

We Cannot Have our Relative Cake and Eat It Too

By

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I watched and listened as Tiger Woods offered his apology to the world on national television. I “I am deeply sorry for my irresponsible and selfish behavior,” admitted Woods. Woods was open about how his marital infidelities opened the door of pain in the heart of his wife, and wrapped his personal life in a cloak of embarrassment. Fame and wealth, he said, granted him a sense of entitlement to enjoy the temptations that were around him. He expressed regret about his bad choices. In short, Tiger Woods took responsibility for his actions and admitted to the world that He was wrong.

Of course, afterwards, people made comments about his motives, questioning the sincerity of his apology. I think that Wood’s a step in the right direction.

I wonder, however, if any thought is being given to the larger implication of Wood’s admission of wrong doing. When Woods admitted that his unfaithfulness to his wife was wrong, he placed his behavior in a moral category and made a moral judgment about it. Wrong also implies that there is a right course of action. Now the moral categories of right and wrong require a standard by which what is right and what is wrong can be determined. Indeed, that standard must be absolute. Otherwise, we have no basis for right and wrong, or justice and injustice. And herein lies the hypocrisy and schizophrenia of North American post modern culture. On the one hand, many of the educational high priests in our main stream educational institutions teach children, teenagers, and college students that there are no such things as absolutes. There is no absolute standard by which right and wrong is to be measured. They assert that it does not matter what you believe as long as you are sincere. But on the other hand, when people go out and follow the implications of these ideas to their practical conclusion, and steal the retirement money of people, takes kick backs and bribes for political advancement, beat someone to death, or commit adultery, we ridicule them; we try them in our courts; we lock them up; victims are hurt in the process; and there is the cultural expectation of an admission of wrongdoing from the perpetrators. Whether we like it or not, we have a sense of fair play, an inner

sense of right and wrong. In his classic book, *Mere Christianity*, C. S. Lewis entitles the first section of the book: Right and Wrong As A Clue to the Meaning of the Universe. Lewis confronts us with an implication that we cannot escape. Tiger Wood's admission of wrong points us to an absolute standard, and reminds thinking people that there is a holy God who is the absolute standard by which right and wrong is determined and to whom all of us are accountable.

And even if you say you do not believe in such categories as right or wrong, let some high ranking person in your company dip in your retirement account, or let someone molest one of your children, and I guarantee you that your sense of right and wrong will come upon like an armed man, and your sense of justice will rise up like a warrior prepared for battle. If we are honest, our culture wants the benefits of the Judeo-Christian ethic without a commitment to the God of the ethic. We cannot have it both ways. To try to have both is hypocrisy and is intellectually dishonest. These are my thoughts and I am Winfred Neely for Prime Time America.