

## DANCING'S DELIGHTS: INNOCENT OR DEVILISH?

Many people really do enjoy dancing. To them it is fun, a pleasurable activity to which they look forward. They recognize that dancing is not for everyone, but they personally like to dance and see no moral or social harm in it.

If we were to take a poll of members of the church about dancing, there is no doubt that we would get more than one type of feedback. Here are the facts: (1) Some Christians are dead set against dancing; (2) Some saints don't dance themselves, but are not opposed to it; (3) A third group not only sees no harm in it, they personally dance or allow (sometimes even encourage) their offspring to dance publicly.

As the title of this article indicates, dancing does bring delights. But are the pleasures of the modern dance innocent, or devilish? We cannot settle this matter by an appeal to man's polls, past practices, or preferences. We must hold fast to that which is "good" in the Lord's sight, and at the same abstain from that which the Godhead deems to be "evil" (1 Thessalonians 5:21,22).

**Some New Testament Principles** – God does not want His children to be conformed to this world (Romans 12:1,2). The Lord tells Christians to depart from iniquity and flee youthful lusts (2 Timothy 2:19,22). Saints are commanded to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to live soberly, righteously, and godly (Titus 2;12). The Bible says that we must keep ourselves unspotted from the world (James 1:27). We are further instructed, "*Ye adulteresses and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? Whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God*" (James 4:4). Our Lord's direct charge is to be holy in all manner of life, even as He Himself is holy (1 Peter 1:15,16). In addition, God's people must not love the world, knowing that the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life are not of God (1 John 2:15,16). Finally, Jesus' followers are exhorted, "*Dearly beloved, I*

*beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul*" (1 Peter 2:11).

**What's Wrong With Dancing?** None of the verses that we noted or quoted above directly mentions the word "dancing." We are convinced, however, that an open-minded appraisal of what dancing really is, coupled with an honest comparison with what these Bible principles teach, will cause a truth-loving person to conclude, "You know what, dancing is a worldly thing that certainly does nothing to help me to be separate from the world and abstain from fleshly lusts. On the contrary."

Seventeen "*works of the flesh*" are listed in Galatians 5:19-21, followed by the additional phrase "*and such like.*" Those that participate in these works of the flesh "*shall not inherit the kingdom of God.*" That is what the Bible says. Sounds like serious business, does it not? The word "lasciviousness" is listed as one of the works of the flesh (Galatians 5:19). Just what does "lasciviousness" mean? It comes from the Greek word *aselgeia* [ασέλγεια], which means "unbridled lust . . . filthy words, indecent bodily movements, unchaste handling of males and females, etc."<sup>1</sup> That description, friends, fits the modern dance "to a T." Look at it again – indecent bodily movements plus unchaste handling of males and females. That is just what the modern dance is! Conclusion? There is no doubt about it: dancing is a work of the flesh.

Dancing casts a stumblingblock before others. Causing others to stumble is not something that any child of God wants to do: "*It is impossible but that offences will come: but woe unto him, through whom they come*" (Luke 17:1). The movements and touching that take place in dancing cause those of the opposite sex to have impure thoughts. It is going to happen. Deny it if you want, but you are flat out wrong if you do! Remember the words of our Lord, "*But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart*" (Matthew 5:28).

We say it again: dancing causes impure, inappropriate thoughts to take place in the minds of those that see and/or feel others dancing. Fast dancing has wild gyrations and bodily movements that are crude, gross, and suggestive. They often mimic sexual activity. Dancing is harmless, you say? Hardly! What about slow dancing? It involves close embraces, touching, rubbing, and pressing of bodies together. What are the emotional and physical results of such? Hearts pound. Hormones are triggered and passions are stirred. Thoughts run ahead to "something bigger and better" than dancing. Harmless fun? Hardly!

Reflect for a moment on what people of the world are admitting about dancing. The following quotes are from an article entitled "Principals Freaked Out by Students' Dance, Dress" that appeared in *The Chicago Tribune* (11-27-04).<sup>2</sup> The article's opening statement reads, "Like many of his friends at Stephenson High School, McFadden sees nothing wrong with bumping and grinding on the dance floor or being sandwiched between two girls with their hips gyrating against him." This reporter for a secular newspaper sees dancing for what it really is! The article goes on to quote a 10<sup>th</sup> grade girl that observed what went on at a dance she attended: "I didn't know people danced like that at homecoming. It looked like people were having sex." **Parents, are you listening?**

Have you ever considered the fruits of dancing? The Lord Jesus said, "*Ye shall know them by their fruits*" (Matthew 7:16,20). For some, dancing stirs up the sexual urges that lead to fornication. Even people that have no interest in spiritual matters admit that dancing is often a prelude to petting and fornication. Dancing surely does *not* go hand in hand with spiritual activities. Like it or not, when a Christian attends a dance, be it a formal dress prom or casual dress dance after a ballgame, reputations suffer. Whose, you ask? The reputation of the child of God that attends the dance. But that is not all. The reputation of the church suffers as well.

Remember: bad fruit/consequence means bad tree/activity. The fruits of dancing are not good. That being true, how could the tree itself (dancing) be harmless?

**Some Serious Questions** – (1) What is it that gives dancing its appeal to most people? Answer: Putting males and females together. If you take away the girls and put all the guys together in one room, dancing will cease for the guys, guaranteed! Guys don't want to be at a dance unless they can see and/or feel the females. Honest males will tell you that this is true, and all females need to learn such before it is too late.

(2) If I am a married man, would I want another man dancing with my wife cheek to cheek and body to body? Answer: No way! Would I want that same man embracing my wife with a "dancing hold" and walking down the street in broad daylight for all people to see? Never! Would I want that man to do this with my middle-school or teenage daughter? No! But you see, if the answer to these questions is "no," then putting their touches, pressing, rubbing, and grinding movements to music in a specified "dance floor" does not change anything, does it?!

(3) What's the difference between organized wrestling and dancing? Answer: In wrestling some holds are penalized because they are against the rules. In dancing there seem to be no holds that are "off limits." Think about it.

(4) What about attending the prom, but not dancing? Answer: Why would I want to pay money to support that which involves and causes wrong behavior? Why would I want to be so closely connected with sinful activity? None of us would want to damage the reputation of our family or the church. Attending the prom is sure to do both. "But what if I go to the prom and use that as a chance to tell people why dancing is wrong?" The motive is noble. For sure, we need more young people telling the truth about dancing! However, there are better occasions to get the point across than at a place where intense rubbing, provocative movements, and adulterous eyes are the norm.

**Dancing's Defenders** – "But dancing is such good exercise." I know of one scenario where those involved in fornication said such activity was good

therapy for a person's back problems. The point? That which helps the physical body is not always best for the soul. Friends, the spiritual must take priority over the physical.

"But godly women of the O.T. danced." The Bible says, "*And Miriam . . . took a timbrel in her hand; and all the women went out after her with timbrels and with dances*" (Exodus 15:20). Note that this was a case of women dancing with women. There is no indication whatsoever that this was done with men looking on. Second, there is no proof that the dancing in which they engaged was at all similar to what we know as the modern dance.

"The dance will be held at school, and there will be chaperones." That may be true, but no person can chaperone people's hearts and prevent them from having impure thoughts (Matthew 5:8,28).

"But everybody else is going; even other members of the church let their kids go." How tragic. Long ago God told His people not to follow a multitude to do evil (Exodus 23:2). We must never forget that a lot of people doing something has absolutely nothing to do with whether such an activity is right or wrong in God's sight. Many are headed down the road to destruction. Jesus said so (Matthew 7:13,14).

May God give us elders, preachers, and Bible class teachers, as well as godly parents and grandparents, who will take an unwavering stand against dancing and tell it like it is. Yes, dancing has its delights. Sin always does (Hebrews 11:25). Dancing, however, is not innocent, but devilish.

<sup>1</sup> Joseph H. Thayer, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, Inc., 2002), pp. 79,80.  
<sup>2</sup> [[http://story.news.yahoo.com/news?tmpl=story&cid=2027&ncid=2027&e=2&u=/chitribts/20041127/ts\\_chicagotrib/principalsfreakedoutbystudentsdancedress](http://story.news.yahoo.com/news?tmpl=story&cid=2027&ncid=2027&e=2&u=/chitribts/20041127/ts_chicagotrib/principalsfreakedoutbystudentsdancedress)]

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