

Notes on the Greek New Testament Week 76 – 1 Corinthians 7:8-8:6

Day 376: 1 Corinthians 7:8-16

Verse 8

Λέγω δὲ τοῖς ἀγάμοις καὶ ταῖς χήραις,
καλὸν αὐτοῖς ἔαν μείνωσιν ὡς κἀγώ·

ἀγαμος, ου f & m unmarried, single

The masculine here is probably gender inclusive, though some (e.g. Fee) think that the reference is to widowers, complemented then by χηραις. Thistleton thinks this suggestion carries extra weight in light of the pressure on men and women to remarry speedily. He cites an article by Aline Rousselle to the effect that in Roman society "a widow was expected to remarry within a year, and a divorcee within six months."

Kistemaker, however, says, "the unmarried are a class of people that includes widowers and both men and women who are single, separated or divorced."

χήρα, ας f widow

ἔαν if, even if, though

μείνωσιν Verb, aor act subj, 3 pl μενω
trans remain, stay

καγώ from καὶ ἐγώ and I, but I, I also

Verse 9

εἰ δὲ οὐκ ἐγκρατεύονται γαμησάτωσαν,
κρείττον γάρ ἐστιν γαμῆσαι ἢ πυροῦσθαι.

ἐγκρατενομαι exercise self-control

Thistleton suggests that the picture is of "a couple for whom mutual love has become so powerful that it becomes a distraction from 'everything for the sake of the gospel.'" He thinks that the phrase here means 'If they do not have power over their passions.'

γαμεω marry

κρειττον and κρεισσον adv. better

πυροῦσθαι Verb, pres midd/pass dep infin

πυροομαι burn, be inflamed with
desire

"Paul does not regard the suppression of sexual desires as itself meritorious, as some later writers have held." Morris

Verse 10

τοῖς δὲ γεγαμηκόσιν παραγγέλλω, οὐκ ἐγώ
ἀλλὰ ὁ κύριος, γυναῖκα ἀπὸ ἀνδρὸς μὴ
χωρισθῆναι

γεγαμηκόσιν Verb, perf act ptc, 3 pl γαμεω

The perfect denotes the married state consequent upon the act of marrying.

"The case envisaged is that of marriage where both partners are Christians." Morris

παραγγέλλω command, instruct
χωρίζω separate; pass. separate oneself,
leave

Cf. Mk 10:11-12.

Verse 11

– ἔαν δὲ καὶ χωρισθῆ, μενέτω ἀγαμος ἢ τῷ
ἀνδρὶ καταλλαγήτω – καὶ ἄνδρα γυναῖκα
μὴ ἀφιέναι.

μενω see v.8

ἀγαμος, ου f & m see v.8

καταλλαγήτω Verb, aor pass imperat, 3 s

καταλασσω reconcile

ἀφιέναι Verb, pres act infin ἀφιημι leave,
forsake, divorce.

Some have suggested that at Corinth there were those who wanted to pursue an ascetic marriage and who wanted to separate so as to avoid the temptation to intimacy. Whatever the situation, Paul is seeking to reinforce the distinctively Christian view of marriage against the background of permissive Roman society.

Verse 12

Τοῖς δὲ λοιποῖς λέγω ἐγώ, οὐχ ὁ κύριος·
εἴ τις ἀδελφὸς γυναῖκα ἔχει ἄπιστον, καὶ
αὕτη συνευδοκεῖ οἰκεῖν μετ' αὐτοῦ, μὴ
ἀφιέτω αὐτήν·

λοιπος, η, ου rest, remaining

By 'the rest' Morris understands "those not bound by the ties of Christian marriage."

λέγω ἐγώ, οὐχ ὁ κύριος i.e. Paul is no longer citing direct sayings of Jesus. This does mean that he believes that what he says carries any lesser authority.

ἀπιστος, ου unfaithful, unbelieving
συνευδοκεω be willing, agree to

Implies mutual consent.

οἰκεω intrans live, dwell; trans live in

Verse 13

καὶ γυνὴ εἴ τις ἔχει ἄνδρα ἄπιστον, καὶ
οὗτος συνευδοκεῖ οἰκεῖν μετ' αὐτῆς, μὴ
ἀφιέτω τὸν ἄνδρα.

Verse 14

ἡγιασται γὰρ ὁ ἀνήρ ὁ ἄπιστος ἐν τῇ
 γυναικί, καὶ ἡγιασται ἡ γυνὴ ἡ ἄπιστος ἐν
 τῷ ἀδελφῷ· ἐπεὶ ἄρα τὰ τέκνα ὑμῶν
 ἀκάθαρτά ἐστιν, νῦν δὲ ἁγία ἐστίν.

ἡγιασται Verb, perf pass indic, 3 s ἁγιαζω
 sanctify, make holy

ἐπεὶ since, because, for

τεκνον, ου n child; pl descendants

ἀκαθατος, ον unclean

The nature of the 'holiness' of the unbelieving partner and of the children is unclear. Paedobaptists, such as Morris, argue that the child of a believing parent is to be regarded as a Christian until they reach the age of discretion. This is difficult to sustain since the same can hardly be applied to the unbelieving partner. Paul is answering questions from the Corinthians, so that his meaning, though obscure to us, was plain to them.

It is probably best to understand Paul's words against the background of the concern by some Corinthians to live 'holy' lives. Since they were Christians they should have no fellowship with non-Christians (cf. for instance, 6:12-20). What then of unbelieving spouse or children? Should they be put away for the sake of holiness? In affirming their holiness Paul is not saying that they too are Christians but that the Christian's relationship with them is acceptable to God – holy in the sense of sanctioned by God for the sake of the believing partner.

"The godliness of the one does more to 'sanctify' the marriage than the ungodliness of the other to make it unclean. Accordingly a believer can live with an unbeliever [not in the contracting of marriages but in maintaining those already entered into] with a clear conscience." Calvin

Thistleton says, "If the spouse falls under the influence of the Christian partner's faith, lifestyle, prayer, and living out of the gospel, how much more shall the children?" He believes 'holy' here to mean 'separate' and adds, "Even if only one parent is Christian the children will be marked by an element of shaping and 'difference' from a wholly pagan environment."

Verse 15

εἰ δὲ ὁ ἄπιστος χωρίζεται, χωριζέσθω· οὐ
 δεδούλωται ὁ ἀδελφὸς ἢ ἡ ἀδελφή ἐν τοῖς
 τοιούτοις· ἐν δὲ εἰρήνῃ κέκληκεν ὑμᾶς ὁ
 θεός.

χωριζέσθω Verb, pres pass imperat, 3 s

χωρίζω see v.10.

δεδούλωται Verb, perf pass indic, 3 s

δουλω **enslave, make (someone) a slave**

"But does the referential denotation mean: not ... in slavery to remain with the former spouse, or not in bondage to the marriage tie which would prevent freedom to remarry?"

Thistleton.

FF Bruce considers that Paul defines abandonment in these verses as "a state of what amounted to widowhood." he adds:

"Presumably remarriage would not be completely excluded for the believer."

τοιουτος, αυτη, ουτον correlative pronoun

and adjective **such, of such kind**

ειρηνη, ης f **peace**

Verse 16

τί γὰρ οἶδας, γυναί, εἰ τὸν ἄνδρα σωσεις;
 ἢ τί οἶδας, ἄνερ, εἰ τὴν γυναῖκα σωσεις;

σωζω **save, rescue, heal**

ἄνερ Noun, voc s ἄνηρ

"Exactly opposite conclusions have been drawn as to the force of this. Some feel that it means that marriage should be retained as long as possible in the hope of conversion... To others Paul's meaning is that marriage is not to be regarded simply as an instrument of evangelism. To cling to a marriage which the heathen is determined to end would lead to nothing but frustration and tension... On the whole the latter seems more likely to be right than the former." Morris

Day 377: 1 Corinthians 7:17-24**Verses 17-24**

Thistleton entitles this section *Divine Calling or Improved Status?* He says that Paul's response to the concerns at Corinth establishes "the principle that *neither freedom in the new creation nor obedient response to the divine call can be compromised by the constraints of a person's circumstantial situation or status in everyday life.* A Christian does not have to seek 'the right situation' in order to enjoy Christian freedom or to serve God's call effectively."

Verse 17

Εἰ μὴ ἐκάστω ὡς ἐμέρισεν ὁ κύριος,
ἕκαστον ὡς κέκληκεν ὁ θεός, οὕτως
περιπατεῖτω· καὶ οὕτως ἐν ταῖς
ἐκκλησίαις πάσαις διατάσσομαι.

The εἰ μὴ (literally, 'except') introduces a contrast with what precedes it. Paul has spoken previously of the Christian's freedom – pursuing what makes for peace. He now introduces a contrasting theme, the need to be content with the situation in which God has placed you.

ἕκαστος, η, ον each, every
μεριζω divide, assign, apportion
περιπατεω walk, walk about, live

"The Pauline logic seems to be that the **call** of the gospel (in the primary sense) can subsume within it a transposition and sublation of earthly circumstances which make a situation capable of becoming one in which the *call to service* can become (or remain) operative." Thistleton

ἐκκλησια, ας f congregation, church
διατασσω command, give instructions

Paul is not treating the Corinthians as a special case or laying down for them what he does not lay down for others.

Verse 18

περιτετημένους τις ἐκλήθη; μὴ
ἐπισπάσθω. ἐν ἀκροβυστία κέκληται τις;
μὴ περιτεμνέσθω.

περιτετημένους perf pass ptc, m nom s
περιτεμνω circumcise
ἐπισπασμαι remove marks of circumcision
ἀκροβυστια, ας f uncircumcision, non-Jews
κέκληται Verb, perf pass indic, 3 s καλεω

The new creation enables us to live renewed lives no matter what our situation. In general, the Christian does not have to seek to change their situation in order to be a 'better' Christian or to serve the Lord more fully.

Verse 19

ἡ περιτομή οὐδὲν ἐστίν, καὶ ἡ ἀκροβυστία
οὐδὲν ἐστίν, ἀλλὰ τήρησις ἐντολῶν θεοῦ.

περιτομη, ης f circumcision, those
circumcised, Jews
οὐδέν Adjective, n nom & acc s οὐδεις,
οὐδεμια, οὐδεν no one, nothing

'Is neither here nor there'

ἀλλὰ 'but what matters is.'

τηρησις, εως f keeping, obeying
ἐντολη, ης f command, order, instruction

Compare Gal. 5:6. What is important is faith which, marked by love for God, motivates a person to live in a manner pleasing to him.

Verse 20

ἕκαστος ἐν τῇ κλήσει ἧ ἐκλήθη ἐν ταύτῃ
μένετω.

ἕκαστος, η, ον see v.17
κλησις, εως f call, calling
μενω trans remain, stay, abide

"In this context Paul refers to the respective situations of being married, being celebrate, being a widow or widower, being separated, being a Jew or a Gentile, and being a slave, freedperson, or freeborn." Thistleton

Verse 21

δοῦλος ἐκλήθης; μὴ σοι μελέτω· ἀλλ· εἰ
καὶ δύνασαι ἐλεύθερος γενέσθαι, μᾶλλον
χρῆσαι.

μελει impersonal verb it is of concern, it
matters; μη σοι μελετω let it not be of
concern to you

μὴ σοι μελέτω 'let it not worry you,' or, in
modern parlance, 'forget it.'

ἐλευθερος, α, ον free, free person
μαλλον adv rather, instead
χρησαι Verb, aor midd dep imperat, 2 s
χραομαι use, make use of

Paul's words can be understood in one of two very different ways:

- i) εἰ καὶ δύνασαι ἐλεύθερος γενέσθαι is understood to mean, *if you can gain free status*, and μᾶλλον χρῆσαι as *use the opportunity [for freedom] instead* (so AV, RV, NIV);
- ii) εἰ καὶ δύνασαι is taken to mean, *even if a chance of freedom arises*, and μᾶλλον χρῆσαι as *rather, use your position as a slave* i.e. for faithful Christian living (so NRSV).

Thistleton takes a mediating position (so also Barrett), arguing that the first half of the phrase relates to hopes *for the future* and the second half to *how one should live now*. He translates it as, "Even if there is a possibility that you might come to be free, rather, start to make positive use of the present." He concludes, "Hope for freedom must not be a distraction; one can use positively one's present situation. But if, after putting it in perspective and 'waiting,' freedom comes, then that now becomes the situation to use. Paul does not bind his readers to remain in slavery; but neither does he want them unsettled by fantasizing about discipleship as a freedperson." I.e. the Christian is to live to Christ *now* rather than being enslaved to hopes of a change of situation.

Verse 22

ὁ γὰρ ἐν κυρίῳ κληθεὶς δοῦλος ἀπελεύθερος κυρίου ἐστίν· ὁμοίως ὁ ἐλεύθερος κληθεὶς δοῦλος ἐστὶν Χριστοῦ.
κληθεὶς Verb, aor pass ptc, m nom s κάλω ἀπελευθερος, ου m freedman

Cf. Gal 4:31; 5:1.

"The slave's real status is not defined by current legal status, but neither is it defined as simply an improved individual condition: freedom. The slave's real status is determined by his or her placement in a different household entirely: the household of Christ. The slave is a freedperson of the Lord and shares in the benefit, status and obligations that relationship brings." Fee and Schrage

ὁμοίως likewise, in the same way

Verse 23

τιμῆς ἠγοράσθητε· μὴ γίνεσθε δοῦλοι ἀνθρώπων.

τιμη, ης f honour, respect, price
ἠγοράσθητε Verb, aor pass indic, 2 pl
ἀγοραζω buy, redeem

Cf. 6:20.

Thistleton argues that v 23a belongs with v.22. "The Christian belongs to Christ, not to himself or herself. This is status and honour, for the slave represents his or her Lord; and it is freedom, for the believer is placed thereby in the hands of the Lord for his care, his decisions, his directions, his responsibility."

V 23b – Winter suggests this is addressed to, "Christian free men willing to sell themselves into slavery for social and financial benefit." Thistleton comments, "Paul is concerned with both situations and attitude; the public world and personal sance. Believers are not to return to the bondage of an honour-shame culture where everything revolves round what status is achieved in human eyes. But with chs. 1-4, this is the 'wisdom' only of the world which is folly with God." (See also the extended note in Thistleton's commentary *ad loc* on *Slavery in the Graeco-Roman World of the First Century*)

Verse 24

ἕκαστος ἐν ᾧ ἐκλήθη, ἀδελφοί, ἐν τούτῳ μενέτω παρὰ θεῶ.

παρα preposition with dat with, in the presence of

"Conversion is not the signal for a man to leave his occupation (unless it is one plainly incompatible with Christianity) and seek some other. All of life is God's. We should serve God where we are until he calls us elsewhere." Morris

Day 378: 1 Corinthians 7:25-31

Verse 25

Περὶ δὲ τῶν παρθένων ἐπιταγὴν κυρίου οὐκ ἔχω, γνώμην δὲ δίδωμι ὡς ἠλεημένος ὑπὸ κυρίου πιστὸς εἶναι.

περι δε indicates that Paul is turning to another subject about which the Corinthians had written to him.

παρθενος, ου f virgin, unmarried girl

Is the term here used exclusively of married *women* or is it gender exclusive? Thistleton thinks that Paul is addressing the issue of those not yet married, though with particular attention to unmarried *women*. Many understand the term here to refer to those *engaged* to be married. It may also include those who were attracted to a form of 'spiritual,' celibate marriage.

ἐπιταγη, ης f command, order, authority

Cf. 7:10,12.

γνώμη, ης f intent, decision

ἠλεημένος Verb, perf pass ptc, m nom s
ἐλεσω and ἐλεω be merciful, show kindness; pass. receive mercy

πιστος, η, ον faithful, trustworthy, believing

Here, 'trustworthy.'

Verse 26

Νομίζω οὖν τοῦτο καλὸν ὑπάρχειν διὰ τὴν ἐνεστώσαν ἀνάγκην, ὅτι καλὸν ἀνθρωπῶ τὸ οὕτως εἶναι.

νομίζω think, suppose

ὑπαρχω be (equivalent to εἶμι)

ἐνεστώσαν Verb, perf act ptc, f acc s

ἐνιστημι be present

ἀνάγκη, ἡς f necessity, distress

"The word conveys the notion of *necessity*, *hardship*, or especially of *external circumstances which bring severe constraints or severe pressures*." Thistleton

It is not clear what this particular 'distress' was that the Corinthians were facing but it seems to have been one that demanded special instructions concerning appropriate conduct.

Schweitzer argued that the perspective is here thoroughly eschatological. He argues that Paul's call to celibacy is part of "the comradeship of the Elect with the Messiah in His struggle against evil powers." It is demanded in the face of trials which form part of sharing in the messianic sufferings which bring in the Kingdom of God. Winter, on the other hand, suggests that the 'distress' mentioned was that consequent upon the famine of AD51. Bruce, while acknowledging the eschatological perspective, argues that the present age is marked by increasing tribulation which heralds the end of the age, "of which signs [such as the 'distress' at Corinth] are already manifesting themselves."

Thistleton comments, "The most problematic question is how to retain a dimension of eschatology while making room for such concrete instantiations as persecution, famine, or some unnamed source of distress. Luther argues, e.g., that Christians at all times labour under the possibility of persecution, danger of losing one's possessions, friends, or home, or the general costliness of faithfulness to the gospel. Paul's main ground for advice not to marry, Luther insists, is the involvement of one's family in all this (although later he further concedes the point about divided interests). In v.29 Luther translates the eschatology of the shortened time into existential address to 'all Christians,' who are 'like guests on the earth.'"

Jeremias and Barrett think that the ὅτι recitative reflects a slogan at Corinth that matches the structure of 'it is good ...' in 7:1.

Verse 27

δέδεσαι γυναικί; μὴ ζητεῖς λύσιν· λέλυσαι ἀπὸ γυναικός; μὴ ζητεῖς γυναῖκα.

δέδεσαι Verb, perf pass indic, 2 s δεω

bind, tie

ζητεω seek, look for, attempt

Is this addressing the situation of the married or the betrothed? Betrothal would seem to fit better with the context and argument. In that case the following λελυσαι would refer to the dissolution of the betrothal.

λυσις, εως f separation, divorce

λυω loose, release, set free

Verse 28

ἐὰν δὲ καὶ γαμήσης, οὐχ ἡμαρτες· καὶ ἐὰν γήμη ἢ παρθένος, οὐχ ἡμαρτεν. θλιψιν δὲ τῇ σαρκὶ ἔξουσιν οἱ τοιοῦτοι, ἐγὼ δὲ ὑμῶν φείδομαι.

"Yet again ... Paul emphasises the difference between what is required of the Christian and areas of freedom where Christians must take responsibility for their own decisions after weighing carefully the factors which others (including Christian teachers or pastors) have brought to their attention in a non-directive manner. It is no less important to note this aspect of Paul's understanding of his own role as pastor and of the adult responsibilities of Christian people to work things out for themselves, than to allude to the rules and traditions which allow no negotiation." Thistleton

ἐὰν if, even if, though

γαμεω marry

ἡμαρτες Verb, aor act indic, 2 s ἁμαρτανω

sin, commit sin

γήμη Verb, aor act subj, 3 s γαμεω

γαμη is an older classical form of the later Koine aorist subjunctive γαμηση.

θλιψις, εως f trouble, suffering

Thistleton suggests the meaning may here be pressures, e.g. responsibilities (cf. vv 32-35) and τῇ σαρκὶ may mean 'in everyday life.'

σαρξ, σαρκος f flesh, physical body

ἔξουσιν Verb, fut act indic, 3 s ἔχω

τοιουτος, αυτη, ουτον such, of such kind

φειδομαι spare, refrain from, keep

oneself from doing

Verse 29

τοῦτο δὲ φημι, ἀδελφοί, ὁ καιρὸς συνεσταλμένος ἐστίν· τὸ λοιπὸν ἵνα καὶ οἱ ἔχοντες γυναῖκας ὡς μὴ ἔχοντες ὦσιν,

φημι say

May carry the force, 'I mean', or 'I affirm.'

συνεσταλμένος perf pass ptc, m nom s:
pass grow short (of time)

"Many see a reference to the second advent. This may be right, but, though he often refers to the Lord's return, Paul never elsewhere gives this kind of counsel. Both in his earlier and his later Epistles he uses the second advent to inspire men to blameless conduct (e.g. 1 Thess 5:1-11; Phil 1:9-11). The note of present crisis, so marked here, is absent. It is probably best to see a reference to circumstances at Corinth." Morris Thistleton says that while Paul "appeals to a *theology* of eschatological imminence, this in no way presupposes a *chronology* of eschatological imminence." He cites the view of Winter that the particular problems at Corinth were the consequence of famine, and adds, "Such concrete circumstances bring home the crumbling insecurity of a world order which stands under the apocalyptic judgment of the cross."

λοιπος, η, ον rest, remaining, other: (το)
λοιπον adv. finally, henceforth, from
now on

Verse 30

καὶ οἱ κλαίοντες ὡς μὴ κλαίοντες, καὶ οἱ
χαίροντες ὡς μὴ χαίροντες, καὶ οἱ
ἀγοράζοντες ὡς μὴ κατέχοντες,
κλαιω weep, cry
ἀγοραζω buy, redeem
κατεχω hold fast, keep, restrain

Verse 31

καὶ οἱ χρωμενοι τὸν κόσμον ὡς μὴ
καταχρωμενοι· παράγει γὰρ τὸ σχῆμα τοῦ
κόσμου τούτου.

χραομαι see v.21
καταχραομαι use, make full use of

"Those who make use of the things of this world should not be engrossed in them." Morris

παραγω pass by, pass away, disappear
σχημα, ατος η outward form, present
form

"Paul's point is not the transiency of creation as such [note the τουτου in addition to το σχημα], but the fact that its outward pattern, in social and mercantile institutions, for example, has no permanence." Barrett

Day 379: 1 Corinthians 7:32-38

Verse 32

θέλω δὲ ὑμᾶς ἀμερίμνους εἶναι. ὁ ἄγαμος
μεριμνᾷ τὰ τοῦ κυρίου, πῶς ἀρέσῃ τῷ
κυρίῳ·

θελω wish, will
ἀμεριμνος, ον free from worry or anxiety

This term was used by Stoics to signify indifference to external events. But it also "occurs in the teaching of Jesus as a manifestation of the single-mindedness which trust in God brings about (Matt 6:25, 28; par. Luke 12:22,26; Matt 10:19). Paul uses the word elsewhere both in the sense of a prohibition against anxiety in the light of the peace of God (Phil 4:6) and in the sense of encouraging concern for other people (Phil 2:20). Jesus also refers to the worry or worries of the present world order (του αἰωνος, Matt 13:22; Mark 4:19)." Thistleton Thistleton underlines the difference between the Stoic and Christian conceptions: "Whereas Jesus and Paul advocate freedom from anxiety and preoccupation with the self by placing everything in God's hands, in trust, Seneca argues that it is folly to look to God for 'what you can acquire for yourself.' Lack of anxiety for Seneca becomes a matter of accepting fate: 'in noble virtue the willing soul Fate leads; but the unwilling Fate drags along.' Paul invites, rather, responsible deliberation in trust; how is one to please the Lord?"

ἀγαμος, ον f & m unmarried, single
μεριμνω be anxious, be concerned
about

There is a play here on words. Paul wants them to be without *distracting worries and concerns* so that they can *devote their concern* to the Lord. "Paul plays on the double sense of *anxious ... right concern*." Mofatt

πως how? in what way?
ἀρεσκω please, seek to please

Verse 33

ὁ δὲ γαμήσας μεριμνᾷ τὰ τοῦ κόσμου, πῶς
ἀρέσῃ τῇ γυναικί,

γαμεω marry

The married man has divided affections. He wants to please the Lord, but he also has responsibilities towards wife (and family) and must concern himself with pleasing her.

Verse 34

καὶ μεμέρισται. καὶ ἡ γυνὴ ἢ ἄγαμος καὶ ἡ παρθένος μεριμνᾷ τὰ τοῦ κυρίου, ἵνα ἡ ἅγια καὶ τῷ σωματι καὶ τῷ πνεύματι· ἡ δὲ γαμήσασα μεριμνᾷ τὰ τοῦ κόσμου, πῶς ἄρεσῃ τῷ ἀνδρὶ.

μεμέρισται Verb, perf pass indic, 3s
μεριζω divide, assign, apportion

There are differences of punctuation here among the manuscripts (and some minor textual variants). The chief alternatives are:

- i) To read μεμερισται with the previous verse (as NIV), and to read the next sentence as beginning καὶ ἡ γυνὴ ἢ ἄγαμος – 'also the unmarried man ...'
- ii) To read καὶ μεμερισται as beginning the sentence in verse 34 and to insert a real or implied pause after γυνὴ and so read, 'the case of a (married) woman and that of an unmarried or virgin also differ ...' as AV

The textual evidence presents a confusing multiplicity of variants. The UBS text above reflects the reading the Committee considered the least unsatisfactory. It is made by them as 'D' – great difficulty in arriving at a decision. Thistleton follows the UBS text in linking καὶ μεμέρισται with the previous verse. "The married man finds himself *apportioned* to both his wife and to the Lord; and it is this *parceling out* of time, attention, energies, and tasks that means he is pulled in two directions."

παρθενος, ου f virgin, unmarried girl

"The distinction between ἡ γυνὴ ἢ ἄγαμος and ἡ παρθενος has been much discussed. But the difference seems to be fairly clear. The former term denotes (usually) a woman who has been married but is now either widowed, divorced, or in a state of permanent separation. Since the latter subcategory is included, we need not be surprised that Paul does not choose to use χηρα, even if *widows* represents the majority of those included under the broader term." Thistleton

ἡ Verb, pres subj, 3s εἶμι

"Clearly a lesser involvement with 'the things of the world' is correlative with being **holy** both in the OT sense of belonging exclusively to God ... and in the sense of devoted attention and service to the Lord." Thistleton

Barett considers that Paul is here quoting another catchphrase from Corinth, "We must conclude, therefore, that in *that she may be holy both in body and in spirit* we have words quoted from the Corinthian ascetical party. Paul approves the sentiment, though he would not himself confine it to the unmarried." Others suggest the asymmetry is due to the stigma attached to spinsters in the Graeco-Roman world. Paul asserts that such a life is pleasing to God (though not to the exclusion of other forms of life).

σωμα, τος n body

Verse 35

τοῦτο δὲ πρὸς τὸ ὑμῶν αὐτῶν σύμφορον λέγω, οὐχ ἵνα βρόχον ὑμῖν ἐπιβάλω, ἀλλὰ πρὸς τὸ εὐσχημον καὶ εὐπάρεδρον τῷ κυρίῳ ἀπεριοπάστως.

συμφορον, ου n good, advantage, profit

'for your help.'

βροχος, ου m restriction lit. noose
ἐπιβάλω Verb, aor act subj, 1 s ἐπιβάλλω
lay (hands) on, throw or place on

"The metaphor is from hunting. Paul is not trying to capture and constrain them." Morris "Paul's motivation and concern are neither purely authoritarian nor largely ascetic, but to maximise the freedom and lack of anxiety experienced by the addressees in the Lord's work." Thistleton

εὐσχημων, ον gen ονος respected,
presentable; το εὐ. good order

Refers to doing everything properly (cf. 14:40).

εὐπάρεδρον, ου devotion, constancy
ἀπεριοπάστως without distraction

A word commonly used in Stoic discourse concerning marriage where it is used of the undistracted devotion to study that the unmarried can enjoy. Thistleton comments, "Yarbrough, Wimbush, and Deming all perceive a close affinity between Cynic concerns and those of Paul at this point. This is probably the closest point of affinity in this chapter, with the fundamental difference that (i) Paul speaks of **devotion to the Lord**; and (ii) Christian husband and Christian wife can also encourage and enhance each other's **devotion to the Lord**, even though a balance sheet emerges of 'distractions' generated by family responsibilities."

Verse 36

Εἰ δέ τις ἀσχημονεῖν ἐπὶ τὴν παρθένον αὐτοῦ νομίζει ἐὰν ἢ ὑπερακμος, καὶ οὕτως ὀφείλει γίνεσθαι, ὃ θέλει ποιεῖτω· οὐχ ἁμαρτάνει· γαμείτωσαν.

ἀσχημονεω behave improperly

The interpretation of these verses is difficult. (Hurd describes the verse as "one of the most difficult and controversial in the NT.") Who is being spoken of in this verse and what is his relationship with the virgin mentioned? There are three main views:

- Older translations and commentators took the view that Paul is probably speaking of a parent/guardian and of his responsibility towards his unmarried daughter or ward.
- Thistleton comments that "a clear majority of twentieth century scholars interpret v.36 as referring to *engaged couples*." According to this view the reference is to a man and his fiancée who have initially agreed not to marry.
- Some suggest that the reference is to spiritual marriages where a couple agree to live together as brother and sister – a union of spirit rather than of body.

After detailed discussion of the options, Thistleton adopts the second, translating the phrase 'If anyone thinks he is not behaving in a proper way toward his betrothed...'

νομίζω think, suppose, assume
 ὑπερακμος, ον past the best age for marriage, past one's prime (of women)

A woman was considered to be beyond the normal marriageable age by the time she was about 20.

However, it is possible to understand ὑπερακμος to mean 'beyond intensity of feeling or passion.' It might then be considered to apply to *the man* in this relationship, 'if his passions are strong' (NRSV, REB, Moffatt). Thistleton adopts a modified version of this view 'if it is an undue strain,' i.e. a strain beyond reasonable limit.

ὀφείλω ought, must, be bound or obligated
 'and it seems the right thing.'

γαμείτωσαν Verb, pres act imperat, 3 pl
 γαμew v.33

"The key phrase, however, is clear in meaning: οὐχ ἁμαρτάνει. Paul adopts an *anti-ascetic* stance towards the Corinthian ascetics (or at very least one which Wimbush calls 'wordly' asceticism), but is also concerned pastorally to *release those who wish to marry from any sense of sin, failure, or second-class status*. He refuses to allow the voluntary ascetics to regard themselves as a spiritual elite: God's demands remain diverse for different people in different situations." Thistleton

Verse 37

ὃς δὲ ἔστηκεν ἐν τῇ καρδίᾳ αὐτοῦ ἐδραῖος, μὴ ἔχων ἀνάγκην, ἐξουσίαν δὲ ἔχει περὶ τοῦ ἰδίου θελήματος, καὶ τοῦτο κέκρικεν ἐν τῇ ἰδίᾳ καρδίᾳ, τηρεῖν τὴν ἑαυτοῦ παρθένον, καλῶς ποιήσει·

"Now that he has established the genuine freedom of the couple to marry or not to marry, Paul does not wish to press the case for marriage too far. The key issue, he argues, is whether marriage or celibacy is chosen as a result of pressure from other people who try to impose celibacy as a higher kind of spirituality, or whether the person in question is inclined in this direction entirely on grounds of personal conviction, with complete freedom from pressure from outside." Thistleton

ἔστηκεν perf ἴστημι intrans (in 2 aor, pf & pluperf; all midd & pass) stand, stop, stand firm, hold ground.

ἐδραῖος, α, ον firm, steadfast

"The whole phrase invites comparison with Paul's later use of the same idea in Rom 14:5: ἕκαστος ἐν τῷ ἰδίῳ νοῦ πληροφορεῖσθω, where the context also concerns the danger of falling prey to the pressure of other people's judgments and pressures." Thistleton

ἀνάγκη, ης f necessity, compulsion

'Not under external necessity' i.e. not because other persons or situations are forcing him.

ἐξουσία, ας f authority, right, power

ἰδιος, α, ον one's own

θελημα, ατος n will, wish, desire

"*Power over his own will* means 'the right to give effect to his own purpose' (Parry). Slaves, for example, would not have this right." Morris. Thistleton interprets the phrase to mean that Paul is asserting that, having taken all other factors into account, the man has 'a full right to make his own decisions.'

κρινω judge

τηρεω keep, observe, maintain

ἑαυτος, ἑαυτη, ἑαυτον reflexive pronoun, himself, herself, itself

τηρεῖν τὴν ἑαυτοῦ παρθένον 'to respect her virginity' (REB).

"Over against Niederwimmer's undue emphasis on ascetic themes, others rightly keep in view the spirit of this verse by stressing Paul's constant concern to be pastorally positive and constructive, while also emphasising the importance of determining what is helpful in specific cases and circumstances. Paul counsels not withdrawal from the world but 'revitalising' it." Thistleton

Verse 38

ὥστε καὶ ὁ γαμίζων τὴν ἑαυτοῦ παρθένον καλῶς ποιεῖ, καὶ ὁ μὴ γαμίζων κρείσσον ποιήσει.

ὥστε so that, with the result that
γαμίζω give (a bride) in marriage
κρείπτον and κρείσσον adv. better

"Only in the light of all that has gone before can we assess the respective currencies of καλως the adverb, and κρείσσον the comparative adverb. Since he has already explained how much depends on circumstances and personal convictions, he is not damning καλως with faint praise. The use of καλως must also confirm that 7:1 is a quotation καλον ... μη ...). Paul's polemic against asceticism is clear. Nevertheless, his personal inclination is still to encourage those who are content to remain celibate, if this is out of conviction about how they may best serve the Lord, and not because of a Corinthian pressure group. Hence both the married and the celibate are to be encouraged positively; but some extra practical support is given to the celibate." Thistleton

Day 380: 1 Corinthians 7:39-8:6

Verse 39

Γυνὴ δέδεταί ἐφ' ὅσον χρόνον ζῆ ὁ ἀνὴρ αὐτῆς· ἐὰν δὲ κοιμηθῆ ὁ ἀνὴρ, ἐλευθέρᾳ ἐστὶν ᾧ θέλει γαμηθῆναι, μόνον ἐν κυρίῳ.

δέδεταί Verb, perf pass indic, 3 s δεω
bind, tie

The perfect tense implies the continuing effects of the past act of marriage.

ὅσος, η, ον correlative pronoun, as much as, how much, how far

ζῆ Verb, pres act indic, 3s ζω live, be alive

κοιμηθῆ Verb, aor pass dep subj, 3 s
κοιμαομαι sleep, fall asleep, die
ἐλευθερος, α, ον free, free person

θελω wish, will

γαμεω marry

μονος, η, ον i) adj only, alone; ii) adv
μόνον only, alone

Paul's concern is that a person should not be distracted from devotion to the Lord. Hence, if the widow is to marry it should be to one who shares a commitment to Christ.

Verse 40

μακαριωτέρα δέ ἐστιν ἐὰν οὕτως μείνη, κατὰ τὴν ἐμὴν γνώμην, δοκῶ δὲ κάγω πνεῦμα θεοῦ ἔχειν.

μακαριωτερος, α, ον happier;
comparative of μακαριος
μενω trans remain, stay, abide; intrans
await, wait for

ἐμος, η, ον 1st pers possessive adj my,
mine

γνώμη, ης f purpose, intent, decision

Cf. 7:25 here the sense of 'opinion.'

δοκεω think, suppose

κάγω a compound word = και ἐγω

'I also think' not 'I think that I also ...'

8:1ff

Thistleton argues that 8:1-11:1 forms a single, coherent section which he entitles, *Questions About Meat Associated With Idols And The Priority Of Love Over 'Rights.'*

Verse 1

Περὶ δὲ τῶν εἰδωλοθύτων, οἶδαμεν ὅτι πάντες γινώσκουσιν ἔχομεν. ἡ γνώσις φυσιολί, ἡ δὲ ἀγάπη οἰκοδομεῖ.

The opening phrase of this verse indicates that Paul is dealing with another matter which had been raised by the Corinthians in their letter. In this and subsequent verses Paul deals with two subjects: eating meals in idols' temples (part of the social fabric of the day), and eating meat (and other food) that may have been offered to an idol.

"The idol temple seems to have served both as a butchers shop and as a place for sharing a cultic meal." Blue

Murphy-O'Connor observes, "About the only time that meat came on the market was after pagan festivals, and it had been part of the victims sacrificed to the gods." The wealthy could always afford to eat meat, but the poor would have fewer opportunities, many of which would have been handouts after pagan festivities.

εἰδωλοθυτον, ου n meat offered to idols
πάντες Adjective, m nom pl πας

γνωσις, εως f knowledge, understanding

Paul is quoting another Corinthian slogan, perhaps a catchphrase of the 'strong' by which they boasted of their knowledge which allowed them to eat meat offered to idols without qualms since *they knew (didn't all?)* that idols were nothing.

φουσιω cause conceit/arrogance; pass
be conceited/arrogant

οικοδομεω build, build up, encourage

"Rather than seeking to demonstrate some individualistic assertion of freedom or even victory, love seeks the welfare of the other. Hence if the 'strong' express love, they will show active concern that 'the weak' are not precipitated into situations of bad conscience, remorse, unease, or stumbling (see προσκομμα in 13:7,9). Rather, the one who loves the other will consider the effect of his or her own attitudes and actions upon 'weaker' brothers and sisters. This is precisely the theology of the church as Christ's 'body' which Paul will expound in 12:21-24." Thistleton

Verse 2

εἴ τις δοκεῖ ἐγνωκέναι τι, οὕτω ἔγνω
καθως δεῖ γινῶναι·

δοκεω see 7:40

ἐγνωκέναι Verb, perf act infin γινωσκω

"The γνωσις claimed by some or by many at Corinth was a different kind of 'knowledge' from that which Paul understands by the same word." Thistleton

οὕτω not yet

ἔγνω Verb, aor act indic, 3 s γινωσκω

δει impersonal verb it is necessary, must,
should, ought

"The use of the perfect infinitive (ἐγνωκεναι) signifies that the Corinthians, or some of them, perceive themselves as having achieved a present state of 'having come to know,' i.e., having achieved knowledge. By contrast the ingressive use of the aorist (ἔγνω) represents Paul's correction: he or she has not yet come to know. The aorist infinitive γινωναι, which follows καθως δεῖ (as it is necessary, or as they ought), expands the contrast." Thistleton

Verse 3

εἰ δέ τις ἀγαπᾷ τὸν θεόν, οὗτος ἔγνωσται
ὑπ' αὐτοῦ.

Thistleton comments, "p⁴⁶ and Clement of Alexandria omit τον θεον, as well as ὑπ αὐτου. This makes excellent sense in the context. The verb ἔγνωσται may be construed either as middle (expressing personal interest or the involvement of the subject of the verb in a reflexive sense) or as a passive (known). To retain the ambiguity, we may translate the shorter text: but if anyone loves, he or she has experienced true 'knowing.' Thus κ* and 33 also omit ὑπ αὐτου. Conzelmann describes this shorter reading as 'a very pregnant text'; Fee observes that 'this shorter text brings Paul's point home so powerfully that it is most likely what he originally wrote'; and Spicq considers it 'very probably authentic.'" However, the textual evidence for the shorter reading is weak.

ἔγνωσται Verb, perf pass indic, 3 s

γινωσκω

"Love, rather than knowledge, should be the Christian's determining consideration" Morris
What is of chief importance is not our knowledge but that we are known of God (cp. 2 Tim 2:19; Gal 4:9). "The only perfect knowledge, both loving and practical, is given by God... To be known by God means to belong to him... chosen by God... Could there have been a more sure way of showing that this love is really possible than by showing that God himself truly communicated it?" Spicq

Verse 4

Περὶ τῆς βρωσεως οὖν τῶν εἰδωλοθύτων
οἶδαμεν ὅτι οὐδὲν εἶδωλον ἐν κόσμῳ, καὶ
ὅτι οὐδεὶς θεὸς εἰ μὴ εἶς.

βρωσις, εως f food, eating, a meal

εἰδολοθυτον, ου see v. 1

"A whole variety of situations may be implied by the phrase, ranging from meat purchased at a butcher's shop which originated from a temple as wholesale supplier to attendance at festivals where meat was available to the poorer classes, probably after a pagan 'blessing' or 'dedication,' or eating in a dining room attached to the temple (cf. J. Murphy-O'Connor), to eating on formal civic occasions 'presided over' by one or more pagan deities." Thistleton

Furthermore, "Meat was given away to the poor by the well-to-do on religious holidays in honour of one false god or another." Blasi

In what follows, Paul would appear to be quoting some at Corinth and saying 'we share your knowledge that ...'

οὐδεις, οὐδεμια, οὐδεν no one, nothing;
οὐδεν not at all
εἰδωλον, ου n idol

Exegetes and grammarians are divided over whether οὐδεν εἰδωλον should be construed as attributive ('no idol [exists]') or as predicative ('an idol is nothing...').

Verse 5

καὶ γὰρ εἶπερ εἰσὶν λεγόμενοι θεοὶ εἴτε ἐν οὐρανῷ εἴτε ἐπὶ γῆς, ὡς περ εἰσὶν θεοὶ πολλοὶ καὶ κύριοι πολλοί,

εἶπερ since, if it is true that
εἴτε if, whether
γῆ, γῆς f earth
ὡς περ as, even as

Thistleton suggests that the first part of the verse is a quotation from the Corinthians and the second part Paul's rejoinder. "The strong at Corinth asserted an ontological and existential monotheism in which the so-called (λεγόμενοι) gods were nonexistent nothings. Paul endorses their ontological monotheism. Even if these 'so-called gods' have power over people's lives, they are not gods or God. Only God is God. Nevertheless, the fact that *kyrios*-cults do really exist means that habitual patterns of loyalty and devotion long practiced by new converts before their conversion cannot simply be brushed aside as no longer affecting their lives and attitudes in the present. At an existential and psychological level they still leave their mark... Indeed, this may mean even more. Not only do they retain a subjective influence; they may also constitute objective forces of evil which bring destruction, disintegration and pain. Unless we adopt a partition theory between 8:1-11 and 10:14-22, Paul appears to associate them with demonic forces."

Verse 6

ἀλλ• ἡμῖν εἷς θεὸς ὁ πατήρ, ἐξ οὗ τὰ πάντα καὶ ἡμεῖς εἰς αὐτόν, καὶ εἷς κύριος Ἰησοῦς Χριστός, δι• οὗ τὰ πάντα καὶ ἡμεῖς δι• αὐτοῦ.

Here again we may have a confessional catchphrase from Corinth in which ἐξ οὗ τὰ πάντα could mean that all things, including the meat offered to supposed idols, is in fact from God and can be received with thanksgiving.

On the other hand, Dunn argues that here is Paul developing the OT Shema (Deut 6:4) and adding a Christological dimension. This early credal formulation stresses not only monotheism but "the unity of creation and salvation, to prevent a spilt in the Corinthians' thinking between their experience of spiritual power and their attitude to the material world... The Lord through whom salvation comes is the Lord through whom all things come... Salvation for us means that we live *for* the one God from whom are all things and *through* the one Lord..."

Thistleton says, "The argument of 'the strong' that since idols are nothings and one God alone has being is accepted; but it is not accepted as an argument for lovelessly ignoring the anxieties of 'the weak'. For all things, including Christian experience, take their origin from God as a gift, and since the one God is the goal of our existence, the means by which this comes about is that it is the one Lord Jesus Christ through whom all things come, and he is the means of our existence. Christ-likeness and the shape of the cross mark all that Christian believers are and do. Nevertheless, the argument of 'the weak' that forces of evil still hold sway is equally qualified by the reminder that in common Christian confession all things, even all food, take their origin from God and that we cannot drive a wedge between creation and redemption so as to live in a ghetto, for it is through one Lord Jesus Christ that all things (the world of creation and the blessings of salvation) come."

πατήρ, πατρος m father

The way the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ are spoken of together here is a clear indication of the deity of Christ.