

Questions About Dancing

INTRODUCTION:

I feel it appropriate to begin this lesson with an apology to our young people. There is a topic of vital concern to you that we generally have not handled as effectively as we should have. I speak of the subject of Dancing. The specific things I would like to apologize for regarding this subject are these:

1. We have often overlooked the type of teaching, counseling, and discipline needed at a time in your lives when it was vital.
2. What instruction you have received has often been too little, too late, or perhaps too negative, without offering positive alternate options. You may have felt bludgeoned after the fact when you really would have been receptive to any truth reasonably presented in advance.
3. The manner of presentation (when it has been studied) has often been stereo-typed, irrelevant, or inadequate. Also it may have been ineptly presented so that you did not realize whether it was sincere or merely designed to harass you.
4. Though different preachers may have used varying combinations of these approaches (and I do not presume to speak for them all), the general approach has been all too often as I have described. Will you study seriously with me as we search for a solution that will be primarily pleasing to God and less frustrating to you?

I. A CLARIFICATION OF THE TOPIC UNDER CONSIDERATION:

A. I have received two specific questions: "If one does not dance vulgar, what is wrong with it?" The other is: "Psalm 150:4 refers to praising God with the dance. Does this mean it can be used in worship? If so, what would be wrong with its use for enjoyment by young Christians outside of worship?" These are typical of questions received fairly often and seem reasonable.

B. This immediately suggests some things that must be clarified for the purpose of this study today:

1. We need to discuss the issue of modern dancing as it is generally conducted among young, unmarried, developing Christians. We will not be considering the question of a man who might choose to dance privately and discreetly with his own wife in the privacy of their home, for example, or dancing as it possibly could be in some rigidly controlled hypothetical case that is not relevant. The remote possibility of isolated, untypical dancing is not what you really want to know about, is it? You want to know how to decide the more typical issue that you face right now, don't you?
2. We will not be discussing the issue of a single individual being so happy that he may jump about with delight upon bearing good news or experiencing unexpected good fortune. That is why the use of the term in the Bible in general

would have very little application to the modern dance that concerns you. Psalm 150 seems to refer to the Levites, leaping and praising, as they carried out duties for which Christians have no corresponding provision. Miriam engaged in such exultation at the triumph of the people at the Red Sea, Exodus 15:20. The people rejoiced at the superior achievement of David, 1 Sam. 21:11; 29:5. There was joyful celebration at the return of the prodigal son, Luke 15:25. Perhaps these deserve more detailed study, but they are not in the same category as the modern practices youth are concerned about. Regarding worship for Christians, we know that no provision is made for adding to the worship outlined in the New Testament, and anything added to appeal to the flesh would be wrong, Acts 2:42; 1 Cor. 11:20ff; Gal. 1:8ff; 2 Pet. 2:12ff; Jude 16 ff.

3. The Biblical examples contained in the following scriptures would more nearly be applicable to the dance we are studying about: Exodus 32:5-6, 19-26 and Mark 6:16-28. It would be difficult for any honest person to imagine incidents similar to there being used to honor in worship today the same God who condemned them so severely.

II. THREE BASIC QUESTIONS TO ASK YOURSELF

(By now you probably have inferred that I do not feel dancing as we are discussing it is appropriate for young Christians. The following three questions and observations made about them led me to that conclusion when I had to make the decisions you are now facing. I ask you to think about them and make your decision as you ask, "What Would Christ Have Me To Do?")

A. WHAT EFFECT WILL DANCING OF THIS TYPE HAVE ON ME?

1. Is it questionable, causing me to violate my own conscience? (Rom. 14:23) (If it is not questionable, why so many continuing questions about it?)
2. Does it cause me to be lascivious, in violation of Gal. 5:19-21? (Lasciviousness refers to desires that are lustful, causing one to desire forbidden things that cannot be scripturally and legally fulfilled under existing relationships.) One may say, "I am not aware of any such feelings." This could increase the danger.

Illust. One brother told of a man he knows who was invited as a teenager to a dance by a girl. He declined, but she was offended and thought him to be a fanatic. That girl later hunted him up, a generation later, to apologize. By then she had a teenage daughter herself and only then understood and appreciated why he had done what he did.

3. Does it break down barriers of modesty and restraint? Does it cause any accompanying questionable practices (such as drinking, necking, petting, etc.) to be encouraged or viewed with less alarm over a period of time?
 - a. Christian Dior has been quoted as saying that some fashion designs were changed to remove stiff braces on under garments due to so many complaints from men that they could not feel the life-form of their mates as they danced.

- b. Are Phil. 4:8 and 2 Tim. 2:22 easier or more difficult to obey under these circumstances?
- 4. Does it decrease or increase your spiritual interests? *Read Job 21:11-15. It has been observed that "The dancing foot and the praying knee are seldom attached to the same body." Can you think of any exception to the following: Depending upon your degree of spiritual interest, you will be miserable — either at the dance or at worship — but cannot enjoy both fully.
- 5. Does it place you in threatening circumstances? Are you with companions or in the midst of activities that create further risk? 1 Cor. 15:33. You will have to answer this about things known to you but unknown to me: Does it involve an environment of drugs, drinking, crude language, suggestiveness, subsequent reckless driving, accidents, immorality, and such like? I am familiar with arguments about proper "chaperones". We both know that they don't always chaperone, neither do they go with you after the dance. We know that is still no solution for one who belongs to Jesus!

B. WHAT EFFECT WILL DANCING OF THIS TYPE HAVE ON OTHERS?

- 1. Does it reduce your Christian influence on them and encourage those who are weak and untaught to stumble? Rom. 14 and I Cor. 8. Do you lose forever your chance to win them to Christ? Name the 10 most genuine Christians you know. Is their influence caused by dancing enhanced by deeper spiritual interests?
- 2. If you are not affected, are you contributing to passions aroused in others that may lead them to sin? If you honestly feel that (points 1-5 under A above) do not affect you, are you contributing to your partner having those effects?

C. WHAT EFFECT WILL YOUR DANCING OF THIS TYPE HAVE ON THE CHURCH?

- 1. Christians are to act distinctly as people of God (1 Peter 2:9-10). They are to glorify God in the name of Christ, (1 Pet. 4:15-16). They are to give glory to God in the church (Eph. 3:21), and give none offense to the church (1 Cor.10:32)
- 2. What will others think of the church (and think of you) when they know a lesson such as this (involving these Bible principles) is taught which you disregard? Will they listen to any other truth the church teaches? It is possible to embarrass the church and the Lord by compromising convictions.

CONCLUSION:

Once, out of six young people who were nominated for the highest honor their public school gave, four were members of the church. The honor was decided as a featured highlight of a dance. This presented serious conflicts to their consciences, which they conferred and prayed about. They respectfully informed the faculty sponsor of the event that they deeply appreciated the nomination. They explained why they would like to

be excused from participation. They were respected so much for their stand that the school changed the traditional procedures of the event entirely so they could participate. The world is hungry to see young people who know what they believe and why.

The key question is: "Do you, belong to Christ?" If one is sincere and consistent, he/she can be respected, popular, and accepted without lowering his/her standards. If You feel that is not possible, then you may have the wrong standards or be trying to impress the wrong people. What is your personal relationship to Christ?

— Author unknown