

She Only Said "Yes" Once

By **Reggie Osborne II** - March 29, 2016



I stood on a stage in the church I'd grown up in. I can only vaguely remember my wedding, but I'll never forget seeing Allison emerge from the hallway at the back of the sanctuary. Beautiful.

Looking up at me through her veil, she smiled. She has always been a shy person, so she should have been intimidated by all of those people looking at her. But this wasn't her shy smile – the tight-lipped, head-hung, eyebrows-raised smile that meant she was embarrassed. No, this was a “nothing-else-in-the-world-matters-right-now” smile.

We all stared at her, a couple hundred people in a full sanctuary. But she stared down the aisle at me as if we were the only two people in the room. I'll never forget that moment.

Her hair was special. I'd never seen it like that before. She was wearing make-up, a small thing, but it stands out in my mind

because she wears it so rarely. I remember the veil. I remember the dress.

We stood before the pastor, and we went through the motions of the service. It feels sacrilege to say this, but they were just words at that point. The promises had already been made.

Finally: “You may kiss your bride.”

We kissed. A real kiss...nothing obscene...but not a peck either. My wife is so shy about showing affection in public, that even to this day we don't really kiss when we're out and about. But we kissed right then and there, with no shyness at all.

And in that moment, on that stage, when we were married, my wife – Allison Lynne Osborne – said, “Yes,” to me.

Before that moment, the answer had always been, “No,” – “no” in my heart and “no” in hers. “No” in parked cars, in movie theatres, in empty living rooms – “no” to all of those emotions and desires that threaten to sweep away young people in love. The answer had always been, “No.”

Not anymore. On, July 28th, 2001, the answer we gave each other before God and everyone was: “Yes.” “Yes,” until the day that we die.

Yes, I could kiss her. Yes, I could sleep with her. Yes, I could steal glances of her in the shower because I think she looks great even after 5 kids. She said, “Yes,” to me, forever.

I wasn't asking for a one night stand or permission to touch her after a party. I was asking for forever, and that's what she gave me. That's what I gave her.

She has never had to say it again. She said "yes" only once. She meant it to last. I meant it to last. It has lasted fourteen years. It will remain in effect until death parts us.

Last October the New York Times published an article describing what sex education is like for tenth graders now in San Francisco. A new law requires that teachers give lessons on something called "affirmative consent". These children are taught to ask for consent at every point in a sexual encounter.

Do you want to kiss her? Ask for consent. Do you want to touch her breasts? Ask for consent again. Do you want to take her clothes off? Ask for consent again. Do you want to penetrate? Ask for consent again.

If that's too graphic for you, just remember, this is 10th grade material. If it makes you uncomfortable, then just imagine being one of the 15 year-old kids in that classroom who are hearing those words (and many that are far more graphic) with other boys and girls their own age...the same boys and girls they used to finger-paint with in kindergarten.

One student, upon hearing that he needed to check with a girl before touching her in certain places or doing certain things, asked, "What does that mean – you have to say 'yes' every 10 minutes?"

"Pretty much," the teacher answered.

Somehow that seemed extraordinarily out of place to this young man, that one would have to pause the progression of an intimate encounter to ask, over and over again, “May I do this now?”

Those aren’t exactly words of passion and romance, are they?

So the teacher gave the kids an assignment. Come up with better ways of asking for consent, ways that won’t seem so awkward and weird. The fifteen year-olds put their heads together and brainstormed. They spent their class time trying to invent less awkward ways of asking each other for permission to have sexual experiences.

They wanted to come up with a way of asking, “Can I do this to you now?” without actually sounding like an alien from another planet. Many of their suggestions were too vague or nonspecific, but finally they settled on one that they could all agree on.

Two simple words: “You good?”

A boy is about to take the top off a girl: “You good?”

He touches her underwear: “You good?”

Before kissing her body: “You good?”

Before taking her virginity...before losing his own, he asks: “You good?”

The answer is no. I’m not good. You’re not good. None of this is good. This is not what sex is for. This is not what love is for. We’ve ruined it.

Sex has become so detached from anything meaningful, personal, and private, that Playboy is no longer even bothering to print nude pictures anymore. People won't pay for them because every sexual act imaginable can be freely viewed on the internet at any moment. Our most popular TV shows, from Game of Thrones to Two and a Half Men, are full of sex, either explicit or implied.

One generation...two generations, have grown up in a culture where sex means practically nothing on TV and media, and so they've actually embraced the idea that it means nothing in real life! They've heard the message and believed it: "Sex is no big deal". They feel totally inadequate and unfulfilled if they aren't having it.

And we have done such a good job teaching that message, that now 1 in 5 women who attend college for four years say they've been sexually assaulted. Or is it 1 in 7, like the authors of the study tried to clarify in TIME Magazine? Am I supposed to feel better about 1 in 7, as opposed to 1 in 5? Is that supposed to comfort me?

Virtually every single major publication in our country, from Sports Illustrated to the New York Times has written extensively on the dangerous places that college campuses have become for young women. The violence of sex has become so undeniably prevalent in our culture that now governments feel they must act, they must do something – ANYTHING – to teach young people **the one truth about sex that should be the most common, basic, intuitive part: it should be CONSENSUAL.**

Think about that for a moment. We have so RUINED our image of sex that we now have to *PASS LAWS* requiring teachers to explain to our children that **they must be sure someone wants to have sex before they go through with it.**

I have worked with youth for 16 years as a leader and a teacher. I have mentored youth and cried with them when their worlds have fallen apart on them. I have given them my money, my time, my vehicle, and my home at various points. And I can tell you this: in my experience, the number 1 reason why children leave their homes and wreck their lives is a desire for sex that our culture has SCREAMED that they must have.

And their parents see it and warn them and plead with them and try to help them – all to no avail in so many terrible cases, because if there's anything the culture has screamed at children more than "SEX IS FOR YOU", it's "YOUR PARENTS ARE IDIOTS".

Buried behind each act of rebellion is the personal belief that he or she knows better than the parents who have raised them from birth. These kids are convinced that they know more about life and sex than their moms and dads. They are bolstered by their familiarity with sex, a familiarity not based in actual reality, but based on what they've seen in movies, music, television, and the internet...what they've talked about it in school with their friends after health class.

They are tragically mistaken. They have overestimated their own wisdom. They have embraced an understanding of sex that is deliberately deceitful.

Deliberately deceitful. Adults know that sex is not REALLY like the movies or the TV or the music make it out to be. The adults that make their money off of selling sex KNOW that their version of it isn't honest – not in it's portrayal, and not in it's consequences.

But those profiteering off of “selling sex” aren't there to help pick up the pieces when they come home diseased, abused, traumatized, pregnant, or addicted. The culture isn't there to help them after an abortion. It's not there to help them as a single parent with a baby. “Here's some food stamps and some government assistance. Good luck! *Make sure you buy my next song on iTunes or watch my next show on HBO!*”

The culture isn't there to help them with child-support payments for the next 20 years, made to a young lady you don't even know outside of a one-night stand. The culture isn't there to help the young lady who never gets a child-support payment because the father doesn't love her and could care less about being a real man.

The culture isn't really “there” at all.

“Culture” is an abstract thing, an illusion that tells us how we should think and feel. It's built through actors, actresses, singers, rappers, advertisements, porn-creators, and the like who glorify sex outside of marriage as if it's some penultimate experience to achieve. And when the illusion is stripped away by the cold realities of life on the other side of these sexual experiences, these kids are left to try to piece together a life that's been gutted by a society more concerned about the dangers of “censorship” than the dangers of the culture we've fostered.

And the proposed answer to all of these problems is: education.

“We just have to teach them about contraception. We just have to teach them safety. We just have to do a better job handing out condoms. We have to do a better job making abortions available. We have to increase social support programs. We have to come up with medication for the diseases and vaccines and protocols for treatment.”

It’s like running around with a garden hose trying to put out a fire that’s burning your entire house down.

We have ruined sex. We have taken what was sacred and made it casual, pretending that it won’t hurt us.

We ought to mourn what we’ve done, but instead, we glory in our own shame. We boast about the sexual revolution as if it were an accomplishment. We mock those who believe that it belongs only to marriage, where consent has been given and relationships rest in promised exclusivity. We laugh at the happily married couples who have never known another partner as if they somehow “missed out” on all the fun.

What fun? Step out of your little world and look at what this trivialization of sex is doing to our people!

Let me pose to you the same question that those kids came up with in San Francisco...a question, by the way, that no one’s ever asked in a porn scene: “You good?”

Sexual violence dominating college campuses: “You good?”

19 year-olds with three abortions: “You good?”

Pornographic websites becoming the main source of a child's first sexual experience: "You good?"

Sex addiction being a real and tragic thing: "You good?"

No...I'm not good. Excuse me while I go throw up.

EDIT 4/8/16 – So after a crazy week, I've written a follow up response to this. If anyone's interested in how this article came about, or what it's meant to convey, you can read it [here](#).

EDIT 4/22/16 – This article has now been shared more than 50,000 times and has more than 500,000 views from around the world. By contrast, I have published one article since this one, and it was viewed less than 100 times. For some reason, God used "She Only Said 'Yes' Once" to reach a great many people. I continue to receive emails of testimony and encouragement from parents who have taken this as an opportunity to talk with their children and spouses about sex. It is so humbling, and I am so grateful to God for being even a fleeting voice against sin for His sake.