

1 Corinthians 7:26

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

I suppose therefore that this is good for the present distress, I say, that it is good for a man so to be.

Analysis

I suppose therefore that this is good for the present distress—the verb *nomizō* (νομίζω, "I think/consider") introduces Paul's judgment. The phrase *tēn enestōsan anankēn* (τὴν ἐνεστῶσαν ἀνάγκην, "the present necessity/distress") refers to circumstances making singleness advantageous. This could mean persecution, famine, eschatological expectation (v. 29), or Corinthian-specific troubles.

Paul's counsel: **I say, that it is good for a man so to be**—remaining as he is (single or married). The term *kalón* (καλόν, "good") again indicates practical advantage (vv. 1, 8) rather than moral superiority. Given *anankē* (pressing circumstances), maintaining one's current status is wise. This does not forbid marriage but recognizes singleness offers advantages during difficult times.

The "present distress" suggests Paul expected near-term difficulties—perhaps persecution or Christ's imminent return. His counsel is situational: given these circumstances, singleness is advantageous. This does not establish universal superiority of celibacy but recognizes that crisis situations may make marriage burdensome (v. 28, "trouble in the flesh").

Historical Context

Early Christians expected Christ's imminent return (1 Thessalonians 4:15-17), which shaped practical decisions. Paul's counsel reflects eschatological urgency—

with time short (v. 29), undistracted devotion to the Lord (vv. 32-35) through singleness offered advantages. Persecution also made family obligations dangerous.

Related Passages

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

Study Questions

1. What "present distress" did Paul have in mind—persecution, eschatological urgency, or local circumstances?
2. How should Paul's situational counsel affect how we apply this passage to contemporary contexts?
3. In what circumstances might singleness be particularly advantageous for focused ministry today?

Interlinear Text

Νομίζω οὖν τοῦτο καλὸν ὑπάρχειν διὰ τὴν
I suppose **therefore** **that this** **good** **is** **for** **G3588**
G3543 G3767 G5124 G2570 G5225 G1223

ἐνεστῶσαν ἀνάγκην ὅτι καλὸν ἀνθρώπῳ τὸ οὕτως
the present **distress** **I say that** **good** **for a man** **G3588** **so**
G1764 G318 G3754 G2570 G444 G3779

εἰναι

to be
G1511

Additional Cross-References

1 Corinthians 7:1 (Good): Now concerning the things whereof ye wrote unto me: It is good for a man not to touch a woman.

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

1 Peter 4:17 (Parallel theme): For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God: and if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God?

1 Corinthians 7:28 (Parallel theme): But and if thou marry, thou hast not sinned; and if a virgin marry, she hath not sinned. Nevertheless such shall have trouble in the flesh: but I spare you.

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