

“I am Going to the Prom!”

(Compiled by Paul R. Blake from previous lessons)

Introduction:

- A. Five years ago I did two sermons on dancing at the request of the elders: “Just Don’t Tell the Preacher,” to address the matter of parents permitting their children to go to dances as long as they don’t tell the preacher. And shortly afterward a lesson entitled “The Sin of Dancing.”
- B. Illustration: Small children, playing hide and seek, will believe themselves to be hidden when they cover their eyes. They believe that if they can’t see you, you can’t see them. With their hands over their eyes, they are in the dark in more ways than one; their reasoning is child-like and unenlightened. That’s cute; and, a lot of adults will play that game with them endlessly.
 - 1. It ceases to be amusing when adults try to play hide and seek in spiritual matters
 - 2. Last year I received a surprise when I was told that some of the young people here go to dancing with the approval of their parents. When I asked how it is that I haven’t heard of it, the answer came back that the parents say to their children, “Just don’t tell the preacher.”
 - 3. Think that kind of reasoning through: “As long as the preacher doesn’t know, then God won’t be able to see me.”
 - 4. “No, Paul, what you don’t understand is that some of us believe you are too strict and conservative; we have come to believe that dancing and such things are ok now.”
 - 5. You know, I heard the same reasoning for Christians wearing swimsuits on public beaches when I was preaching in Ohio; I heard the same reasoning about social drinking in Arkansas; I heard the same reasoning for viewing pornography here about seven years ago
- C. I have some searching questions for you
 - 1. Are you confident in the core of your being that kind of reasoning will be accepted by the Lord when you stand before Him in judgment?
 - 2. Are you aware that each generation tends to carry things further than the previous one? In other words, when you tell your children they can go to dances, do you consider how much further into sinful conduct they will permit your grandchildren to go?
 - 3. Are you aware that kind of conduct blurs the distinct nature of the message of the Gospel you are to manifest before the world?
 - 4. I understand why you are making this compromise with your children. You are afraid you will damage or lose your relationship with them if you require them to make the moral choice. Here is the last question: after setting this precedent of compromise to keep them from acting out toward you, what other compromises will you make with them as they continue to move further from the faith and eventually leave home?
- D. What does the Bible say about dancing? The same thing it says about immodesty and social drinking; the same thing it has been saying for thousands of years.

1. The fact that it is accepted by the world changes nothing
 2. The fact that it is accepted by many denominations changes nothing
 3. The fact that some of the parents here have come to believe it is acceptable now doesn't change what is written
 4. My Ohio brethren who believe it is ok to lay on the beach in a modern bathing suit in full view of others, have changed nothing about what the Bible says about immodesty
 5. My Arkansas brethren who believe it is ok to have a few beers or glasses of wine, have changed nothing about what the Bible says about drinking alcohol
- E. We will consider what the Bible says about dancing today
1. To dismiss what the Bible says about this to keep from hurting you children's feelings, puts you and your children's eternal souls at risk
 2. One young woman observed afterward: "With all that TR has going for the kids, how can their parents set them up for failure like that?!"
- F. We will consider the following in this study:
1. Dancing is a form of the sin of lasciviousness
 2. Dancing is universally recognized as an expression of overt sexuality
 3. Dancing does harm to a Christian's influence
 4. The modern dance is not endorsed in the Bible
 5. Answering those who defend Christian involvement in modern dance

I. THE SIN OF LASCIVIOUSNESS

- A. Lasciviousness is condemned as a work of the flesh - Gal. 5:19 (KJV, ASV)
1. Translated "lewdness" in the NKJV
 2. Translated "sensuality" in the NAS
 3. Translated "debauchery" in the NIV
 4. Translated "licentiousness" in the RSV
 5. As that which defiles a man - Mark 7:21-23 (KJV)
- B. Lasciviousness defined
1. The Greek word is aselgia, defined by Thayer as "unbridled lust; wanton acts or manners (including) filthy words, indecent bodily movements, unchaste handling of males and females"
 2. In English, lascivious is defined as "exciting sexual desires; salacious"
 3. Anything which excites the lust of the flesh (words, bodily movements, unchaste behavior) is considered sinful; this applies to the stirring up of sexual desires and sensual pleasures outside the bond of marriage
 4. The Bible recognizes there is a need and a place for sexual expression, but limits it to married persons - Heb. 13:4
 5. Exciting and enticing of lust between those not married is sinful, condemned by Jesus in Matt. 5:28
 - a. It is wrong to lust for another person
 - b. It is equally wrong to arouse lust in another person

II. THE SIN OF DANCING

- A. Non-Christians recognize dancing as inciting lustful thoughts

1. "The popular teen-age dances of the mid-20th century have no set steps; the dancers respond spontaneously to the beat of the musicians. The degree of satisfaction attained by young people "twisting" or "shaking" to the blare of amplified music in dance halls, further enlivened by psychedelic lighting, is different from the pleasure derived by their elders waltzing to the 'Blue Danube' - but it is only a difference of age and time. Fundamentally, both age groups are enjoying the pleasure of dancing in their own way. The end product is doubtless the same - physical pleasure in the activity of dancing and sexual awareness of a partner, whether embraced or half-consciously observed." (Encyclopedia Britannica, "The Art Of Dance", Vol. 5, p. 455-456 (1979 edition))

2. "...The social dance has usually been the result of joint physical exuberance and sex stimuli..." (Collier's Encyclopedia, "Dance", Vol. 7, p. 683 (1964 edition))

3. "Another motive for the dance is the sexual motive - the dance has always been used as a means of expressing sexual desire and as a means of wooing. We find this same sex motive in the modern ballroom dance, which has now degenerated into dull and stupid forms, but it is a legitimate opportunity for contact." (Dance We Must (1938, reprinted 1950), p. 6 (from a series of lectures given by Ted Shawn at George Peabody College For Teachers))

4. "All ballroom dancing in pairs looks toward intercourse. In this respect the Puritans were correct. The development of no-contact dances has come about because one doesn't now need a social excuse to embrace a girl, but as an excitant it need not involve contact at all. In fact, modern dances are far more erotic than a clinch because you aren't too close to see one another. At its best this sort of dance is simply intercourse by remote control." (The Joy Of Sex, Alex Comfort, p 162, 1972)

5. The Roman orator Cicero says: "No man who is sober dances, unless he is out of his mind, either when alone or in any decent society, for dancing is the companion of wanton conviviality, dissoluteness, and luxury." - New Unger's Bible Dictionary (1988)

6. "Dancing: The vertical expression of a horizontal desire legalized by music." (George Bernard Shaw)

B. Common sense teaches that dancing is lustful

1. What would be your reaction if you saw an entire dance floor with people of the same sex dancing together?

a. If dancing was morally neutral with no sexual overtones, there would be no reaction at all

b. Most would be surprised, suspecting they had stumbled into a "gay" dance

2. If we would view that dance as an expression of gay sensuality, how can we deny that people of opposite sex dancing together is an expression of heterosexual sensuality?

3. Both common sense and the testimony of people in the world confirm that dancing is an activity that has the arousal of sexual desire as its main appeal. Should Christians be making provision for the flesh to fulfill its lusts? - Rom. 13:14

III. ANSWERING OBJECTIONS

(Almost without exception, those who desire to dance or allow their children to dance will raise some of these objections)

A. "Dancing may turn on other people, but I don't react that way."

1. For the sake of argument, let's assume that some people either:
 - a. Do not have strong sexual urges
 - b. Or have grown spiritually to the point they can keep their urges under control
2. The modern dance involves two persons
 - a. Even if one is not affected, the other usually is
 - b. In which case, the one claiming to be spiritual becomes a stumbling block to the other

B. "I can't control what other people think."

1. Just because we can't force a person to think right, that does not justify encouraging them to think wrong
2. We have a responsibility not to contribute to another's moral fall
3. Rom. 14:13, 21; 1Cor. 8:13, 10:31-32; Matt. 18:6-7

C. "How can anything go wrong? It is closely supervised."

1. Bodily actions may be well-supervised, but no one can supervise the inward thoughts
2. Chaperons can inhibit only what happens on the dance floor.
 - a. What about afterwards on the way home?

D. "Dancing is good exercise."

1. There are many alternative forms of exercise that do not excite the lusts of the flesh in yourself or others
2. Are you willing to become a stumbling block to others, just to get some exercise? Isn't that rather selfish?

E. "Dancing is mentioned in the Bible."

1. Are you equating the modern dance to dancing in the Bible?
2. There are four categories of dancing mentioned in the Bible
 - a. Religious dances of the Old Testament - Ex. 15:20-21; 2Sam. 6:14
 - b. Expressions of great rejoicing - 1Sam. 18:6
 - c. The play of small children - Job 21:11; Luke 7:32
 - d. Sexually enticing dances, like that of Salome before King Herod (the contemporary equivalent would be pole dancing by strippers) - Matt. 14:6
3. How do the first three categories justify Christians engaging in the modern dance today?
 - a. Would you use Salome's dance before Herod to justify Christian participation in the modern dance?
 - b. There is no trace in the Bible that men and women ever danced as couples
 - c. "While the mode of dancing is not known in detail, it is clear that

men and women did not generally dance together, and there is no real evidence that they ever did. Social amusement was hardly a major purpose of dancing, and the

modern method of dancing by couples is unknown." (Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia Of The Bible, "Dancing", Vol. 2, p. 12, 1977)

d. "Social dancing, as we now understand it, was almost, if not altogether, unknown in ancient times..." (Hastings Bible Dictionary, p. 550)

e "Women seemed generally to have danced by themselves. Of the social dancing of couples in the modern fashion there is no trace." (International Standard Bible Encyclopedia, "Games", p. 1170)

4. In fact, dancing in the form of mixed couples did not exist before the 12th Century A.D. - "There is no evidence of couples dancing together, however; that was to happen much later in Provence in the 12th Century." (Encyclopedia Britannica, "The Art Of Dance", Vol. 5, p. 452)

Conclusion:

A. Can Christians participate in the modern dance? There are two things we can be sure of:

1. It is wrong to lust in our hearts after others - Matt. 5:28

2. It is wrong to conduct ourselves in such a way as to excite lust in others; that is lasciviousness, which is condemned as a work of the flesh - Gal. 5:19-21

B. That popular dancing involving unmarried couples is condemned, can only be denied by those ignorant or lacking in understanding of the Scriptures, and by those hardened by the deceitfulness of sin

C. "Because of its physical appeal, dance lends itself to erotic purposes and has been practiced to these ends by both sexes." (Encyclopedia Britannica, "The Art of Dance") - Rom. 13:12-14