

1 Corinthians 7.1-16

Life's Second Most Important Question



April 23, 2018

Alek Minassian drove THIS VAN
down Crowded Sidewalk
in Toronto, Canada

10 killed, 18 wounded

ALEK & been RADICALIZED, Looking for REDISTRIBUTION

Most thought Transformed by ISIS, Al-Quida, or radical Islam??

NO, Alek pledged allegiance to the “Incel Rebellion” on his Facebook Page

INCEL hybrid word - stands for “involuntarily celibate”

“INCEL is an online community of men united by their inability to convince women to have intimate relations with them”
Vox.com

On Alek’s Facebook where pledged allegiance to “Incel Rebellion,”

He HAILED Elliot Rodger as the “Supreme Gentleman”



February 14, 2018 Nikolas Cruz
attacked High School in Florida
17 killed, 17 wounded

Nikolas wrote these words

“Elliot Rodger will not be forgotten”

Forgot Elliot Rodger? > 2014 Killed 6 people in Santa Barbara, California

Made Video to Explain Why: “attractive women wouldn’t sleep with him”

32 Random N. Americans killed by Sexually Frustrated Young Men > RAGE

Message of Sexual Revolution > It is your RIGHT to have Sex with Anyone

For MANY TODAY > Sexual Freedom is the Most Important Freedom

“One might plausibly argue that those with much less access to sex suffer to a similar degree as those with low income, and might similarly hope to gain from organizing around this identity, to lobby for redistribution of the benefits of the sexual revolution and to at least implicitly threaten violence if their demands are not met.”
 Robin Hanson, Economist, George Mason University

People that watch HOURS of PORNOGRAPHY should be entitled to Act it Out
 When WOMEN are NOT Interested – INCEL Men feel Cheated – Take Action!
 Strong Message > Sex is Everything > Nothing CAN or SHOULD Stop You

“One lesson to be drawn from recent Western history might be this: *Sometimes the extremists and radicals and weirdos see the world more clearly than the respectable and moderate and sane...* as offensive or utopian the redistribution of sex might sound, the idea is entirely responsive to the logic of late-modern sexual life, and its pursuit would be entirely characteristic of a recurring pattern in liberal societies... There is an alternative, conservative response, of course — namely, that our widespread isolation and unhappiness and sterility might be dealt with by reviving or adapting older ideas about the virtues of monogamy and chastity and permanence and the special respect owed to the celibate. But this is not the natural response for a society like ours.”

Ross Douthat, “The Redistribution of Sex,” New York Times, May 2, 2018

NYT Columnist sees Recurring CULTURAL TRUTH > Paul EXPLAINS
 Societies SWING > Open to Closed > Conserv to Liberal > Freedoms to Control
 PASTORAL Realism of PAUL > Real People in Real Messy Situation

Ch 6 > Corinthians who REVELED in SEXUAL FREEDOMS

Ch 7 > Corinthians tried to REPRESS SEX thinking it should be FORBIDDEN
 ONCE AGAIN we need to Listen to BBC “Balanced, Biblical, Christianity”

v. 1 Now concerning the matters about which you wrote:



Paul sends this letter to Corinth from Ephesus
 Chs 1 – 6 Paul ADDRESSES Sins & Struggles
 he Heard ABOUT church
 Now ANSWER QUESTIONS from Church

FIRST CORINTHIANS

Rebuke for Sinful Conditions		Reply to Specific Questions
Introduction (1:1-9) Divisions in the Church Exposition (1:10-17) Explanation (1:18-4:5) Exhortation (4:6-21) CHAPTERS 1:10-4:21	Disorders in the Church Moral disorder (5:1-13) Legal disorder (6:1-11) Carnal disorder (6:12-20) CHAPTERS 5-6	Difficulties in the Church Domestic difficulty—marriage and divorce (7:1-40) Social difficulty—liberty and license (8:1-11:1) Ecclesiastical difficulty—women and worship (11:2-34) Practical difficulty—gifts and body (12:1-14:40) Doctrinal difficulty—death and resurrection (15:1-58) Financial difficulty—gifts and body (16:1-9) CHAPTERS 7:1-16:9
Key	"I exhort you." (1:10)	"Now concerning the thing about which you wrote." (7:1)
Need	Unity among the Corinthian Christians	Clarity regarding six areas of concern

Food offered to Idols –
 Spiritual Gifts –
 Resurrection –
 Collection –
 Apollos

Change of TOPIC: Marriage, NOT change in TONE – Still Deeply Concerned
 CONTEXT of his CONCERNS already Addressed > Walk with GOD
 PROUD Believers who think they FULLY ARRIVED > ALREADY REIGN!

“triumphalism has many strange children”

Sexual BEHAVIOR is Unifying LINK between chs 5 – 7

Ch 6 INDULGENCE / Ch 7 ABSTINENCE

Paul starts DISCUSSION with ABSTINENCE ADVOCATES...I HEAR You!
 v. 1 Now concerning the matters about which you wrote: “It is good for a man not to have sexual relations with a woman.”

I UNDERSTAND your REACTION – In this SIN-SICK World wanna HIDE
 ENTER a Monastery or Convent – Move to Deserted Island – ESCAPE SEX
 WELCOME Move Away from Corinth > Corinth might Not Move Out of You

Paul seems to be WRITING to SISTERS – Appeal made FIRST to Women
 They're VERY LIKELY Sick of Sexually Unfaithful Corinth, Church, Husbands
 CONJUGAL Act is SO REPULSIVE they were DIVORCING HUSBANDS
 Sad to say MANY of our Countries – Rate of Divorce in Church same as Society

Both Jesus & Paul advocated Celibacy – Many Victimized Corinthian Women
 Were Ready to Sign Up to be Bachelorettes to the Rapture!

1. The Gift of a Spouse

Because we have been CREATED Sexual BEINGS – God Created Marriage
 God our MAKER made SEX – In Marriage – Wonderful, Celebration of LOVE
 Christians CONSIDER 2 Important Questions, 1. Should you Marry? 2. Who?
 Question of Marriage > Life's 2nd Most Important Question – 1st FOLLOW Jesus

a. Monogamy – *One Man, One Woman, For Life*

One of Clearest and Most Simple Statements on Marriage in the Bible

v. 2 But because of the temptation to sexual immorality, each man should have his own wife and each woman her own husband.

God has given GIFT to this SEX-SATURATED World

ONE Man joins ONE Woman for LIFE – Ordinary? Boring? Well Known?
 VERY RADICAL Corinth / 1st C SLANG “to Corinthianize” = to FORNICATE

Many – even in CHURCH – Would have thought Paul was UNREALISTIC
 As Paul writes he was SINGLE – Say with NEAR Certainty But Not Always
 RABBI --- LEADING, Respected, Important Rabbi > Be Rabbi MARRIED
 Paul WIDOWER? Or Wife ABANDONED after Damascus Rd. Conversion?
 Nothing in Bible ANSWERS very INTERESTING Question > Will Ask him!
 Paul PRACTITIONER of Struggles of Marriage not just Philosopher of Science
 vs. 10,11 To the married I give this charge (not I, but the Lord): the wife should not separate from her husband (but if she does, she should remain unmarried or else be reconciled to her husband), and the husband should not divorce his wife.

Paul RESTATES the THRUST of Jesus and Genesis > Marriage for Life

God's Design in Marriage is Partners Find their Delight in One Another
 Marriage is PICTURE of RELATIONSHIP w/ God > Only HE SATISFY Fully

DIVORCE is RESULT of Sin > Falling short of God's IDEAL Men & Women

In a culture which divorce has become the norm, this text has become a bone of contention. Some find Paul and Jesus too harsh and try to find ways around the plain sense of the text. Others turn the text into law and make divorce the worst of all sins in the church. Neither of these seem an appropriate response. On the one hand, there is little question that both Paul and Jesus disallowed divorce between two believers, especially when it served as grounds for remarriage... On the other hand, Paul does not raise this norm to law. Divorce may happen, and such a person is not ostracized from the community. But it must be remembered that in this setting divorce was being sought for ascetic reasons, which is almost always the precise opposite of most such situations in our own culture! What is not allowed is remarriage... If the Christian husband and wife cannot be reconciled to one another, then how can they expect to become models of reconciliation before a fractured and broken world? Gordon Fee

b. Equality – Your Body belongs to Your Spouse

vs. 3,4 The husband should give to his wife her conjugal rights, and likewise the wife to her husband. For the wife does not have authority over her own body, but the husband does. Likewise the husband does not have authority over his own body, but the wife does.

FRANK Teaching about Sex – BOTH Husband and Wife have FULL Rights

Sex is NOT DIRTY or SHAMEFUL but a GIFT you GIVE to your Spouse

BEST Way to put Prostitutes – and Internet Porn – OUT of BUSINESS

Wholesome, Happy, Fulfilling SEXUAL Life in your MARRIAGE

Common Cultural Idea > ALL Belonged to HUSBAND > Wife CHATTLE

RADICAL IDEA > Husbands Body BELONGS to Wife

1st Time in HISTORY that IDEA was Every WRITTEN!

Paul FOUNDER of True Gender Equality, Women's Rights, 1st FEMINIST

Calling of Christian is to be SERVANT > Christ is our Servant > MODELS It
Everything we DO should SERVE Others INCLUDING our Sexual Activity

Marriage Covenant is ONLY place for Mutual Servanthood thru SEX

ONLY way you can SERVE GOD and OTHERS in SEX is within MARRIAGE

Natural Inclination is to be SELFISH > Sex without Marriage is Selfish

Sometimes Even MARRIED People are Still INTENSELY SELFISH

This is paradoxical counsel to married couples, and I think Paul knows it. It does not give either spouse the right to demand certain sexual acts from the other that he or she does not want to give...God calls the couple to a profound effort to please the other without settling who will wind up getting the most pleasure, especially because each person will get pleasure in not asking the other to do what the other finds unpleasurable...This is a holy and humble and self-sacrificing competition to make the other maximally glad. John Piper

vs. 5,6 Do not deprive one another, except perhaps by agreement for a limited time, that you may devote yourselves to prayer; but then come together again, so that Satan may not tempt you because of your lack of self-control. Now as a concession, not a command, I say this.

Paul Acknowledging that SEXUAL Practices of Corinth are PERVERTED

SOMETIMES it MIGHT be Good Idea to REFRAIN for a SEASON

Admits that CONCESSION --- NOT like a COMMAND

LIMITED Time – MUTUAL Agreement – Urgent PRAYER – RESUME Sex

GANDHI – Quit having SEX in Marriage – PRAISED! – SELFISH!!

LEGALISM / Suppressing LEGITIMATE Expression of Passions will Backfire

Marriage is GOOD > You will CURB Immorality thru GOOD MARRIAGES

NORMAL Christians Married Couple SET RECORD for How often have SEX

Do not ROB, or STEAL from ONE ANOTHER

NO Games or Testing One Another with Sex > No Holding Out to Hurt the Other

This whole approach to equality and mutuality in the marriage relationship was completely revolutionary...and continues to be so in every modern culture...At the practical level this is a very challenging word to all Christian couples. Many reasons are given for withholding what is due the other: tiredness, resentment, disinterest, boredom, etc...Paul does not stress the duty of either partner at the expense of the other.

David Prior

Young Teenage Girl talking to GRANDMOTHER “How Old Are You?”

Granny very PRIVATE and said, “Sweetheart, that is Not your Business”

Then Girl asked “How much do you Weigh?” Again, Granny Refused Answer

After a Few Minutes Granddaughter came BACK with a SMUG SMILE

“I know how OLD you Are!” 74! // “I know you weigh 63 kilos!”

Granny “How did you FIND that OUT!? I found your DRIVER’S License

And I also NOTICED that in SEX YOU – Got an F – You FAILED

If you want Abstinence like a MONK or NUN – Don’t get Married

This PUTS God’s Relationship only in VAGUE Spiritual World

ALIENATES a person from Physical World and Reality of their BODIES

GOD made our BODIES to be Place where HE is HONORED > TEMPLE

2. The Gift of Singleness

Individuality – Everyone is Different

vs. 6,7 Now as a concession, not a command, I say this. I wish that all were as I myself am. But each has his own gift from God, one of one kind and one of another.

Marriage is NORMAL and GOOD and MOST People will be Married in Christ

Marriage is HONORABLE ESTATE it is NOT for EVERYONE

SOME have the GIFT of Singleness, just as others have GIFT of Marriage

Revolutionary View of Singleness AND Marriage --- BOTH are GREAT!

Do Not be TOO EAGER to Change Status – Shocking THEN AND NOW

Married? – Don't try BE Single – Marriage is GREAT!

Single? – Don't try BE Married – Marriage is HARD!

Ancient Society > ONLY Family Honor and Success and Achievement

NOT Married you had NO IDENTITY or SIGNIFICANCE

Christianity > FIRST Ideology to LIFT UP WORTH of SINGLENES, Virtue
Breaks ABSOLUTE Necessity of FAMILY > God making New, Eternal Family

One pt Roman History Caesar imposed FINES on Widows not Remarried 2 Yrs

Bible ENCOURAGES Older Widows Remain Single > Enlist in Lord's Army!

SINGLENES is Not a STATE of Greater Spirituality

What is IMPORTANT is your FAITHFULNESS and SERVICE to HIM

Paul had GIFT of Celibacy > Necessary to Maintain INTEGRITY in Singleness

Paul WISHES that More would be SINGLE for FOCUS on GOSPEL ministry

But EACH Time he Suggests SINGLENES he Qualifies It > NOT Command

vs. 6,7 Now as a *concession*, not a command, I say this. I *wish* that all were as I myself am. But *each has his own gift* from God, one of one kind and one of another.

Paul is not so narrow minded that he thinks all must become full-time missionaries like himself, but he does believe that all must bear witness in whatever social situation they find themselves with their lives and their words. This is one reason he encourages Christians to remain in their current state.

Ben Witherington III

One Marriage Ceremony pastor told Couple “NOW you are COMPLETE!”

Bible – We are Complete, Fulfilled, Purposeful, Meaningful BY OURSELVES

If you are NOT COMPLETE – Don’t Get Married – Not be able to Serve Spouse

Marriages that WORK when Each Partner gives Themselves to One Another

vs. 8,9 To the unmarried and the widows I say that it is good for them to remain single, as I am. *But if they cannot exercise self-control*, they should marry. For it is better to marry than to burn with passion.

We’ve got LOTS of BURNING People in this ROOM! Even ME!

NOT most Flattering Description of Marriage -But HONEST, esp CORINTH

BURN? CONTROL our PASSIONS...Everyone HAS THEM! Self-Control

Paul NOT saying only those who are BURNING will MARRY...Weakness!

Ch 6 CORINTH was BURNING --- They were CONTROLLED by SEX

The Bible will rub against our cultural sensibilities on this issue. No one human culture has cornered the market on truth, and so everyone would expect the Divine Word to affirm every culture on some points, but challenge them on others. And this is precisely what the Bible does. Stephen Um

Little Boy asked Father where BABIES Come From

So, Father gives Simple, Clear, Honest Description of Sex, Conception, Birth

Little Boy’s Eyes GOT BIG and he said, “Dad, does God know about this!?”

3. The Gift of Salvation

a. Authority – Paul the Apostle speaks the Word of God

v. 10 To the married I give this charge (not I, but the Lord)

v. 12 To the rest I say (I, not the Lord)

GOSPELS were NOT Complete – MAYBE Mark was Already WRITTEN

Words of Jesus were ORAL RECORD – Perhaps some Small Writings

IF known Words of Jesus SUPPORT Teaching – Then PAUL cites them v. 10

IF Paul has NO Quote from Jesus – Speaks with AUTHORITY of Jesus: Apostle
 v. 25 Now concerning the betrothed, I have no command from the Lord, but I
 give my judgment as one who by the Lord's mercy is trustworthy.

v. 40 Yet in my judgment she is happier if she remains as she is. And I think that
 I too have the Spirit of God.

SARCASTIC Tone – COMPARING self with Bold, Arrogant Claims of Corinth

If anyone thinks that he is a prophet, or spiritual, he should acknowledge that the
 things I am writing to you are a command of the Lord. 1 Corinthians 14.37

b. Testimony - Believing Spouse Sanctifies

vs. 12-13 ...if any brother has a wife who is an unbeliever, and she consents to
 live with him, he should not divorce her. If any woman has a husband who is an
 unbeliever, and he consents to live with her, she should not divorce him.

COMMON Situation – ONE Spouse gets SAVED – Is Marriage OVER? NO!
 SAVED Partner FEELS Trapped > Unbelieving Partner worships IDOLS Boldly

Marriage is CREATION Ordinance, Not Salvation Ordinance

Yet, it can be SHOCKING to Spouse – SOME want to Leave!

South African Doctor's Wife was Converted and he said there were 2 Shocks

1. Woman I Loved Change Completely / 2. Another Man in Marriage: Jesus

v. 15 But if the unbelieving partner separates, let it be so. In such cases the
 brother or sister is not enslaved. God has called you to peace.

Paul is REALIST – If they WANT to Leave, You cannot FORCE them to Stay

Pauline EXCEPTION to Marriage Vow – ABANDONMENT by Unbeliever

Most Commentators do NOT SEE Permission to REMARRY in this Chapter

Some Christians WORRIED that Unbelieving Spouse would Ruin their Faith

Paul argues the Opposite – YOU the Believer are there to Change them

HOLY = Saved > SET APART, Unique Opportunity – Salt, Light, Truth, Jesus

v. 14 For the unbelieving husband is made holy because of his wife, and the unbelieving wife is made holy because of her husband. Otherwise your children would be unclean, but as it is, they are holy.

HOLINESS – Set Apart, Unique, Different, Highly Unusual

You the BELIEVER create OPPORTUNITY > Light, Salt, Hope, Truth, Love
the church of God that is in Corinth, to those sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints
1 Corinthians 1.1

People CLOSE to LIVING Christian are IMPACTED by God at work in Them

Does NOT Promise they will be SAVED – or Baptize them – Bless Them

The godliness of the one does more to ‘sanctify’ the marriage than the ungodliness of the other does to make it unclean. John Calvin

Apostle PETER Address similar Challenge – Woman with Unbelieving Husband

Likewise, wives, be subject to your own husbands, so that even if some do not obey the word, they may be won without a word by the conduct of their wives, when they see your respectful and pure conduct. 1 Peter 3.1-2

IRRESISTIBLE Beauty of KINDNESS, LOVE, ACCEPTANCE, Contentment

Husband asks “What has gotten into you?” Only Answer is “Jesus”

Sometimes WIFE has Lost all Joy because of the Lack of Love from Husband

Woman DEPRESSED Husband took to Psychiatrist > She was Silent

Husband On & On Just how Terribly Sad his Wife Was

Psychiatrist stood Woman Up – Gave BIG KISS – Woman: Big, Happy Smile

Psych: “This is what your wife NEEDS”

Man OK I will bring her HERE every TUESDAY and THURSDAY!

v. 16 For how do you know, wife, whether you will save your husband? Or how do you know, husband, whether you will save your wife?

WHO KNOWS? – Paul is NOT Guaranteeing Salvation – God is Sovereign

Paul extends EVERY HOPE in Grace & Mercy of God our Savior

Out of MORAL CESSPOOL Jesus calls Men & Women: Freedom, Forgiveness

If God saved Paul, and You, and Me, Then ANYBODY can COME to Him!

Little children, you are from God and have overcome them, for he who is in you is greater than he who is in the world.

1 John 4.4

1 Corinthians 7:¹ Now concerning the matters about which you wrote: “It is good for a man not to have sexual relations with a woman.” ²But because of the temptation to sexual immorality, each man should have his own wife and each woman her own husband. ³The husband should give to his wife her conjugal rights, and likewise the wife to her husband. ⁴For the wife does not have authority over her own body, but the husband does. Likewise the husband does not have authority over his own body, but the wife does. ⁵Do not deprive one another, except perhaps by agreement for a limited time, that you may devote yourselves to prayer; but then come together again, so that Satan may not tempt you because of your lack of self-control. ⁶Now as a concession, not a command, I say this. ⁷I wish that all were as I myself am. But each has his own gift from God, one of one kind and one of another. ⁸To the unmarried and the widows I say that it is good for them to remain single as I am. ⁹But if they cannot exercise self-control, they should marry. For it is better to marry than to burn with passion. ¹⁰To the married I give this charge (not I, but the Lord): the wife should not separate from her husband ¹¹(but if she does, she should remain unmarried or else be reconciled to her husband), and the husband should not divorce his wife. ¹²To the rest I say (I, not the Lord) that if any brother has a wife who is an unbeliever, and she consents to live with him, he should not divorce her. ¹³If any woman has a husband who is an unbeliever, and he consents to live with her, she should not divorce him. ¹⁴For the unbelieving husband is made holy because of his wife, and the unbelieving wife is made holy because of her husband. Otherwise your children would be unclean, but as it is, they are holy. ¹⁵But if the unbelieving partner separates, let it be so. In such cases the brother or sister is not enslaved. God has called you to peace. ¹⁶For how do you know, wife, whether you will save your husband? Or how do you know, husband, whether you will save your wife?