

1 Corinthians 7:34

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

There is difference also between a wife and a virgin. The unmarried woman careth for the things of the Lord, that she may be holy both in body and in spirit: but she that is married careth for the things of the world, how she may please her husband.

Analysis

There is difference also between a wife and a virgin—Paul now addresses women, maintaining complete reciprocity with verse 33's discussion of men. **The unmarried woman careth for the things of the Lord** (hē agamos merimna ta tou kyriou, ἡ ἄγαμος μεριμνᾷ τὰ τοῦ κυρίου)—her concern is Christ's affairs. **That she may be holy both in body and in spirit** (hina ē hagia kai tō sōmati kai tō pneumati).

Paul's phrase "holy both in body and in spirit" does not suggest married women are unholy but describes the single woman's complete devotion. She can dedicate both physical energy and spiritual focus entirely to the Lord without competing family obligations. This reflects the biblical concept of holiness as being "set apart" for God's exclusive use.

Conversely, **but she that is married careth for the things of the world, how she may please her husband**. Married women face the same divided attention as married men (v. 33)—legitimate family concerns that compete with ministry focus. Paul's counsel is practical: singleness allows women to pursue ministry, prayer, and service with complete availability.

Historical Context

Single Christian women found unprecedented opportunities for ministry and leadership in the early church (Phoebe, Priscilla, Junia, widows' orders). Unlike Greco-Roman culture where women's value centered on marriage and childbearing, Paul affirms single women's complete devotion to Christ as valid and valuable.

Related Passages

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Study Questions

1. How does Paul's teaching honor single women's calling and ministry capacity?
2. What does it mean for single women to be "holy both in body and in spirit" through undivided devotion?
3. How can the church support and utilize single women's unique capacity for focused ministry?

Interlinear Text

μεμέρισται	τῷ	γυνή	καὶ	τῷ			
There is difference also between	for the things	a wife	and	for the things			
G3307	G3588	G1135	G2532	G3588			
παρθένος	τῷ	ἄγαμος	μεριμνᾷ	τῷ			
a virgin	for the things	The unmarried woman	careth	for the things			
G3933	G3588	G22	G3309	G3588			
τῷ	κυρίου	ἵνα	ἡ	ἁγία	καὶ	σώματι	καὶ
for the things	of the Lord	that	she may be	holy	and	in body	and
G3588	G2962	G2443	G5600	G40	G2532	G4983	G2532
πνεύματι·	τῷ	δὲ	γαμήσασα	μεριμνᾷ	τῷ		
in spirit	for the things	but	she that is married	careth	for the things		
G4151	G3588	G1161	G1060	G3309	G3588		
τῷ	κόσμου	πῶς	ἄρᾶσει	τῷ	ἀνδρί		
for the things	of the world	how	she may please	for the things	her husband		
G3588	G2889	G4459	G700	G3588	G435		

Additional Cross-References

1 Corinthians 6:20 (Spirit): For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's.
