

1 Corinthians 7:33

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

But he that is married careth for the things that are of the world, how he may please his wife.

Analysis

But he that is married careth for the things that are of the world—Paul contrasts the married believer's concerns with the single's (v. 32). The phrase *ta tou kosmou* (τὰ τοῦ κόσμου, "the things of the world") refers to earthly, practical matters—provision, housing, family needs. This is not sinful but reflects legitimate marital responsibilities. **How he may please his wife** (pōs aresē tē gynaiki, πῶς ἀρέσῃ τῇ γυναικί).

Paul acknowledges that marriage involves divided attention. The married man must balance pleasing the Lord with pleasing his wife—both legitimate concerns. This does not mean married men cannot serve God faithfully, but they face competing priorities singles avoid. Marriage requires time, attention, emotional energy, and resources that could otherwise be devoted entirely to ministry.

Paul's observation is descriptive, not prescriptive. He neither condemns marriage nor suggests married believers serve God less faithfully. Rather, he acknowledges practical realities: family obligations limit availability for certain ministries (travel, intensive prayer, dangerous missions). This supports his counsel (vv. 26-28) that singleness is advantageous given present circumstances.

Historical Context

Greco-Roman household management (*oikonomia*) required significant attention from the *paterfamilias* (household head). Christian husbands bore responsibility

for family provision, protection, and spiritual leadership (Ephesians 5:25-29; 1 Timothy 3:4-5), necessarily limiting ministry availability compared to single men.

Related Passages

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Study Questions

1. How does marriage's divided attention differ from the single believer's undivided focus on the Lord?
2. In what ways is "pleasing one's wife" a legitimate concern that honors God rather than compromising faithfulness?
3. How can married believers maximize faithfulness to Christ while honoring family obligations?

Interlinear Text

τῇ	δὲ	γαμήσας	μεριμνᾷ	τῇ
for the things that are	But	he that is married	careth	for the things that are
G3588	G1161	G1060	G3309	G3588
τῇ	κόσμου	πῶς	ἀρέσει	τῇ
for the things that are	of the world	how	he may please	for the things that are
G3588	G2889	G4459	G700	G3588
γυναικί				
his wife				
G1135				

Additional Cross-References

1 Peter 3:7 (Parallel theme): Likewise, ye husbands, dwell with them according to knowledge, giving honour unto the wife, as unto the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life; that your prayers be not hindered.

Colossians 3:19 (Parallel theme): Husbands, love your wives, and be not bitter against them.

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