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The saddest part of Weingate: America's reaction to it

By [Bob Reccord](#) 5:10 PM 06/12/2011

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To me, the most shocking thing about the Weingate scandal has been people's reaction to it. The prevailing sentiment seems to be that while it was wrong for Rep. Anthony Weiner to send [photos of](#) himself to women he met on the Internet, the worst part is that he lied about it.

While I agree that it is terrible that Anthony Weiner lied repeatedly to his constituents, I am deeply troubled that many Americans seems to totally miss that there is a far more basic trust that has been shattered by Rep. Weiner — the sacred trust of the marriage vow.

I believe this is another tragic [symptom](#) of the attack on traditional marriage. We have reduced marriage in America to a *contract* rather than how God established it, which was as a *covenant*. Christianity and Judaism alike hold marriage to be a covenant before God, not simply a contract with the state.

And there is a vast difference between contracts and covenants. Contracts are based on a lack of trust;

covenants are based on trust. Contracts are based on “limited liability”; covenants are based on understood responsibility. Contracts can be voided by a court or by mutual consent; covenants are not meant to be voided by circumstances. People enter contracts to protect their own rights; people enter covenants to protect the other party’s rights.

When I officiate at weddings, I share the importance of the covenant as the biblical model of marriage and explain why each part of the traditional wedding occurs as it does and how each reflects an element of the biblical-based covenant. What amazes and saddens me is how many people come up to me after the ceremonies and say, “That was so enlightening. Why haven’t we heard that before?” Or, “I would give anything if that had been included in my wedding.” Yet again, “If only I had understood that before my own marriage crashed and burned!”

A core element of a covenant is that it must be based on truth and trust. It is here that I believe Mr. Weiner’s greatest breakdown occurred. He broke the covenant of truth and trust with his wife, who is presently bearing their child. And contrary to most situational ethics proponents, it *DOES* make a great difference what one does in private and it *DOES* affect what one will likely do in public. Ask yourself: Is it logical to think that someone who will lie to their spouse in private will not be tempted to lie to people in public? If one can be dishonest at home with the one who took them “for better or for worse,” are they not likely to twist the truth to those they represent in office?

Right now, I’m grieving for Weiner, his wife, and his constituents, who have some hard questions before them, though I am baffled that a recent poll indicates that close to 60% of Weiner’s constituents think he should be able to remain their representative. But I fear that the greatest tragedy is that we have eviscerated the institution of marriage as a culture, removing the element of covenant, and thus breaking down the foundational base of our society. For if the violation of truth and trust in a marriage is not seen as more tragic than the violation of truth to the media and trust to constituents, could it be that our society is close to being so broken that it is beyond repair?

Dr. Bob Reccord serves as Executive Director of the Council for National Policy, and is a national speaker and author. One of his top-selling books, Beneath the Surface, speaks to marital fidelity. He recently spoke at the Faith and Freedom Coalition National Conference.

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