

# From the Desk of Tom Nelson:

## The Hope of Hypocrisy

There is something about the world that has always amused me and that is its total hypocrisy. Now mind you, "hypocrisy" is the moral darling of the pagan. It is the ideal that has justified a billion renunciations of the notion of Christianity. From the massive heinousness of the Crusades and Inquisition to the pastor who spends too much time on his hair – our culture goes after moral inconsistency like sharks to blood. As a matter of fact, not being a hypocrite gives men a sense of justification before God. "I may be a drunk and an immoral one but at least I'm not a hypocrite!" Nothing is more contemptible to our culture than hypocrisy.

And yet hypocrisy is the cardinal attribute of modern culture. It is so deeply ingrained that we never notice it. The only way that our culture can maintain any decency is by universal hypocrisy. If for a moment we lived out consistently our atheism, relativism, and toleration of all ideas, our civilization would resemble an apocalyptic horror scenario. We maintain a culture by rules, morals, justice, and demanded social behavior – in other words by all of those divine, monotheistic, Trinitarian, Judeo-Christian virtues which we scorn in the vacuum of theory.

Every man can act on his own freedom and absence of moral absolutes until Tiger Woods is found to be a liar and philanderer. Suppose Tiger said, "So I like women. Lots of 'em!" Think that would've washed? Suppose O. J. had said of his ex-wife's 911 calls, "Hey I get irritated and get violent. Don't judge me. Beating women is my prerogative." Suppose Nixon had said during Watergate, "So I lied. Who can say if there is truth?" All these answers are consistent with the secular, God renouncing, "man as the measure of all things", secular world view of our day. Views that are marvelous in classrooms but evaporate in the heat and bright light of reality. In the real world of expectations and relationships and business transactions and loved ones and pain we become 17th century English Puritans in our demands. We may be as left as San Francisco in theory but on the street we are as right as Scottish Presbyterians. To act otherwise would be seen as insane and dangerous.

In other words, our culture can exist in the matrix of its denials only through hypocrisy. When the famous visit orphanages or men race into danger to save others, or when men sacrificially give for others to live, or when one's child displays honesty or kindness – we become warmed to the soles of our feet and say "there is hope!" Blessed blinded hypocrisy.

Fascinating isn't it that the hope of our culture is that the horror of the logical conclusions of what we embrace is avoided by the inconsistent boundaries and longings of that system which we loathe and reject.

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