

Tiger Woods: Role Model?

by Wayne Goff

Yes, Tiger Woods is a role model of a different kind!

Tiger Woods stood before millions of TV viewers last Friday and admitted that he was a man of character flaws who needed to come clean with the public. In admitting that he was a “closet adulterer” (Jay Mariotti’s words), he was admitting that he had been living a lie. The public perception of Mr. Woods was one of a moral, family man. He was anything but that as we learned last November!

Tiger admitted himself into a sex-addiction clinic. He is going through that clinic’s version of the “Twelve Steps.” He is learning to take complete responsibility for his actions. He told the world: “I was unfaithful. I had affairs. I cheated. What I did was unacceptable, and I am the only person to blame.” That is fantastic, and is exactly how people should deal with their sins. How many people -- even Christians -- refuse to blame themselves for their own sins? In this, Tiger is a role model for everyone else.

Again, Tiger said: “For all I have done, I am so sorry. I have a lot to atone for.” In reality, Tiger may yet lose his wife and children. He has already lost lots of money and two corporate sponsors. He has lost the respect of the public, and will try to earn all of this back. But none of us can truly “atone” for our sins! Sadly, Tiger confessed to being a Buddhist who had slipped away from his religion. Buddhism does not have Jesus Christ as the atonement for sin. Jesus Christ alone can make atonement, see Rom. 3:23-26, et. al.

To “atone” means to “make reparations for wrongs done.” Perhaps Tiger can make some reparations with his family and friends, and in time earn back their trust, respect, and honor. But sadly there will always be an asterisk beside his name now, if not on the legends of golf, then certainly on his legacy in time.

Interestingly, Tiger admitted to the mind-set that led him down his woeful path. He said that having worked so hard and so long to become rich and famous, he felt “entitled” to enjoy the temptations around him. He said further: “I convinced myself that normal rules didn’t apply to me. I thought only about myself...” I find these remarks brutally honest. Tiger has spent the last three months doing some serious soul-searching. Again, how many of us wish only to get away quickly from our sins and go on living as though nothing has changed? How refreshing to see a young man realize that his sinful life was caused by his own character flaws!

As for “entitlement,” if the world’s first billion dollar athlete isn’t entitled to sin, then who is? The truth of the matter is that this world owes us nothing. God owes us nothing. We deserve nothing. Human life is only valuable when we realize that we are made in the image of God (Gen. 1:27). Human life is only valuable when we turn to God for help for our sins (Rom. 3:9-18). Human life is only valuable when it is lived for the Lord Jesus Christ (Gal. 2:20). Short of that, as Solomon said, “Vanity of vanities, all is vanity” (Eccl. 1:2). A great lesson to be learned from Tiger is that none of us is entitled to anything. Until we learn that lesson, we will never get back on the right track. Tiger understands that now. Good for him.

Tiger explained: “I was wrong. I was foolish. I don’t get to play by different rules. The same boundaries that apply to everyone apply to me.”

Of course, my question is “What are those rules?” Our society largely rejects the Bible but admits that there are rules we must live by. That would make for an interesting public discussion.

Yes, Tiger Woods is a new role model now.

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