

A Christian Response to MGTOW

Ecclesiastes 4:9-12

CRBC February 17, 2016

1. Definitions: What is MGTOW?

The acronym stands for “Men Going Their Own Way.”

It is a loose way of speaking about a small but emerging group of men in Western society who are increasingly choosing to live without women in their lives and, for some, with as little contact with anyone else, men or women, as possible.

MGTOW can in some ways be described as part of the modern Men’s Movement, a reaction against the rise of feminism and which some believe has led to reactionary and unjust discrimination against men and masculinity.

The MGTOW movement largely exists as a cyber or virtual community. Those who are part of the movement communicate with each other via social media, in various forums which some have dubbed the “manosphere.”

The movement is, by nature, hard to define and there are men who would identify with the movement at various levels.

When we speak of those who are explicitly in the MGTOW movement we are talking about men who are consciously aware of this movement and who are choosing to identify with it. These men are generally white, well-educated professionals with technological savvy.

We might also include other men who know nothing of the movement but who are also responding to our current cultural environment in passive and reclusive ways.

Many men involved in MGTOW claim to have suffered unjust treatment and even abuse at the hands of women.

Some believe that women are only attracted to men for selfish reasons (i.e., they are looking for a man to take care of their material needs and use sexual

attraction to manipulate and control men). Some feel rejected by women and admit to feeling socially awkward around women.

Some claim that they have been falsely accused of crimes like stalking or date rape or they are offended by the feminist rhetoric which holds that all men are “potential rapists.”

Some report that they came into the movement after being saddled with unjust alimony payments or divorce settlements and child custodial agreements in courts which now favor women over men.

The response of the MGTOW is to intentionally live their lives apart from women. For some it means intentionally separating from their families and all social contact.

With regards to sexuality, these men are largely heterosexuals. Some choose to live in celibacy. Others seek to fulfill their sexual desires through one night stands, prostitutes, or pornography.

With regards to family and society, these men reject marriage or fathering children (some even claim that coupling should be avoided due to risk of having a daughter).

Extreme MGTOWS severely demonize women and believe that they are inherently and irredeemably toxic for men. In some ways one might say that the MGTOW movement is a return to the pre-Christian pagan view that men are superior to women and that men can only experience meaningful friendship and intellectual engagement with other men.

Many claim they have joined the MGTOW movement do to frustration with rising “misandry” in society. No one protest the large number of men who are raped in prisons each year. Men have higher suicide rates than women, face tougher criminal penalties in courts than women, have a lower life expectancy than women, do jobs that have higher health and safety risks. Women now outnumber men in higher education. Yet, men are blamed for making more money than women or for holding higher paying jobs. Women’s health issues are promoted over those of men. Boys are chided for being active, playing and acting like boys, given Ritalin, and encouraged to act like girls.

One of the favorite metaphors of the MGTOW movement is “the red pill.” It is taken from the cult film “The Matrix” when the lead character is offered a red pill or a blue pill. If he takes the blue pill he continues to live with a false perception of the world. If he takes the red pill his eyes are opened and he sees the world as it really is. When a man “awakens” to reality of discrimination against men and the slavery of living for others and decides “to go his own way” he has taken the red pill.

2. Sympathy for men MGTOW.

Many of these men have been hurt by sinful interactions with women, with their family members, and others.

Many men have been unjustly treated by the legal system, media, schools, and society (e.g., the recent false rape accusations at UVA that were reported in “Rolling Stone” magazine).

The rise of extreme feminism has sometimes resulted in the demonization of men and reverse discrimination against men.

Many men have difficulty forming friendships. They are expected to communicate and behave like women. They are not taught to act like responsible men. They have grown up without fathers in their homes and have not been taught how to live as men. They do not appreciate or understand each human being’s basic need for community.

3. Problems with the MGTOW from a Christian worldview:

1. It is a rejection of the Biblical view of manhood and womanhood. Men and women are both in the image of God (Gen 1:27).
2. It lacks the understanding of sin as universal—impacting both men and women (cf. Rom 3:23). Feminists demonize men and MGTOWs demonize women. In reality both are sinners whose only hope is Christ (Rom 6:23).
3. It fails to understand the beauty of the one man, one woman, one flesh union which lasts a lifetime (cf. Gen 2:24). Men and women were not made to compete with one another but to complete one another.

4. It depersonalizes and makes an idol of sexuality, disparaging the institution of marriage (cf. 1 Cor 6:18: “Flee fornication...”; Heb 13:4: “Marriage is honourable in all...”).
5. It rejects man’s basic need for community and the places where God has ordained that we find it: in the family, in the church, and in society. We need others (see Ecc 4:9-12). We need the community that comes in the Body of Christ (1 Cor 12).
6. It elevates selfishness and self-centeredness. Christianity, on the other hand, calls on men and women to die to themselves and to live for Christ (see Luke 9:23-24).

JTR