

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 ἀγαμος 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 γυνὴ 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 ἦ γάια 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 ἀρέσει τῷ ἀνδρί¹
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.

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