικα (for the woman) versus διὰ τὸν ἄνδρα (for the man)—the preposition dia with accusative indicates purpose or goal. This echoes Genesis 2:18: "It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him." Woman was created to complete man, to be his counterpart and companion.

This is purpose, not value. A violin was made for music—this doesn't demean the violin but defines its telos. Similarly, woman's creation "for the man" defines her complementary role without implying inferiority. The head covering symbolizes this purpose-driven creation: woman embraces her God-designed role as helper and complement. Significantly, Paul will balance this with mutuality (vv. 11-12), showing that creational order doesn't eliminate interdependence. The feminist objection misconstrues purpose as oppression, but biblical purpose liberates when aligned with God's design.

Historical Context

The Genesis narrative of woman as ezer kenegdo (helper suitable/corresponding to him) was revolutionary in the ancient world. Unlike Ancient Near Eastern views where women were property or mere childbearers, Genesis presents woman as man's necessary complement—his equal opposite. Paul draws on this to argue for gender distinctions in worship without denigrating women's worth. His Jewish

training in Genesis interpretation (midrash) shapes his reading of creation as prescriptive, not merely descriptive.

Related Passages

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

Study Questions

1. How does being created 'for' someone define purpose without diminishing worth?
2. What does it mean practically for a wife to be her husband's 'helper'—and how does this reflect Christ's relationship with the church?
3. How do modern ideals of autonomy and self-actualization conflict with the biblical vision of purpose-driven creation?

Interlinear Text

καὶ	γὰρ	οὐκ	έκτισθη	ἄνδρα	διὰ	τὴν	γυνὴ	ἀλλὰ
G2532	G1063	Neither	created	the man	for	G3588	the woman	but
		G3756	G2936	G435	G1223		G1135	G235
γυνὴ	διὰ	τὸν	ἄνδρα					
the woman	for	G3588	the man					
G1135	G1223		G435					

Additional Cross-References

Genesis 2:18 (Parallel theme): And the LORD God said, It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him.