

The Leftist Attacks on Pence's Moral Guidelines Are a Denial of Human Nature

The left's bizarre and almost hysterical reaction to Vice President Pence's personal marital guidelines is not only totally off point. It actually misses the most essential point of all, namely, that it is Pence's high esteem for women—specifically, the most important woman in his life, his own wife—that fuels his moral choices. At the same time, the leftist response reveals a glaring blind spot when it comes to self-awareness.

The uproar began last week when the *Washington Post* published Ashley Parker's article, "Karen Pence is the vice president's 'prayer warrior,' gut check and shield."

The title of this article points to the important role Karen Pence plays in her husband's life, which one would think would draw praise from the feminists and the leftists. But no, because of their high moral ethic (and because Mike Pence is, after all, the Vice President of Donald Trump), the article drew rabid responses, including Laura Chapin's call on *US News* to "lock him up" (seriously).

Most of the criticism focused on the revelation that, "In 2002, Mike Pence told the Hill that he never eats alone with a woman other than his wife and that he won't attend events featuring alcohol without her by his side, either."

Chapin, a Democratic strategist, responded with this diatribe:

Then lock him up. Because if your only concept of women is whether you want to have sex with them, something is seriously wrong with you. It presumes women exist only in terms of how men define and perceive them, without autonomy

or self-determination. Women exist solely for procreation, which is to be determined and directed by men.

Memo to Mike Pence and the other right-wing men: Women come in more categories than prey and invisible. And none of them want to have sex with you.

Still breathing fire, she concluded her article with this:

Whether Pence is in a room with a single woman is silly but irrelevant. What matters is the millions of American women, and women abroad, to whom his retrograde beliefs and policies pose a threat. (She was also referring here to the fact that "Pence broke a tie in the Senate to OK legislation allowing states to bar Planned Parenthood from getting public health grants.")

Not to be outdone, Bret Stephens of the *Wall Street Journal* tweeted, "The calling card of all religious fundamentalism: terror of women," with reference to the tweet of Danish journalist Martin Burcharth: "How different [sic] is VP from Orthodox Muslim men? Mike Pence doesn't eat alone with women."

On my own Twitter feed, Susan wrote, "Christians will criticize Muslim women for wearing hijabs, but Pence would exclude their presence altogether. That oppression is OK though."

Over at , attorney Joanna L. Grossman opined that, "[T]he practice described by Pence in that 2002 interview is clearly illegal when practiced by a boss in an employment setting, and deeply damaging to women's employment opportunities."

Also at , although in more moderate tones, a female, evangelical university professor suggested that "good character is better than strict rules," as if the two were necessarily in conflict. To the contrary, good character often results in strict rules, although strict rules themselves

hardly produce good character.

The reality is that Mike Pence is exercising good, old-fashioned common sense, something that is increasingly rare these days.

Pence recognizes that it's very easy for human beings to fall into temptation, and he made clear that he's seen all too many marriages destroyed during his years in politics: "I've lost more elections than I've won. I've seen friends lose their families. I'd rather lose an election. ... Little old ladies come and say, 'Honey, whatever you need to do, keep your family together.'"

What happens when you spend more time with a woman other than your wife? What happens when you share your victories and sorrows with someone other than your spouse? What happens when you put in late hours together, behind closed doors, leaning on one other for support? (One of Pence's guidelines was never to work late alone with a female aide.)

The reality is that many, if not most affairs, begin with an emotional attachment rather than a physical attachment, and it is the latter that grows out of the former, given the nature of male-female chemistry.

And let's remember that Pence is not only protecting himself and his wife Karen. He's also protecting the women who work for him, not allowing them to look to him in ways that would be inappropriate and closing the door on the possibility of stumbling for either of them. (If I recall, President Clinton had a bit of a problem with one of his female interns.)

And just imagine what could happen if Pence was accused of sexual impropriety. As one of my Twitter followers observed, "The same liberals would be quick to judge and condemn him if he were to be involved in a sexual act outside of his marriage."

In light of these fairly straightforward observations, one can only wonder why so many on the left are reacting so harshly to Pence's practical guidelines. Are marriages so solid that safeguards are unnecessary? Is there a need to increase adultery in America? Should we declare war on fidelity?

As Frank Camp wrote on the *Daily Wire*, "Elected officials in Washington, D.C. are just as flawed as any other human being. Additionally, men and women in positions of power are more frequently the target of unwanted advances, unsubstantiated accusations, and tabloid speculation. Given the environment in which elected officials live, the limitations Pence applies to himself are admirable and prudent."

Camp is absolutely correct, and I for one am glad to have guard rails on the sides of mountainous roads (or, for that matter, concrete medians in the center of a six-lane highways), and the most conscientious drivers I know are the first to put on their seat belts. As the old adage goes, "An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure." Or, in the words of the apostle Paul, "Therefore let him who thinks that he stands take heed, lest he fall" (1 Cor. 10:12).

That's exactly what Mike Pence has done, recognizing that overconfidence kills. Many on the left, perhaps in denial of the sinfulness of human nature, must concoct a different explanation for Pence's moral guidelines, thereby revealing another aspect of our fallen nature, namely, the ability to deceive ourselves about who we really are.

Sometimes it's painful to look in the mirror. {eoa}