

1 Corinthians 7:1

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Now concerning the things whereof ye wrote unto me: It is good for a man not to touch a woman.

Analysis

Now concerning the things whereof ye wrote unto me—Paul transitions to answer specific questions from the Corinthian church, likely submitted in a letter. The phrase **It is good for a man not to touch a woman** uses *haptō* (ἅπτω), a euphemism for sexual relations. This may be quoting the Corinthians' own ascetic slogan, which Paul will qualify rather than endorse absolutely.

The Corinthian church struggled with two extremes: libertinism (chapters 5-6) and asceticism. Some believers, influenced by Greek dualism viewing the body as evil, advocated complete sexual abstinence even in marriage. Paul's response balances the goodness of singleness for ministry with the goodness of marriage as God's provision against sexual immorality.

The term *kalón* (καλόν, "good") suggests "advantageous" or "beneficial" rather than morally superior. Paul will develop this pragmatic approach throughout the chapter, emphasizing that both singleness and marriage are legitimate callings, each with distinct opportunities for serving Christ with *aperispastos* (undivided devotion, v. 35).

Historical Context

Written around 55 AD from Ephesus during Paul's third missionary journey, this letter responds to reports of division and a written inquiry from Corinth. The Greco-Roman world practiced various sexual ethics—from temple prostitution to

Stoic asceticism. Some Corinthian believers, possibly influenced by proto-Gnostic thought, elevated celibacy as spiritually superior, creating marital conflicts.

Related Passages

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Psalms 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Study Questions

1. How does Paul's "good" differ from "morally superior"—what implications does this have for viewing singleness and marriage?
2. In what ways might contemporary Christianity fall into either extreme libertinism or asceticism regarding sexuality?
3. How can the church honor both callings (single and married) as equally valid paths for devoted service to Christ?

Interlinear Text

Περὶ	δὲ	ὧν	ἐγράψατε	μοι,	καλὸν
concerning	Now	the things whereof	ye wrote	unto me	It is good
G4012	G1161	G3739	G1125	G3427	G2570
ἄνθρωπῳ	γυναικὸς	μὴ	ἅπτεσθαι·		
for a man	a woman	not	to touch		
G444	G1135	G3361	G680		

Additional Cross-References

1 Corinthians 7:8 (Good): I say therefore to the unmarried and widows, It is good for them if they abide even as I.

Genesis 20:6 (Parallel theme): And God said unto him in a dream, Yea, I know that thou didst this in the integrity of thy heart; for I also withheld thee from sinning against me: therefore suffered I thee not to touch her.

