

9. *“but if they do not have self-control (inner power) let them marry; for it is better to marry than to burn.”*

Having suggested that the unmarried and widows remain single, Paul immediately qualifies his suggestion by saying, “but if they do not have self-control let them marry.” The Greek verb translated “self-control” (εγκρατευονται) is derived from the preposition “εν” prefixed to the verb “κρατευομαι,” and it is in the imperative mode of command. Paul is literally commanding them, if they lack *inner power, strength, and might*, to get married. This statement taken at face value places no limitations on the unmarried, whether some of them were separated or not, but orders all who lack self-control to get married.

In view of the present and impending distress, marriage was not Paul’s first choice for them, but if they lacked inner strength to subdue their hot passions, he adds, “it is better to marry than to burn.” This context ties together the thought of *inadequate inner power to control one’s sexual urge* and the thought that *marriage is an alternate to burning*. the context implies that to have a strong sexual urge is “to burn” (πυρροσθαι) with lust and desire (cf. 2 Cor. 11:29). Out of the three times Paul uses this word in his epistles, two times he uses it in this manner.

Those who are burning in sexual desire, including all unmarried and widows, regardless of background, need to recognize the peril of their position – that they are walking a tightrope between continence and incontinence, between chastity and unchastity. Even though Paul recognized that marriage had its problems at that time in history, yet he says that it is “better” (κρειττον), *superior*, and *more desirable* than traveling Perilous-Burning Road. In view of what Paul is saying in this verse *we have no authority* to prevent anyone from leaving Perilous-Burning Road for Marriage Lane.

10. *“And I charge those who have been married, not I but the Lord, a wife (believing) is not to depart from a husband,”*