

# **The “Gospel” of “Magic”**

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In the 1980s, “Magic” Johnson obtained great fame and wealth by his basketball exploits with the Los Angeles Lakers. He has been named one of the fifty greatest basketball players of all time. In 1991, he contracted the HIV virus, which forced his immediate and premature retirement when he was at the top of his game. He tried a comeback later, but never achieved his former level of play and soon gave it up for good. While we can sorrow for him because of his illness, the implications of this matter should cause us much deeper sorrow. He became an HIV/AIDS advocate, and began preaching what he termed his “gospel.”

He had heretofore kept his name free of scandal relating to gambling, sex, drugs, or violence in which so many professional athletes become involved. His broad, natural smile made him likeable even to strangers. He presented himself as an unusually wholesome hero for young people who idolized him. Now he has freely admitted his sexual promiscuity as the source of his infection, and his wholesomeness has been forever tarnished to those who still have any moral standards. Worse, however, despite his sexual immorality, he remained the hero and role model for millions of youngsters.

His “gospel” (as he describes it) is a message of “safe sex.” Loosely translated this means go ahead and behave like an alley cat in satisfying your sexual passions, just take the “necessary precautions” to decrease the chance of infection. Go ahead, commit fornication any time, and with anyone anywhere as long as you do it “safely.” You see, committing fornication with perhaps several hundred women was a minor matter—even beside the point; his great fault was in failing to protect himself and his “partner” against disease.

I sorrow over the quick praise for “Magic’s” safe sex “gospel.” Such public acceptance indicated (and indicates) the corrupted and flawed view of God, of marriage and the family, of the Bible, and of moral standards abroad in our nation. And “Magic” is only one among many sports and entertainment figures whom youngsters idolize. The news media, complicit in the amoral/secular culture that has steadily made headway over the last half-century, have almost made him a new Messiah. What a golden opportunity for “Magic” to influence millions with a sorely needed message concerning morals, abstinence, and self-control at least somewhere in his “preaching,” but we have not heard the slightest hint either from him or the news media

that he has violated any moral strictures. His only “sin” was the folly of failure to “protect” himself. However, God’s Word still declares that fornication is sin and that impenitent fornicators will be eternally lost (1 Cor. 6:9–11, et al.).

“Magic” is already reaping what he sowed (Hos. 8:7; Gal. 6:7–8). The price for sin must be paid, and sinners often pay dearly even in this world, with the heaviest price coming in the end (1 Cor. 6:9–10; Heb. 13:4; Rev. 22:14–15; et al.). Not only do sinners pay, but they bring tragedy upon the innocent. Not all who have contracted AIDS have done so through their own sins. Many will die from this merciless killer because they innocently (on their part) were infected by a medical professional, a polluted blood transfusion, or some similar means. The gravest consequence of the behavior of “Magic” Johnson and those like him is that by thus glorifying sin, young people will accept and adopt such behavior and will be lost and undone eternally.

**Sin indeed has terrible, far-reaching consequences!**

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