

The Overlooked Victims of the Tiger Woods Scandal

✖ Two people have been overlooked in the middle of the Tiger Woods scandal. The consequences of his actions upon their lives will only be seen years down the road. Of course, I am referring to his children.

Family breakdown is not limited to celebrities or the rich and famous. I know this all too well. Growing up in a middle-class home where there were nine divorces between my mother, father and step-father, I sat front row and center and watched addiction, discord and conflict tear my family apart.

My parents were separated when I was three and divorced when I was nine, and my mom remarried someone 32 years older than her.

My dad made ends meet as a bartender for more than 50 years, and my mom struggled with alcoholism. As a teenager, I saw my dad for a few hours twice a month.

My story may seem to be an extreme example of family dysfunction, but it's not unique. It has been widely reported that roughly half the marriages in America end in divorce. According to , about 43 percent of the adults in this country have a family history of alcoholism.

Clearly, tens of millions of U.S.

households endure the pain of family dysfunction. Sadly, in many cases, the children suffer tragic consequences.

In Exodus 20:5, God sees the destructive patterns that parents inadvertently pass on to their children. Vicious cycles begin, and ultimately the children pay the price for poor parental choices.

But there is a path to healing for Tiger Woods' family and others like it. Tens of millions of families around the world, including mine, have found that four words point them in the right direction: integrity, forgiveness, wisdom and discipline.

- Integrity is the foundation for every decent relationship. When the family breaks down, there is only one way to rebuild it. Unless we are honest with those we love, we cannot repair the damage. Integrity leads to trust, and trust is the most essential quality in any relationship. God trusts a heart of integrity (see 1 Kings 9:4, 5), and if He trusts a good heart, most others will as well.
- Forgiveness allows us to break free from the bitterness of the past and to embrace the hope for a better future (Luke 6:37). Bitterness and lack of forgiveness are the poisons we drink hoping that someone else will die. The one who winds up dead, though, is the one who consistently sips the poison. In order to break the cycle, we must choose to forgive (regardless of whether we stay in

the relationship or not) in order to become healthy. Forgiveness isn't just letting the other person off the hook. It releases us from the toxic emotions that keep us in a cycle of pain and agony.

- Just because we embrace integrity and forgiveness doesn't ensure that we will make wise choices along the way. That is why wisdom is so important. God offers His wisdom freely to all who ask for it (James 1:5). Being wise enables us to make the best choices for our families and loved ones, and it enables us to make the choices that will bring healing in the most effective manner.
- Finally, when faced with adversity, we need to find the discipline (strength) to put into practice what we know is good and wise. Every person needs Godly strength in order to overcome temptation, discouragement, depression, and, yes, even addiction. Whether you're Tiger Woods or an average person, you need God's help.

If Tiger and his wife (and every other married couple in America) put into practice these principles, they will move well beyond the barriers that have afflicted their marriage. And they will usher in a whole new era of blessing for the greatest assets they have, their two precious children.

Since 1995, my family has made huge strides in overcoming the dysfunction that paralyzed us. My

mom began a
relationship with God that empowered her to break the chains
of alcoholism and
addiction. If my family can break the barriers that held us
back, there is hope
for every family that yearns for a new day.

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Your
Greatest Potential.