

1 Corinthians 7:10

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And unto the married I command, yet not I, but the Lord, Let not the wife depart from her husband:

Analysis

And unto the married I command, yet not I, but the Lord—Paul distinguishes his teaching from direct dominical instruction. The phrase οὐκ εγὼ ἀλλὰ ὁ κύριος (οὐκ ἐγὼ ἀλλὰ ὁ κύριος, "not I but the Lord") indicates he is citing Jesus' teaching on divorce (Matthew 5:31-32; 19:3-9; Mark 10:2-12; Luke 16:18). **Let not the wife depart from her husband** uses χωρισθῆναι (χωρισθῆναι, "be separated/divorced").

Paul addresses the wife first, possibly because some Corinthian women sought to leave marriages for ascetic reasons, claiming spiritual superiority in celibacy. The command is absolute: Christian wives must not divorce their husbands. This reflects Jesus' prohibition against divorce except for sexual immorality (Matthew 19:9), though Paul does not mention that exception here.

The seriousness of this command reflects marriage's covenantal nature as reflecting Christ and the church (Ephesians 5:31-32). Divorce violates God's creational design (Genesis 2:24) and His expressed will (Malachi 2:16). Paul will address mixed marriages (believer/unbeliever) separately in verses 12-16, but for Christian couples, the principle is clear: permanence.

Historical Context

Jewish law permitted divorce (Deuteronomy 24:1-4), debated between Hillel's lenient and Shammai's strict interpretations. Roman law allowed easy divorce by

mutual consent. Jesus and Paul both taught a more restrictive view, emphasizing marriage's permanence as reflecting God's covenant faithfulness.

Related Passages

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Study Questions

1. Why does Paul emphasize that this command comes from Jesus Himself, not Paul's own judgment?
2. How does viewing marriage as permanent covenant rather than contract affect how we approach marital difficulties?
3. What might have motivated Corinthian wives to seek divorce for "spiritual" reasons?

Interlinear Text

τοῖς	δὲ	γεγαμηκόσιν	παραγγέλλω	οὐκ	ἐγὼ	ἀλλ'	ό	
G3588	And	unto the married	I command	yet not	I	but		G3588
G1161		G1060	G3853	G3756	G1473	G235		
κύριος	γυναῖκα	ἀπὸ	ἀνδρὸς	μὴ	χωρισθῆναι			
the Lord	the wife	from	her husband	not	Let			
G2962		G1135	G575	G435	G3361	G5563		

Additional Cross-References

Matthew 5:32 (Parallel theme): But I say unto you, That whosoever shall put away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, causeth her to commit adultery: and whosoever shall marry her that is divorced committeth adultery.

Luke 16:18 (Parallel theme): Whosoever putteth away his wife, and marrieth another, committeth adultery: and whosoever marrieth her that is put away from her husband committeth adultery.

Jeremiah 3:20 (References Lord): Surely as a wife treacherously departeth from her husband, so have ye dealt treacherously with me, O house of Israel, saith the LORD.

1 Corinthians 7:15 (Parallel theme): But if the unbelieving depart, let him depart. A brother or a sister is not under bondage in such cases: but God hath called us to peace.

1 Corinthians 7:12 (References Lord): But to the rest speak I, not the Lord: If any brother hath a wife that believeth not, and she be pleased to dwell with him, let him not put her away.

1 Corinthians 7:6 (Parallel theme): But I speak this by permission, and not of commandment.

1 Corinthians 7:25 (References Lord): Now concerning virgins I have no commandment of the Lord: yet I give my judgment, as one that hath obtained mercy of the Lord to be faithful.