

Sex and the married senator

by Cal_Thomas

Jay Leno and David Letterman never run out of material when they are making fun of politicians, especially when it involves sex and hypocrisy. After years of beating up on Bill Clinton for his sexual indiscretions, the late-night comedians are spending equal time chortling about Republicans who have been caught with their pants down. Their latest target is Sen. David Vitter, a Louisiana Republican. Vitter is an easy target for those looking to play "pin the hypocrite tail on the elephant." He's a lector in his local Catholic Church and he has been associated with the Family Research Council, the political offshoot of Dr. James Dobson's Focus on the Family. Pictures of a woman said to be the prostitute with whom Vitter reportedly had a relationship are posted on various Websites. The first reaction one should have is not laughter, but sadness, sadness for him, his wife and their four children. Vitter let down his family in order to feed a lower nature that resides in all of us. Is there anything sadder than a child who no longer sees his father as having good character, or a wife whose trust has been shattered? The second reaction is how could he have been so stupid? In the Internet age when Larry Flynt offers \$1 million to anyone who can provide evidence of people in high places engaging in base behavior, the biblical warning "be sure your sin will find you out" rings even more true. Not all sins are exposed in this life, but the higher the profile, the more likely exposure will occur, especially if it involves our national preoccupation with sex. Laughing at others, especially over adultery, is the ultimate cover-up. It keeps us from focusing on our lower nature, which used to be called sinful before we all became "dysfunctional." Once, we repented and confessed to God such things, if we did them, or sought God's power in order to protect us from such behavior. Today, we issue press releases, consult advisers, take medication, or check into rehab. Those yukking it up seem oblivious of their own potential to follow in Vitter's footsteps, as many have done before. Whatever happened to the humbling expression, "There, but for the grace of God, go I?"

While sexual escapades have always been with us, we now seem to have a bipolar approach to such behavior. On the one hand we condemn it, at least when it is practiced by someone who preaches "family values," or is identified with a party that promotes morality; on the other hand we promote, especially in the media, what we simultaneously decry. Some in Congress stand up for family values, while they lie down with prostitutes. Their rhetoric may add to the cultural debate, but their behavior nullifies any credibility they might expect to enjoy. Anyone who can't impose morality on himself is unlikely to be successful in legislating it for others. God called the ancient Israelites a "wicked and adulterous generation." In context, that meant they lusted after false gods, worshipping and following idols made of wood and gold instead of the real thing. Today in America, adultery is no longer regarded as a big deal, except for those hurt by a cheating partner. Laws have been so watered down in many states that while an adulterous partner in a marriage might sue for divorce on grounds of sexual infidelity, increasing numbers of family courts do not penalize the cheating partner when it comes to alimony and other financial considerations, or even child custody. Cheating wives can still win custody or joint custody of their children. Whether one commits adultery with a White House intern, or a prostitute, it's all the same and it isn't funny, except for the hypocrisy part. Sex is a powerful force. It can bond, or it can destroy. In our culture, sex has been used as a commodity to make lots of money and in doing so it has mortgaged the souls of those who use it irresponsibly. Ask Sen. David Vitter, who is now making his mortgage payments - in public humiliation and private shame. (Direct all MAIL for Cal Thomas to: Tribune Media Services, 2225 Kenmore Ave., Suite 114, Buffalo, N.Y. 14207. Readers may also e-mail Cal Thomas at tmseditors@tribune.com.) (c) 2007 Tribune Media Services, Inc.

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