

Integrated or Compartmentalized?

It has happened again, a sportsperson's private life has invaded his public life and another furious storm of controversy has erupted. A high profile college basketball coach has found his indiscretions from six years ago suddenly coming to light with brutal clarity and startling consequences. The details are still coming out in the mass media of his adulterous affair, the resulting pregnancy and the payment for an abortion, all leading to accusations of extortion by the formerly pregnant adulteress.

The radio talk shows, newspaper columns, blogs, web sites and television shows are all speculating about whether the coach should be fired, should resign or should be given a total pass. The whole sports world seems confused by the facts and their feelings of betrayal, moral outrage, disappointment and more. They do all this without any real basis for making moral judgments. Confusion reigns. Many of these people are classic secularists and would strongly hold to a highly compartmentalized world-view. They still want to make moral judgments, even though they only have arbitrary bases for making them.

Bottom line – they, like the coach, have fallen into a trap of their own making. At the core of the dilemma is that we only get one life. Our private life, our public life, our work life, our Church life, our love life, our family life, our fill-in-the-blank life will keep bumping into the other areas of life because, in reality, we only have one life. As much as we may want to compartmentalize and to keep these various areas of life separate, they will invariably each invade the others. The compartmentalization is a self-deluding illusion. We rationalize and convince ourselves that these various facets of life don't directly affect the others, but in doing so we make fools of ourselves, sooner or later. Sometimes six years later.

So what are we to do? Live a life of integrity. Be the same person all the time. Rather than living as if our lives are lived in separate compartments with no overlap, we must have our life's vision and values fully integrated into all areas of our lives. Let's choose to be the same person all the time. Let's be the same people on the field of competition that we are while tucking our children into

bed. Let's hold to the same ethical standards at work on Tuesday that we would at church on Sunday. Let's apply the same moral standards to our lives as we do with those we follow from afar in the sport world. Let's be like diamonds, multifaceted and wholly integrated. Let's not be like filing cabinets, compartmentalized and foolishly disconnected.

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