

The Sin of Hypocrisy

I have always tried to follow the teachings of my faith, which include the directive to “judge not, that ye be not judged.” (Matthew, 7:1) This important scripture instructs us to accept the fact that human beings are flawed, that we all make mistakes, and we must not judge one another too harshly. While I do my very best to embrace this concept of compassion and understanding, I can't help but be angry every time yet another story breaks where a married politician who touts himself as a pillar of faith and morality gets caught up in a sordid sex scandal. Once caught, the guilty inevitably release a humble statement, admitting their adulterous transgression, and begging for forgiveness from God and their loved ones.

This frustrates me even more, because in cases like these, adultery is not their greatest sin—hypocrisy is, and there never seems to be any remorse or acknowledgement of that.

Earlier this week, U.S. Representative Vance McAllister (R-Louisiana) was the latest example of this ever-growing do-as-I-say, not-as-I-do club, when he was [busted on video](#) for cheating with a married staffer in his congressional office. During his campaign last year, McAllister repeatedly presented himself as a devout Christian with strong family values. His wife and five children were [featured prominently in his Congressional campaign](#): in television ads, he even lamented that if elected to Congress, it would mean spending time away from his beloved family, but it was a sacrifice he was willing to make in order to bring “wholesome Louisiana values” to Washington.

How noble that sounds, until you consider that another of his primary campaign platforms was opposing marriage rights for homosexuals. This is a man who willfully exploited his own marriage for political gain, and then set about actively working to enact laws that would keep others from experiencing that same bond with the person they love. He seeks to deny others the right to pledge a lifelong vow of fidelity, while secretly violating his own.

Faced with [undeniable video evidence](#), Rep. McAllister admitted his misstep, and predictably issued an impassioned plea for forgiveness from God, his wife, his family, his staff and his constituents. Thus far, he has refused to step down, although he had no problem [quickly accepting the resignation of the staffer](#) with whom he had an inappropriate relationship. That's odd....I don't recall God giving Adam a pass to stick around the Garden of Eden while Eve packed her bags and headed off into exile...why does McAllister expect one?

Perhaps it's because McAllister is just the latest in a string of hypocritical politicians who are all too eager to hold others to a standard that they themselves refuse to meet. There was former Idaho Senator Larry Craig, the staunch conservative who fought vigorously against gay rights, infamously caught “toe-tapping” in a restroom, [allegedly looking to solicit gay sex](#). In 2010, Rep. Mark Souder (R-Indiana), a vocal advocate for abstinence and family values, [stepped down in disgrace](#) after admitting to an extramarital affair with a staffer. Then there's Rep. David Drier (R-California), who was the subject of [an award-winning documentary about hypocrisy in politics](#), after it was discovered that he repeatedly voted against gay rights bills at the same time he was allegedly carrying on [a homosexual affair with one of his staffers](#).

Of course, such hypocritical behavior is not strictly limited to conservative Republicans. Who can forget married politician Anthony Weiner (D-New York), who got busted in 2011 [*sending half-naked selfies*](#) to women on Twitter? He eventually stepped down, but not before appearing in front of the media, with his wife, [*Huma Abedin*](#), dutifully at his side, a shining example of the forgiveness he sought from the public. Just two years later, Weiner had the hubris to attempt a political comeback, running for Mayor of New York City in 2013. He claimed to be a changed man, recommitted to his wife and their new child, only to be caught *again*, [*sexting with three different women*](#).

No one can say for sure why so many politicians engage in scandalous private behavior that is in direct conflict with their wholesome public image, but after my years of working in politics and witnessing this common phenomenon, I have a theory. I believe that once legislators realize they have the power to mold and shape and change the laws that govern our land, their personal sense of right and wrong becomes malleable, too. The law is no longer seen as an absolute: it is fluid and ever-changing, and they are the ones in control. That sort of power can quickly go to a person's head, feed an already inflated ego, and lead to a delusionary sense of being "above the law."

McAllister has every right to seek forgiveness for his actions, and for the sake of his family, I hope that he is able to move forward in his personal life and have a happy future. I just wish they he and others like him would stop judging the life choices of those that differ from theirs, and stop trying to impose such strict moral standards on others, when they can't—or won't—adhere to those values themselves.

Do you think McAllister should resign from Congress over this scandal?



About Lisa Yakomin

Lisa Yakomin, a national freelance writer for over 25 years, has been actively involved in politics and government since her first stint as a campaign volunteer at 10 years old. She recently served as a senior aide in the New Jersey State Legislature, and continues to advocate for a variety of social and political causes.