

JUDITH M. GUNDRY

Women, Gender, and Sex in the End-Time

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Judith M. Gundry

Women, Gender, and Sex in the End-Time

Household Roles in 1 Corinthians 7

Mohr Siebeck

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Dedicated
with love
to my parents
Robert and Lois

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A note to the reader: All translations of the Greek of the New Testament (Nestle-Aland, 28th revised edition) are mine, unless otherwise noted.

Soli deo gloria

New Haven, Connecticut, Lent 2025

Judith M. Gundry

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Abbreviations

1 En.	1 Enoch (Ethiopic Apocalypse)
1QH ^a	Thanksgiving Hymns ^a
1QS	Rule of the Community
2 Bar.	2 Baruch (Syriac Apocalypse)
3 Macc.	3 Maccabees
4Q171	<i>Pesher on Psalm 37</i>
4Q251	Halakha A
4QMKT	Miqsat Ma'ase ha-Torah
11Q	Temple Scroll
AAAH	Acta Academiae Aboensis Humaniora
AB	Anchor Bible
ABD	<i>The Anchor Bible Dictionary</i> . Edited by D. N. Freedman. 6 vols. New York: Doubleday, 1992
AcBib	Academia Biblica
Act	<i>Acta Theologica</i>
Acts Paul Th.	Acts of Paul and Thecla
Ag. Ap.	Josephus, <i>Against Apion</i>
AGJU	Arbeiten zur Geschichte des antiken Judentums und des Urchristentums
Am.	Ovid, <i>Amores</i>
ANRW	<i>Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt: Geschichte und Kultur Roms im Spiegel der neueren Forschung</i> . Part 2, <i>Principat</i> . Edited by Hildegard Temporini and Wolfgang Haase. Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1972–
Ant.	Josephus, <i>Jewish Antiquities</i>
Apoc. El.	Apocalypse of Elijah
As. Mos.	Assumption of Moses
AYB	Anchor Yale Bible
b. Yebam.	Babylonian Talmud, Yebamot
BDAG	Walter Bauer and Frederick W. Danker. <i>A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament</i> . Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001
BDF	Friedrich Blass, Albert Debrunner, and Robert W. Funk. <i>A Greek Grammar of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature</i> . Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1961
BCCR	Brill's Companions to Classical Reception
BECNT	Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament
BETL	Bibliotheca Ephemeridum Theologicarum Lovaniensium
Bib	<i>Biblica</i>
BibSem	The Biblical Seminar

<i>BICS</i>	<i>Bulletin of the Institute of Classical Studies</i>
<i>BJS</i>	Brown Judaic Studies
<i>BNTC</i>	Black's New Testament Commentaries
<i>BR</i>	<i>Biblical Research</i>
<i>BSL</i>	Biblical Studies Library
<i>BTS</i>	Biblisch-theologische Studien
<i>BTZ</i>	<i>Berliner Theologische Zeitschrift</i>
<i>BZNW</i>	Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft
<i>BZSup</i>	Biblische Zeitschrift: Supplements
<i>CBQ</i>	<i>Catholic Biblical Quarterly</i>
<i>CD</i>	Damascus Document
<i>CEJL</i>	Commentaries on Early Jewish Literature
<i>CFThL</i>	Clark's Foreign Theological Library New Series
<i>CH</i>	<i>Church History</i>
<i>Chae.</i>	Chariton, <i>Chaereas and Callirhoe</i>
<i>CJPS</i>	<i>Canadian Journal of Political Science</i>
<i>ClQ</i>	<i>The Classical Quarterly</i>
<i>Clu.</i>	Cicero, <i>Pro Caelio</i>
<i>Comp. Lyc. Num.</i>	Plutarch, <i>Comparison of Lycurgus and Numa</i>
<i>Contemp. Life</i>	Philo, <i>On the Contemplative Life</i>
<i>Contr.</i>	Seneca (the Elder), <i>Controversiae</i>
<i>CP</i>	<i>Classical Philology</i>
<i>CRINT</i>	Compendia Rerum Iudaicarum ad Novum Testamentum
<i>CTR</i>	<i>Criswell Theological Review</i>
<i>DCLS</i>	Deuterocanonical and Cognate Literature Studies
<i>Decalogue</i>	Philo, <i>On the Decalogue</i>
<i>Diatr.</i>	Musonius Rufus, <i>Diatribai</i>
<i>Diss.</i>	Epictetus, <i>Dissertationes</i>
<i>EBib</i>	<i>Études bibliques</i>
<i>EKKNT</i>	Evangelisch-katholischer Kommentar zum Neuen Testament
<i>Ep.</i>	Seneca (the Younger), <i>Epistulae morales</i>
<i>Eth. eud.</i>	Aristotle, <i>Eudemian Ethics</i>
<i>Eth. nic.</i>	Aristotle, <i>Nicomachian Ethics</i>
<i>EWNT</i>	<i>Exegetisches Wörterbuch zum Neuen Testament</i> . Edited by Horst Balz and Gerhard Schneider. 3 vols. Stuttgart; Berlin; Köln: Kohlhammer, 2011
<i>Fast.</i>	Ovid, <i>Fasti</i>
<i>FB</i>	Forschung zur Bibel
<i>FJTC</i>	Flavius Josephus: Translation and Commentary
<i>frag.</i>	<i>fragmentum, fragmenta</i>
<i>FRLANT</i>	Forschungen zur Religion und Literatur des Alten und Neuen Testaments
<i>Gen. an.</i>	Aristotle, <i>Generation of Animals</i>
<i>Good Person</i>	Philo, <i>That Every Good Person is Free</i>
<i>Gos. Thom.</i>	Gospel of Thomas
<i>Gyn.</i>	Soranus, <i>Gynecology</i>
<i>Herm. Mand.</i>	Shepherd of Hermas, Mandate(s)
<i>HNT</i>	Handbuch zum Neuen Testament
<i>HNTC</i>	Harper's New Testament Commentary

HThKNT	Herders Theologischer Kommentar zum Neuen Testament
<i>HTR</i>	<i>Harvard Theological Review</i>
HUT	Hermeneutische Untersuchungen zur Theologie
<i>Hyp.</i>	<i>Philo, Hypothetica</i>
<i>IBS</i>	<i>Irish Biblical Studies</i>
ICC	International Critical Commentary
<i>Int</i>	<i>Interpretation</i>
JAC Ergänzungsband	Jahrbuch für Antike und Christentum. Ergänzungsband
<i>JBL</i>	<i>Journal of Biblical Literature</i>
JCT	Jewish and Christian Texts
<i>JETS</i>	<i>Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society</i>
<i>Joseph</i>	<i>Philo, On the Life of Joseph</i>
<i>JSJ</i>	<i>Journal for the Study of Judaism in the Persian, Hellenistic, and Roman Periods</i>
<i>JSNT</i>	<i>Journal for the Study of the New Testament</i>
JSNTSup	Journal for the Study of the New Testament Supplement Series
<i>JSP</i>	<i>Journal for the Study of the Pseudepigrapha</i>
<i>JTS</i>	<i>Journal of Theological Studies</i>
Jub.	Jubilees
<i>J.W.</i>	<i>Josephus, Jewish War</i>
KEK	Kritisch-Exegetischer Kommentar zum Neuen Testament
LCL	Loeb Classical Library
<i>Life</i>	<i>Josephus, The Life</i>
<i>Lib. ed.</i>	Plutarch, <i>De liberis educandis</i>
LNTS	The Library of New Testament Studies
LSJ	Henry George Liddell, Robert Scott, and Henry Stuart Jones. <i>A Greek-English Lexicon</i> . 9 th ed. with revised supplement. Oxford: Clarendon, 1996
LSTS	Library of Second Temple Studies
LXX	Septuagint
MNTC	Moffatt New Testament Commentary
<i>Mor.</i>	Plutarch, <i>Moralia</i>
<i>Mos.</i>	<i>Philo, On the Life of Moses</i>
<i>Nat. Hist.</i>	Pliny the Elder, <i>Natural History</i>
NCB	New Century Bible
NEchtB	Neue Echter Bibel
<i>Neot</i>	<i>Neotestamentica</i>
NIBCNT	New International Biblical Commentary on the New Testament
NICNT	New International Commentary on the New Testament
NIGTC	New International Greek Testament Commentary
<i>NovT</i>	<i>Novum Testamentum</i>
NovTSup	Novum Testamentum Supplements
NRSV	New Revised Standard Version
NTD	Das Neue Testament Deutsch
NTOA	Novum Testamentum et Orbis Antiquus
<i>NTS</i>	<i>New Testament Studies</i>
NTTS	New Testament Tools and Studies
OCT	Oxford Classical Texts
<i>Oec.</i>	Xenophon, <i>Oeconomicus</i>

[<i>Oec.</i>]	[Pseudo-]Aristotle, <i>Economics</i>
<i>Opif.</i>	Philo, <i>On the Creation of the World</i>
<i>Or.</i>	<i>Orations</i>
P. Brem.	Ulrich Wilcken, ed. <i>Die Bremer Papyri</i> . Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1936
PACS	Philo of Alexandria Commentary Series
PCNT	Paideia Commentaries on the New Testament
<i>Per.</i>	Livy, <i>Periochae</i>
PKNT	Papyrologische Kommentare zum Neuen Testament
PNTC	Pillar New Testament Commentary
<i>Pol.</i>	Aristotle, <i>Politics</i>
<i>Q. G.</i>	Philo, <i>Questions and Answers on Genesis</i>
<i>RB</i>	<i>Revue biblique</i>
<i>RivB</i>	<i>Rivista biblica italiana</i>
<i>Rom. Ant.</i>	Dionysius of Halicarnassus, <i>Roman Antiquities</i>
RUSCH	Rutgers University Studies in Classical Humanities
RWAW	Rheinisch-Westfälische Akademie der Wissenschaften
<i>Sat.</i>	Juvenal, <i>Satires</i>
SBLDS	Society of Biblical Literature Dissertation Series
SBLMS	Society of Biblical Literature Monograph Series
SBLSBS	Society of Biblical Literature Sources for Biblical Study
SBLSP	Society of Biblical Literature Seminar Papers
<i>Sent.</i>	Pseudo-Phocylides, <i>Sentences of Pseudo-Phocylides</i>
Sib. Or.	Sibylline Oracles
SNTSMS	Society of New Testament Studies Monograph Series
SP	Sacra Pagina
<i>Spec. Laws</i>	Philo, <i>On the Special Laws</i>
<i>SPhilA</i>	<i>Studia Philonica Annual</i>
<i>ST</i>	<i>Studia Theologica</i>
StBibLit	Studies in Biblical Literature
STDJ	Studies on the Texts of the Desert of Judea
SUNT	Studien zur Umwelt des Neuen Testaments
SVTP	Studia in Veteris Testamenti Pseudepigraphica
<i>TBei</i>	<i>Theologische Beiträge</i>
<i>TLZ</i>	<i>Theologische Literaturzeitung</i>
THKNT	Theologischer Handkommentar zum Neuen Testament
T. Iss.	Testament of Issachar
T. Job	Testament of Job
T. Naph.	Testament of Naphtali
TNTC	Tyndale New Testament Commentaries
Tob.	Tobit
TSAJ	Texte und Studien zum antiken Judentum
<i>TynB</i>	<i>Tyndale Bulletin</i>
<i>VC</i>	<i>Vigiliae Christianae</i>
<i>Virt.</i>	Philo, <i>On Virtues</i>
WBC	Word Biblical Commentary
WCom	Wisdom Commentary
Wis.	Wisdom of Solomon
WGRW	Writings from the Greco-Roman World

WuD

WUNT

YCS

ZAW

ZNW

ZTK

Wort und Dienst

Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament

Yale Classical Studies

Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft

Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft

Zeitschrift für Theologie und Kirche

Introduction

Women are more prominent in 1 Corinthians 7 than in any other text of comparable length in the Pauline corpus. Throughout the forty verses that make up this chapter, Paul repeatedly mentions women, addresses them directly, and distinguishes them from one another in terms of their marital status.¹ Yet, 1 Corinthians 7 has played a relatively minor or ancillary role in most scholarly treatments of Paul’s views on women and gender,² with some important exceptions.³ Its significance for Paul’s views on these topics is also disputed,

¹ 1 Corinthians 7 divides into sections addressed to different groups based, in part, on marital status: married men and women in sexless marriages (7:2–5), widowers and widows (7:6–9), married men and women with a spouse in the community (7:10–12), the divorced woman (7:11), married men and women with an “unbelieving” spouse (7:12–16), men bound to or loosed from a virgin (7:25–28, 36–38), men in sexual relationships with a wife (7:29b), unmarried men and women (7:32–35), and married women and widows (7:39–40). Other groups addressed are the circumcised and uncircumcised (7:18–20), slaves and free (7:21–23), and men who mourn, rejoice, buy, and use the world (7:30–31). For the suggestion that 1 Corinthians 7 is similar in form to Jewish *halakha*, see Peter J. Tomson, *Paul and the Jewish Law: Halakha in the Letters of the Apostle to the Gentiles*, CRINT III 1 (Assen; Maastricht: Van Gorcum; Minneapolis: Fortress, 1990), 105–8.

² “Gender” in this study refers to socially constructed roles or characteristics associated with being “female” or “male.”

³ The following studies devote only a few brief comments to 1 Corinthians 7: Craig S. Keener, *Paul, Women and Wives: Marriage and Women’s Ministry in the Letters of Paul* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1992); Ross S. Kraemer, *Her Share of the Blessings: Women’s Religions among Pagans, Jews, and Christians in the Greco-Roman World* (New York; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), 146; Ronald W. Pierce and Rebecca Merrill Groothuis, eds., *Discovering Biblical Equality: Complementarity without Hierarchy* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic; Leicester, UK: Apollos, 2005); Lynn H. Cohick, *Women in the World of the Earliest Christians: Illuminating Ancient Ways of Life* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2009), 282; John Piper and Wayne Grudem, eds., *Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood: A Response to Evangelical Feminism* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012); Susan Hylen, *Women in the New Testament World* (London: Oxford University Press, 2018), 89. In the recent monograph by Michelle Lee-Barnewall, *Neither Complementarian nor Egalitarian: A Kingdom Corrective to the Evangelical Gender Debate* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2016), there is no discussion of 1 Corinthians 7 but only a brief mention in the “Afterword” by Lynn H. Cohick. For other studies on women and gender in the New Testament and early Christianity that devote considerably more attention to 1 Corinthians 7, see Chapter 1, Section 2.

based on whether it is thought to agree with Gal. 3:28 and 1 Cor. 11:11–12 or 1 Cor. 14:34–35 and the household codes attributed to Paul. In this discussion, 1 Corinthians 7 has become an echo of what is known or inferred from these parallels. By contrast, the present study attempts to describe the distinctive contributions of this text to the debate on Paul, women, and gender by expanding the range of *comparanda*.

This book also addresses the vexed question of how to interpret Paul’s statements about marriage, sex, sexual abstinence, and celibacy in 1 Corinthians 7 within their broader historical context. For these two debates are inextricably intertwined.⁴

The book divides into two parts. In Part I, I provide a review of representative or influential scholarly literature on 1 Corinthians 7 that focuses narrowly on Paul’s views on women and gender, followed by a review of representative scholarly studies that focus narrowly on Paul’s views on marriage, sex, sexual abstinence, and celibacy (Chapter 1). This chapter demonstrates the need for further discussion on all these topics combined. Then, I develop a new approach to the interpretation of 1 Corinthians 7 (Chapter 2), based on a comparison of this text with Aristotle’s *topos* of household management (*oikovouία*) as found in the *Politics* and select Hellenistic sources that date to roughly the same period as 1 Corinthians. I explore whether Paul’s instructions to the Corinthians on the topics of marriage and sex, slavery and freedom, and property management or building wealth can be interpreted as an implicit refutation of or competitive engagement with this Hellenistic tradition of household management.

Part II consists of five interrelated, exegetical-historical studies devoted to different aspects of Paul’s parenthesis in 1 Corinthians 7 and their implications for his views on women and their roles and relationships to men in the household. These chapters draw out the importance of Paul’s eschatology for his engagement with this Hellenistic *topos* of household management.

Chapter 3 addresses the question, why Paul holds that the Corinthian men who were “bound” or betrothed to “the virgins,” or had young fiancées, “will do better,” if they decide to “keep” the virgins rather than to “marry” them (7:25–28, 32–38).⁵ Is there a moral or merely a practical difference between the two decisions, if we assume that Paul’s references to “the impending distress” and the “affliction” that some “will have” (7:26, 28) mirror the apocalyptic tradition that women with young or unborn children will suffer and die in the distress, while men who have begotten sons will simply grieve their loss?

⁴ Interpreters agree that it is anachronistic to interpret 1 Corinthians 7 in terms of a moral or spiritual ideal of celibacy. But there is widespread disagreement on how to interpret Paul’s statements about marriage, sex, and celibacy within his own historical context and what are the most useful parallels for doing so.

⁵ All chapter and verse references are to 1 Corinthians unless otherwise noted.

Chapter 4 investigates Paul’s advice to the widowers (“unmarried men”) and the widows that “it is better for them if they remain, as I also” remain unmarried, followed by his opinion that the widow “is more fortunate, if she remains so” (7:8–9, 39–40). Why does Paul add this macarism on the widow? What leads him to contradict the view of his contemporaries that the widow was *unfortunate*, especially if she could not marry? Does Paul’s contrarian opinion reflect his knowledge of Jesus tradition about similar women who are (or will be in the last days) fortunate?

Chapter 5 tackles the interpretation of Paul’s exception for sexual abstinence in marriage under certain conditions, despite prohibiting the practice, in general (7:2–5). Can this exception be explained by Corinthians’ desire to control fertility through sexual abstinence in marriage, and if so, for what reason did they want to do so? Is there a logical or a lexical connection between Paul’s conditions for sexual abstinence in marriage and ancient methods used to control fertility? What role might Paul have seen women to play in controlling their fertility?

Chapter 6 begins with a critique of the interpretation of Paul’s five parallel admonitions to “brothers” (7:29–31) as a digression on the importance of “inner aloofness” from the world, which is transitory. The chapter then explores the possibility that Paul is addressing only a group of men who used their wives as sources of legitimate children and heirs to inherit their name and property and propagate their line after the man died. I discuss the significance of this practice for the hope of an afterlife through progeny based on the fluid boundary between the individual and the familial group, and how Paul challenges it without appealing explicitly to the hope of the eschatological resurrection of the dead.

Chapter 7 examines Paul’s instructions on divorce (7:10–16) in the light of the general expectation that Roman wives should worship the same deity as their husbands in the household. Did Paul’s instructions to wives to comply with their unbelieving husband’s decision on divorce disadvantage the Corinthian women, and if so, how? Or if not, why not? What are the implications for women’s household roles of Paul’s assertions that the unbeliever “is consecrated by his wife” and “your children are consecrated”? How are these statements related to Paul’s claim that “the form of this world is passing away” (7:31)?

The Conclusion synthesizes the results of these discussions and draws the implications of Chapters 2 to 7 for Paul’s views on women and gender.

The historical-critical method cannot produce a completely objective interpretation of an ancient text such as 1 Corinthians 7. Nor do I pretend that my use of it here has yielded “the” interpretation of this text.⁶ Others will no

⁶ For a more skeptical assessment of the explanatory power of this method, see Laura S. Nasrallah, *Archaeology and the Letters of Paul* (Oxford: Oxford University Press,

doubt find reasons to disagree based on the same methodology. I hope however to have advanced toward "the" interpretation of 1 Corinthians 7 by this means and believe it is worth the effort to enrich the contemporary discussion of the apostle's views on women and gender.

2019), 16: "While embracing as many historical details as possible, I reject the historical critical method and its faith in exegetical tools to fix, like a butterfly pinned on a wall, the people of a given time and place, to be able to say: *This is what they thought, this is what they did, this is the explanation*"; see also pp. 2, 7.

Part I

Chapter 1

Currents in the Interpretation of 1 Corinthians 7

1. Introduction

This chapter divides into two sections. The first section illustrates the wide range of approaches to interpreting Paul’s views on women and gender in 1 Corinthians 7 and the diverse results of those approaches. The second section illustrates the wide range of approaches to interpreting Paul’s statements about marriage, sex, and sexual abstinence or celibacy in 1 Corinthians 7 and the diverse results of those approaches. The goal of this chapter is to demonstrate the need for a more integrated approach to interpreting Paul’s views on all these topics.

2. Scholarship on Women and Gender in 1 Corinthians 7

2.1 Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza

In *In Memory of Her: A Feminist Theological Reconstruction of Christian Origins*,¹ Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza argues that Paul “clearly had the baptismal formula [Gal. 3:28] in mind when elaborating the general theological foundation for his advice in 1 Corinthians 7” and that Paul “interprets and adapts the baptismal declaration of oneness and equality in Christ” to “the concrete situation in Corinth” and develops “direct practical elaborations of Gal 3:28c, even though the third pair of the formula [‘male and female’] is never explicitly mentioned.”² The third part of the formula, “there is no male

¹ Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, *In Memory of Her: A Feminist Theological Reconstruction of Christian Origins* (New York: Crossroad, 1983). My discussion below draws on the sections titled, “Analysis and Interpretation of Galatians 3:28” (pp. 208–18) and “Pauline Modifications of Galatians 3:28” (pp. 218–26), which contains the subsection, “Marriage and Celibacy (1 Corinthians 7).”

² *Ibid.*, 219–20. Schüssler Fiorenza builds on the suggestion of two other scholars that Paul’s discussion in 1 Corinthians 7 alludes to the early Christian baptismal formula: Scott S. Bartchy, *First-Century Slavery and 1 Corinthians 7:21*, SBLDS 11 (Missoula, MT: Scholars Press, 1973), 162–65; Dieter Lührmann, “Wo man nicht mehr Sklave oder Freier ist: Überlegungen zur Struktur frühchristlicher Gemeinden,” *WuD* 13 (1975), 53–83. This allusion is also suggested in other secondary literature: Judith M. Gundry-Volf, “Male and Female in Creation and New Creation: Interpretations of Gal 3:28c in 1 Corinthians 7,” in

and female,” “probably alludes to Gen. 1:27 LXX,” “male and female [G*d] made them” (ἄρσεν καὶ θῆλυ ἐποίησεν αὐτούς),

where humanity created in the image of God is qualified as ‘male and female’ in order to introduce the theme of procreation and fertility … ‘No longer male and female’ is best understood, therefore, in terms of marriage and gender relationships. As such, Gal 3:28c does not assert that there are no longer men and women in Christ, but that patriarchal marriage – and sexual relationships between male and female – is no longer constitutive of the new community in Christ.³

The baptismal formula can thus be taken to imply that both women and men are “full members” of the eschatological community of Christ-believers “in and through baptism”⁴ and free “to exercise leadership functions within the missionary movement,” regardless “of their procreative capacities and the social roles connected with them” in “the patriarchal family.”⁵ Based on this interpretation of the baptismal formula, Paul “advises Christians, especially women, to remain free from the marriage bond” and to marry only if necessary due to sexual desire, without any requirement to procreate (see, e.g., 7:7–9, 11, 27c–d, 32–34, 36–38, 40).⁶ This advice was “a severe infringement of the right of the *paterfamilias*” and “a frontal assault on the intentions of existing law and the general cultural ethos.”⁷ For ordinary women in Greco-Roman society were not free to choose celibacy because they were under the authority of the *paterfamilias* and required by the cultural ethos and, in some cases, Roman law, to marry and bear children.⁸

To Tell the Mystery: Essays on New Testament Eschatology in Honor of R. H. Gundry, ed. Thomas E. Schmidt and Moisés Silva, JSNTSup 100 (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1994), 95–121; Bruce Hansen, “All of You Are One”: The Social Vision of Gal 3.28, 1 Cor 12.13 and Col 3.11, LNTS 409 (London; New York: T&T Clark, 2010), 10–11; Karin B. Neutel, *A Cosmopolitan Ideal: Paul’s Declaration ‘Neither Jew Nor Greek, Neither Slave Nor Free, Nor Male and Female’ in the Context of First-Century Thought*, LNTS 513 (New York: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2015), 190.

³ Schüssler Fiorenza, *In Memory of Her*, 211. Schüssler Fiorenza disputes that Gal. 3:28c refers to “eliminating biological sexual distinctions or advocates androgyny” (*ibid.*), or “purely religious” equality (*ibid.*, 207); with Hans Dieter Betz, *Galatians*, Hermeneia (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1979), 189 n. 68. For a brief discussion of the history of interpretation of Gal. 3:28, see Schüssler Fiorenza, *ibid.*, 205–7.

⁴ Schüssler Fiorenza, *In Memory of Her*, 211.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 211, 216.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 224. All chapter and verse references are to 1 Corinthians unless otherwise noted. All translations are mine unless otherwise noted.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 225.

⁸ *Ibid.* On the Augustan marriage legislation penalizing the unmarried and rewarding those who married and procreated among the Roman elite, see Mary R. D’Angelo, “Roman ‘Family Values’ and the Apologetic Concerns of Philo and Paul: Reading the Sixth Commandment,” NTS 61 (2015), 525–46; *eadem*, “Gender and Geopolitics in the Work of Philo of Alexandria: Jewish Piety and Imperial Family Values,” in *Mapping Gender in Ancient*

Paul drew no culturally explosive implications from the baptismal formula for *married* women, however, in Schüssler Fiorenza's opinion: Paul "implicitly limited married women to the confines of the patriarchal family" and "posited a rift between the married woman, concerned about her husband and family, and the unmarried virgin who was pure and sacred and therefore would receive the pneumatic privileges of virginity."⁹ These comments are based on 7:34: "The unmarried and chaste woman devotes care to the things of the Lord, so that she is consecrated both in body and in spirit [to the Lord], but the married woman devotes care to the things of the world, how she may serve her husband."

Schüssler Fiorenza explains that Paul limited married women to the patriarchal household for practical, not theological reasons, namely, to promote "decency and order" and reduce the "tension [between the Christian community and the wider society as a result of his emphasis on the marriage-free state of Christians] as much as possible."¹⁰ For example, in 11:2–16, 14:33–36 (the latter of which is authentically Pauline, in her view) Paul restricts the roles of married women to protect the Christian community and further its mission.¹¹

Schüssler Fiorenza concludes that in Paul's view the equality or mutuality of husband and wife is limited to "sexual conjugal relationships" (7:2–5),¹² and "it would be reaching too far to conclude that women and men shared an equality of role and a mutuality of relationship or equality or responsibility, freedom, and accountability in marriage."¹³

In sum: On the one hand, Paul "opens up a new independent lifestyle for women by encouraging them to remain free of the bondage of marriage. On the other hand, he subordinates women's behavior in the worship assembly to the interests of Christian mission, and restricts their rights not only as 'pneumatics' but also as 'women,' for we do not find such explicit restrictions on the behavior of men *qua* men in the worship assembly [sic]."¹⁴ Paul's teaching

Religious Discourses, ed. Todd Penner and Caroline Vander Stichele, BibInt 84 (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 63–88; Susan Hylen, *Women in the New Testament World* (London: Oxford University Press, 2018), 71–72.

⁹ Schüssler Fiorenza, *In Memory of Her*, 226; see also pp. 231–32. Schüssler Fiorenza contrasts Paul's view with that of Prisca and other married women who were actively engaged in the early Christian mission, not restricted to subordinate roles in the patriarchal household. They illustrate an "alternative vision and praxis" (*ibid.*, 251).

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 233, 236.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 233: "Here [14:34–35], as in 7:34 and 9:5, Paul appears to limit the active participation of wives in the 'affairs of the Lord'."

¹² *Ibid.*, 224.

¹³ *Ibid.*

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 236. Schüssler Fiorenza, *ibid.*, 220, comments that Paul's qualifications of the baptismal formula in 1 Corinthians 7 were "developed further in a patriarchal direction by the Pauline 'school'?"

on women and their roles in the early Christian missionary movement was thus double-edged. His impact was neither entirely positive nor wholly negative.

But as others have observed, at many points in this passage Paul bends over backwards to make the same statements to or about women as he does to or about men, not just when referring to the sexual relationship. It is thus difficult to conclude that Paul *presents* marriage or the family as “patriarchal” institutions.¹⁵ Indeed, Paul presents marriage as confining also for the *man*:¹⁶

The unmarried man devotes care to the things that belong to the Lord, how he may serve the Lord. But the married man devotes care to the things that belong to the world, how he may serve his wife, and he is divided.

ο ἄγαμος μεριμνᾷ τὰ τοῦ κυρίου, πῶς ἀρέσῃ τῷ κυρίῳ· ο δὲ γαμήσας μεριμνᾷ τὰ τοῦ κόσμου, πῶς ἀρέσῃ τῇ γυναικὶ, καὶ μεμέρισται. (7:32b–34a)

Here, Paul draws on an ancient stereotype of marriage as depriving the man of his freedom and reducing him to a servant with inescapable obligations to a wife, children, and in-laws.¹⁷ Instead of realizing the Stoic ideal of a life “free from distraction” (cf. 7:35), the married man “devotes care to the things that belong to the world” and strives to “serve” or “please” his wife. “And he is divided” probably refers to needing to fulfill his obligations to the Lord as “Christ’s slave” or “the Lord’s freedperson” (7:22) as well as his obligations to his wife.¹⁸ In 7:27, Paul refers to the man who “is bound (δέδεσαι) to a woman” as well as in 7:39 to the woman who “is bound (δέδεται) for as long as her husband is alive.” Finally, Paul’s statement in 7:35, “I say this for your benefit, not with the result of putting a yoke (βρόχον) on you,” probably

¹⁵ Cf. Carol L. Meyers, “Was Ancient Israel a Patriarchal Society?,” *JBL* 133 (2014), 8–27, on the inadequacy of “patriarchy” as a hermeneutical device for describing the roles of women in ancient Israel and other ancient contexts.

¹⁶ I have argued for the following translation of 7:32–34 in Judith M. Gundry, “Anxiety or Care for People? The Theme of 1 Corinthians 7:32–34 and the Relation between Exegesis and Theology,” in *Reconsidering the Relationship between Biblical and Systematic Theology in the New Testament: Essays by Theologians and New Testament Scholars*, ed. Benjamin E. Reynolds, Brian Lugioyo, and Kevin J. Vanhoozer, WUNT 2.369 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2014), 111–30.

¹⁷ The ancient view of marriage as entailing numerous social obligations is presupposed in 1 Corinthians; see further Will Deming, *Paul on Marriage and Celibacy: The Hellenistic Background of 1 Corinthians 7*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids; Cambridge, UK: Eerdmans, 2004).

¹⁸ 7:34a, “and he is divided,” is antithetically parallel to 7:34b: “The unmarried, virgin woman devotes herself to the Lord’s things, so that she is consecrated both in body and in spirit.” Cf. Schüssler Fiorenza, *In Memory of Her*, 226, for the interpretation of “he is divided” (μεμέρισται, 7:34a) as “he is not equally dedicated to the affairs of the Lord.”

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