

Does a Prurient Public Deserve the Truth about Marital Infidelity?

No, I think not. Like almost everybody else, I would either be silent or lie if asked the personal question nobody has a right to ask. I suppose I would lie if I had anything to cover up.

But because I have nothing sexual to cover up, I have never been tempted to lie. I'm a virgin (except within my one marriage), and I'm now in my nineties.

Of course I'm a Jimmy-Carter-type adulterer (in Jesus' radical sense: nonmarital sexual attraction "in my heart" [Matthew 5:28]). Jesus was warning against sexual fixations outside of marriage. You can't keep the birds from flying over your head, but you can keep them from building nests in your hair.

As I have done openly in light of my personal sexual history, everyone responding to this "On Faith" questioning will do - whether or not openly:

"Another politician (John Edwards) has admitted to having an extramarital affair, and another spouse (Elizabeth Edwards) has been forgiving. At what point does a person of faith cease to forgive? At what point does forgiveness become destructive?"

1 --- If the second question intends only to explicate the first, my response is this: Stop forgiving as soon as you believe that further forgiving would be destructive. But the advice is nullified if you believe, as I do, that forgiveness threatens to destroy only what needs to be destroyed so that higher values will not be violated. As the Bible puts it, everything is to be shaken "so that what cannot be shaken may remain" (Hebrews 12:27).

2 --- "At no point" is the Bible's answer to the question, "At what point does a person of faith cease to forgive?" In both Testaments, God is always not only ready but also eager to forgive askers for forgiveness (the one condition being, says Jesus in Matthew 6:15, the asker's willingness to forgive others). / An Old Testament prophet's sexual history demonstrates God's eagerness to forgive. Every time his wife runs off with another man, Hosea - at the cost of personal dignity - runs after her and begs her to come home. His love is too strong: he just cannot give her up. God's people (says this prophet) have abandoned him for idols; but God says (Hosea 11:8), "How can I give you up, Israel? My love will not let me do it! My love for you is too strong." God is *holy love*. As holy, he must be Judge; but even in judging, he is Lover, at the cost of personal dignity. / The New Testament bears the same message, intensifying it with God's incarnation in Jesus. In Jesus' parable of the Prodigal Son, the loving father, at the cost of personal dignity, runs and embraces his homecoming profligate. And when Jesus is asked specifically how many times one should forgive, maybe even seven times, his response playfully remained in the arithmetic vein: 77 times or 490 times (or make that $70 \times 70 = 4,900$ times: he laughed at the calculating mentality, as I did when I read the current "On Faith" questions). (Matthew 18:22 may be translated "seventy-seven" or "seventy times seven.") We say 1-2-3. But God's forgiveness cannot count: he says 1-1-1.

3 --- Does anyone deserve the truth who asks a personal question that should not be asked? If one responds, "That's personal," the asker, motivated by prurience or by profit by publishing pabulum for a prurient public, will assume the worst and so publish. To prevent this, almost all victims who have something to conceal will lie. The truth is that the question should not have been asked, and the lie serves this truth.

4 --- "Monica Lewinsky," l'affaire Clinton, was a prurience case that cost the President of the United States a half year of distraction from public business, and a legal case that cost us taxpayers \$70 million. The money-hungry media made millions from the scandal, which presented a highly skilled lawyer as a highly skilled liar, the latter allegedly proved by a spot on a blue dress. The irony is that he was not lying when he said, under oath, "I did not have sex with that woman." In American street-language (and among his fellow Southern Baptists), to "have sex" means penile-vaginal linkage. He was, I believe honestly, denying this penetration.

5 --- Now view l'affaire Edwards in light of the horror and high costs of l'affaire Clinton. In terror, they lied even to themselves. We human beings are so limited in so many ways, but not in our ability to rationalize our behavior. From 2006 on until not many days ago, John and Elizabeth Edwards were able to rationalize their suppression

of his former extramarital relationship. And it is as silly, and as nosy, to say what Elizabeth should have done upon discovery of John's unfaithfulness as it was to say what Hillary should have done.

6 --- Monogamy is natural for swans but not for our species. But since monogamy is the highest and the only egalitarian male-female sexual relationship, marital faithfulness is a fight against nature. (We are born primates with the unnatural potential of becoming human beings.) Nature-worshippers "naturally" oppose monogamy. The Bible tells the story of humanity's evolution from polygamy to monogamy, and the biblical ideal still so penetrates the American mind that prominent failures to maintain monogamy rivet public attention. This phenomenon is itself a scandal of the present sex-sated American mind, soap-opera sex moved to the front page for exposure and entertainment.

7 --- Maritally unfaithful men and women pay a high price for their "natural" behavior. Our society is hypocritical in encouraging natural sexual behavior (especially in commercial advertising and entertainment) while condemning it in politicians.

BY WILLIS E. ELLIOTT | AUGUST 25, 2008; 6:28 AM ETSAVE & SHARE:        

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ECLA

POSTED BY: ANONYMOUS | AUGUST 28, 2008 5:22 PM
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A D V I C E: Sample, On WHAT TO DO NEXT:

Remember: Do-Not fix what is NOT BROKEN & thus only prevent from being broken & Think Globally & thus act Locally!

Note: The U.S. should Isolate Itself for 3-Years!

PS: It is now time to clean-out or pull-out alot of our U.S. Prison Population [2.2 Million, imagine the Voter potentiate Blocks] by giving many, who linger needlessly in OUR 'Puss-Hole' SYSTEM,

[because of self aggrandizing judgeships or ridiculous stale un-uniform or uniform Laws, omitting or denying DNA testingetc] THAT

Since many (majority) are Black, and so, the New white house Prez, Black & White ,Administration of 2009 should 'alot' AMNESTY or Once in a Life-Time PARDON(s), and Not across the board Amnesty's like the Bushes Admin, hath unjustly given 'illegal Immigrants' [Foreigners from the Near Abroad] time & time again!

POSTED BY: ANONYMOUS | AUGUST 28, 2008 5:02 PM
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Live From Coney Island N.Y., A white ISRAELi-American raised by black African-Americans:

">http://> t//h//a//n//k//s////////O

Many of the more intelligent posters seem to have gone away.

POSTED BY: DANIEL IN THE LION'S DEN | AUGUST 26, 2008 10:29 AM
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I could not agree more. Fact is, politicians are human just like the rest of us. So many people tend to try and hold their leaders to a higher standard than they themselves are willing to live up too. This always ends in disaster.

POSTED BY: C. M. KEEL, SR | AUGUST 26, 2008 7:17 AM
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"Nature-worshippers "naturally" oppose monogamy. "

Actually they don't. I'm a perfect example. Been with one person for ten years, married for five and have never dreamed of being with anyone else. What others do is not my business. Is monogamy natural? In some cases yes. In some others, no. So what? That's got nothing to do with me.

Don't tell someone who isn't like you what 'they' believe.

And on this:

"I'm a virgin (except within my one marriage)"

makes you celibate, not a virgin.

POSTED BY: RIA | AUGUST 25, 2008 5:26 PM
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McCain's first marriage resulted in divorce. The history is not a plus for JM.

From: http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2008/06/09/john-mccains-first-wife-s_n_106021.html?page=2

"McCain likes to illustrate his moral fibre by referring to his five years as a prisoner-of-war in Vietnam. And to demonstrate his commitment to family values, the 71-year-old former US Navy pilot pays warm tribute to his beautiful blonde wife, Cindy, with whom he has four children.

But there is another Mrs McCain who casts a ghostly shadow over the Senator's presidential campaign. She is seldom seen and rarely written about, despite being mother to McCain's three eldest children.

And yet, had events turned out differently, it would be she, rather than Cindy, who would be vying to be First Lady. She is McCain's first wife, Carol, who was a famous beauty and a successful swimwear model when they married in 1965.

She was the woman McCain dreamed of during his long incarceration and torture in Vietnam's infamous 'Hanoi Hilton' prison and the woman who faithfully stayed at home looking after the children and waiting anxiously for news.

But when McCain returned to America in 1973 to a fanfare of publicity and a handshake from Richard Nixon, he discovered his wife had been disfigured in a terrible car crash three years earlier. Her car had skidded on icy roads into a telegraph pole on Christmas Eve, 1969. Her pelvis and one arm were shattered by the impact and she suffered massive internal injuries.

When Carol was discharged from hospital after six months of life-saving surgery, the prognosis was bleak. In order to save her legs, surgeons had been forced to cut away huge sections of shattered bone, taking with it her tall, willowy figure. She was confined to a wheelchair and was forced to use a catheter.

Through sheer hard work, Carol learned to walk again. But when John McCain came home from Vietnam, she had gained a lot of weight and bore little resemblance to her old self.

Today, she stands at just 5ft4in and still walks awkwardly, with a pronounced limp. Her body is held together by screws and metal plates and, at 70, her face is worn by wrinkles that speak of decades of silent suffering.

For nearly 30 years, Carol has maintained a dignified silence about the accident, McCain and their divorce. But last week at the bungalow where she now lives at Virginia Beach, a faded seaside resort 200 miles south of Washington, she told The Mail on Sunday how McCain divorced her in 1980 and married Cindy, 18 years his junior and the heir to an Arizona brewing fortune, just one month later.

Carol insists she remains on good terms with her ex-husband, who agreed as part of their divorce settlement to pay her medical costs for life. 'I have no bitterness,'

she says. 'My accident is well recorded. I had 23 operations, I am five inches shorter than I used to be and I was in hospital for six months. It was just awful, but it wasn't the reason for my divorce.

'My marriage ended because John McCain didn't want to be 40, he wanted to be 25. You know that happens...it just does.'

Some of McCain's acquaintances are less forgiving, however. They portray the politician as a self-centred womaniser who effectively abandoned his crippled wife to 'play the field'. They accuse him of finally settling on Cindy, a former rodeo beauty queen, for financial reasons."

Do the five years in a Vietnamese POW camp where he suffered significant and brutal interrogation and his 17 military awards get him off the "thou shalt not comment adultery", "thou shalt not cheat" and marriage vows' hook???

No it does not!!!!

I might just write-in General Colin Powell's name as my presidential choice slot as BO's religious history is more than disturbing.

POSTED BY: CONCERNED THE CHRISTIAN NOW LIBERATED | AUGUST 25, 2008 4:12 PM
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I really only care when the politician involved is also trying to dictate a 'morality' he's not living up to.... and, frankly, Edwards isn't even running. It's a diversion from McCain's own cheating and *abandonment* of his wife for a wealthier and younger one after her car accident.

Cheating... does happen, particularly in a culture that represses sexuality in the first place, turning a marriage into, in fact, a battle against the natural instincts Rev. Elliot mentions.

I don't consider it my business, but from what you can't help but hear, Mr. and Mrs. Edwards *worked it out.* That's how these things sometimes go.

Hypocrisy in a politician concerns me. Someone trying to extirpate their own conflicts and senses of 'sin' by using government to control others, concerns me.

The media turning itself into an unwilling public confessional just for the sake of pretending people have the right to moralize about absolutes that really aren't the norm in so many regular folks' lives, ...Well, that's voicing concerns I don't share. And I don't think it serves the public good.

If it's about forgiveness, it appears Mrs. Edwards has.... and that's her business.

Isn't there, like, anything *important* going on right around now?

POSTED BY: PAGANPLACE | AUGUST 25, 2008 1:04 PM
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We must judge those running for leadership positions. A person who cheats on his wife or husband cannot be trusted. Those who cheat on a sick wife or husband multiply the distrust and are even more unfit for leadership positions.

POSTED BY: CONCERNED THE CHRISTIAN NOW LIBERATED | AUGUST 25, 2008 11:39 AM
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Good column, Rev.

POSTED BY: MR MARK | AUGUST 13, 2008 3:58 PM
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