

1 Corinthians 7:37

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Nevertheless he that standeth stedfast in his heart, having no necessity, but hath power over his own will, and hath so decreed in his heart that he will keep his virgin, doeth well.

Analysis

Nevertheless he that standeth stedfast in his heart—the phrase *hos de hestēken hedraios en tē kardia* (ὅς δὲ ἔστηκεν ἐδραῖος ἐν τῇ καρδίᾳ, "but whoever stands firm in his heart") describes resolute conviction. **Having no necessity, but hath power over his own will**—*mē echōn anankēn, exousian de echei peri tou idiou thelēmatos* (μὴ ἔχων ἀνάγκην, ἔξουσίαν δὲ ἔχει περὶ τοῦ ἴδιου θελήματος). There is no external pressure (cultural expectation, sexual temptation) compelling marriage.

The man who **hath so decreed in his heart that he will keep his virgin, doeth well**. The phrase *tērein tēn heautou parthenon* (τηρεῖν τὴν ἑαυτοῦ παρθένον, "keep his own virgin") means allowing her to remain unmarried. *Kalōs poiei* (καλῶς ποιεῖ, "does well") indicates this is a good choice. Paul affirms that remaining single (whether for oneself or one's daughter) is advantageous for ministry.

The conditions are crucial:

1. firm conviction
2. no necessity
3. self-control.

If these are met, choosing singleness is "good." This reflects Paul's consistent teaching that singleness is advantageous but requires the corresponding gift (v. 7). Without gift and conviction, marriage is better (v. 9).

Historical Context

Paul's teaching freed fathers from obligatory marriage arrangements and honored women who chose celibacy for Christ's service. This was countercultural in societies where women's value centered on marriage and childbearing. Christian women could pursue devoted service without social shame.

Related Passages

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Study Questions

1. What conditions must be met for singleness to be the wise choice—how can these be discerned?
2. How does this verse honor women's calling to singleness rather than viewing unmarried women as shameful?
3. In what ways does modern culture pressure marriage in ways similar to ancient culture?

Interlinear Text

ὅς δὲ ἔστηκεν ἐδραῖος ἐν τῇ καρδίᾳ μὴ ἔχει
he Nevertheless that standeth stedfast in G3588 heart no hath
G3739 G1161 G2476 G1476 G1722 G2588 G3361 G2192

ἀνάγκην ἔξουσίαν δὲ ἔχει περὶ τοῦ ἰδίου
necessity power Nevertheless hath over G3588 his own
G318 G1849 G1161 G2192 G4012 G2398

θελήματος καὶ τοῦτο κέκρικεν ἐν τῇ καρδίᾳ αὐτοῦ
will and so decreed in G3588 heart G846
G2307 G2532 G5124 G2919 G1722 G2588

τοῦ τηρεῖν τὴν ἔαυτοῦ παρθένον καλῶς ποιεῖ·
G3588 that he will keep G3588 his virgin well doeth
G5083 G1438 G3933 G2573 G4160

From KJV Study • kjvstudy.org