

Christians and the Modern Dance:

Old Timer's Scruple
or Old Fashioned Sin?

Christians and the Modern Dance

- We will consider the following in this study:
 - Dancing is a form of the sin of lasciviousness
 - Dancing is universally recognized as an expression of overt sexuality
 - Dancing does harm to a Christian's influence
 - The modern dance is not endorsed in the Bible
 - Answering those who defend Christian involvement in modern dance

Christians and the Modern Dance

- When one becomes a Christian, all old practices need to be considered in light of their compatibility with being a Christian
 - 2Cor. 5:17 - “Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.”
 - 1Peter 4:2-3 - “...that he no longer should live the rest of his time in the flesh for the lusts of men, but for the will of God. 3 For we have spent enough of our past lifetime in doing the will of the Gentiles--when we walked in lewdness, lusts, drunkenness, revelries, drinking parties, and abominable idolatries.”

The Sin Of Lasciviousness

- “Lasciviousness” is condemned as a work of the flesh - Gal. 5:19 (KJV, ASV)
 - Translated "lewdness" in the NKJV
 - Translated "sensuality" in the NAS
 - Translated "debauchery" in the NIV
 - Translated "licentiousness" in the RSV
 - As that which “defiles a man”
 - Mark 7:21-23 - “For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, 22 Thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness: 23 All these evil things come from within, and defile the man.” (KJV)

The Sin Of Lasciviousness

- Lasciviousness defined
 - 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"
 - The English word lascivious is defined as "exciting sexual desires; salacious"
 - 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

The Sin Of Lasciviousness

- The Bible recognizes there is a need and a place for sexual expression, but limits it to married persons
 - Heb. 13:4 - “Marriage is honorable among all, and the bed undefiled; but fornicators and adulterers God will judge.”

The Sin Of Lasciviousness

- Exciting and enticing lust between those not married is sinful, condemned by Jesus
 - Matt. 5:28 - “But I say to you that whoever looks at a woman to lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart.”
 - It is wrong to lust for another person
 - It is equally wrong to arouse lust in another person

The Sin Of Dancing

- Non-Christians recognize dancing as inciting lustful thoughts
 - "...The social dance has usually been the result of joint physical exuberance and sexual stimuli" - Collier's Encyclopedia, "Dance", Vol. 7, p. 683
 - Roman orator Cicero: "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."
 - "Dancing: The vertical expression of a horizontal desire legalized by music." (George Bernard Shaw)

The Sin Of Dancing

- Common sense teaches that dancing incites lustful thoughts
 - What would be your reaction if you saw an entire dance hall with people of the same sex dancing together in close embrace?
 - 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?
 - Rom. 13:14 - “But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to fulfill its lusts.”

Answering Objections

- “Dancing may turn on other people, but I don't react that way.”
- The modern dance involves two persons; even if one is not affected, the other usually is. In which case, the one claiming to be spiritual becomes a stumbling block to the other

Answering Objections

- “I can't control what other people think.”
- Rom. 14:13, 21 - “Therefore let us not judge one another anymore, but rather resolve this, not to put a stumbling block or a cause to fall in our brother's way... 21 It is good neither to eat meat nor drink wine nor do anything by which your brother stumbles or is offended or is made weak”
- 1Cor. 8:13 - “Therefore, if food makes my brother stumble, I will never again eat meat, lest I make my brother stumble.”

Answering Objections

- 1Cor. 10:31-32 - “Therefore, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God. 32 Give no offense, either to the Jews or to the Greeks or to the church of God”
- Matt. 18:6-7 - “But whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in Me to sin, it would be better for him if a millstone were hung around his neck, and he were drowned in the depth of the sea. 7 Woe to the world because of offenses! For offenses must come, but woe to that man by whom the offense comes!”

Answering Objections

- “How can anything go wrong? It is closely supervised.”
- Bodily actions may be well-supervised on the dance floor, but no one can supervise the inward thoughts.
- There are no chaperones on the way home.

Answering Objections

- "Dancing is good exercise."
 - There are many alternative forms of exercise that do not excite the lusts of the flesh

Answering Objections

- “Dancing is mentioned in the Bible.”
 - Are you really equating the modern dance to dancing in the Bible?

Answering Objections

- There are four categories of dancing mentioned in the Bible:
- Religious dances of the Old Testament
 - Ex. 15:20-21 - “Then Miriam the prophetess, the sister of Aaron, took the timbrel in her hand; and all the women went out after her with timbrels and with dances. 21 And Miriam answered them: Sing to the LORD, For He has triumphed gloriously! The horse and its rider He has thrown into the sea!”
 - 2Sam. 6:14 - “Then David danced before the LORD with all his might; and David was wearing a linen ephod.”

Answering Objections

- Expressions of great rejoicing
 - 1Sam. 18:6 - “Now it had happened as they were coming home, when David was returning from the slaughter of the Philistine, that the women had come out of all the cities of Israel, singing and dancing, to meet King Saul, with tambourines, with joy, and with musical instruments.”

Answering Objections

- The play of small children
 - Job 21:11 - “They send forth their little ones like a flock, And their children dance.”
 - Luke 7:32 - “They are like children sitting in the marketplace and calling to one another, saying: We played the flute for you, And you did not dance; We mourned to you, And you did not weep.”

Answering Objections

- Sexually enticing dances, like that of Salome before King Herod
 - Matt. 14:6 - “But when Herod's birthday was celebrated, the daughter of Herodias danced before them and pleased Herod.”
- To use the dances mentioned in the Bible to justify the modern dance opens the door to all other Old Testament practices. Are you prepared to accept that?

Answering Objections

- There is no example or evidence in the Bible that men and women ever danced together as couples.
- "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

Answering Objections

- "Social dancing, as we now understand it, was almost, if not altogether, unknown in ancient times..." - Hastings Bible Dictionary, p. 550
- "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, p. 1170
- "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

Answering Objections

- Can Christians participate in the modern dance? There are two things we can be sure of:
 - It is wrong to lust in our hearts after others - Matt. 5:28
 - 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

Answering Objections

- That popular dancing involving unmarried couples is condemned, can only be denied:
 - By those ignorant of or lacking in understanding of the Scriptures
 - By those hardened by the deceitfulness of sin
- "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

- “The night is far spent, the day is at hand. Therefore let us cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armor of light. 13 Let us walk properly, as in the day, not in revelry and drunkenness, not in lewdness and lust, not in strife and envy. 14 But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to fulfill its lusts.”