

1 Corinthians 7:28

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

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.

Analysis

But and if thou marry, thou hast not sinned—Paul immediately clarifies that his preference for singleness (vv. 26-27) does not make marriage sinful. The phrase *ouch hēmartes* (οὐχ ἡμαρτες, "you have not sinned") directly counters ascetic Corinthians who viewed marriage as spiritually inferior or even immoral. Paul affirms marriage's goodness (Genesis 2:18; Hebrews 13:4).

Similarly, **and if a virgin marry, she hath not sinned**. The repetition emphasizes that neither men nor women sin by marrying. However, **Nevertheless such shall have trouble in the flesh** (*thlipsin tē sarki*, θλίψιν τῇ σαρκί, "tribulation in the flesh"). *Thlipsis* means affliction, distress, or trouble—likely referring to the hardships of married life during persecution or the "present distress" (v. 26).

Paul adds **but I spare you** (*egō de hymōn pheidomai*, ἐγὼ δὲ ὑμῶν φείδομαι, "I am trying to spare you"). His counsel to remain single is motivated by pastoral care, not by viewing marriage as sinful. Married believers face anxieties and difficulties singles avoid (vv. 32-34), especially during crisis times. Paul's advice is practical and compassionate.

Historical Context

During times of persecution, Christian families faced unique dangers—arrest, separation, martyrdom. Paul's warning of "trouble in the flesh" for married

believers reflects the added burden of protecting and providing for family during such distress. His counsel aimed to spare believers unnecessary hardship.

Related Passages

1 John 4:8 — God is love

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

Study Questions

1. How does Paul's explicit affirmation that marriage is not sinful protect against false asceticism?
2. What "trouble in the flesh" do married believers face that singles avoid?
3. How should we balance Paul's pastoral care to "spare" believers with legitimate desires for marriage?

Interlinear Text

ἐὰν	δὲ	καὶ	γῆμη	οὐχ	ἥμαρτεν	καὶ	ἐὰν	γῆμη	ἡ
if	But	and	marry	not	she hath	and	if	marry	G3588
G1437	G1161	G2532	G1060	G3756	G264	G2532	G1437	G1060	
παρθένος	οὐχ	ἥμαρτεν	θλίψιν	δὲ	τῇ	σαρκὶ	ἔξουσιν		
a virgin	not	she hath	trouble	But	G3588	in the flesh	shall have		
G3933	G3756	G264	G2347	G1161		G4561	G2192		
οἱ	τοιούτοι	ἐγὼ	δὲ	ὕμῶν	φείδομαι				
G3588	such	I	But	you	spare				
	G5108	G1473	G1161	G5216	G5339				

Additional Cross-References

Hebrews 13:4 (Parallel theme): Marriage is honourable in all, and the bed undefiled: but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge.

1 Corinthians 7:26 (Parallel theme): I suppose therefore that this is good for the present distress, I say, that it is good for a man so to be.

2 Corinthians 1:23 (Parallel theme): Moreover I call God for a record upon my soul, that to spare you I came not as yet unto Corinth.

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