

Friday, April 24, 2015 - "I want to go to the prom"

I reprint three articles every year dealing with subjects which need continued attention: Christmas, Easter and the prom. This article usually gets me the most negative mail because, I'm told, I suggest that teens skip an event which is "so enjoyable and provides great memories." I have yet to find a scripture which tells me I am on this earth for secular enjoyment and making memories. It was Solomon that gave us the sage advice, "This is the end of the matter; all hath been heard: fear God, and keep his commandments; for this is the whole of man." (Eccl. 12:13)

Christians are constantly called upon to make decisions concerning the activities they engage in. God's expectation for us is that we make those decisions based upon Biblical instructions, not the opinion of the world or peer pressure. If one is to accept and practice what the Bible approves, you must reject and oppose that which it condemns. The weight of popular opinion often condones what the Bible condemns. This forces a Christian, when faced with such decisions, to either break with the popularity of the world or break with the teachings of God.

The subject of our study this week is something you won't hear much about in pulpits anymore because the "preacher" is afraid of offending those in the audience. I don't like to offend people but I will NOT water down the truth as it pertains to God's word. As always, let God's word speak for itself and let people determine to obey or not. If I teach or preach what you want to hear, as opposed to what God's word says, it will do you no good in the day of judgment! God has SPOKEN!

One subject which Christians must decide regards modern dancing. For the purposes of this discussion, we want to focus on dancing that calls for:

- * Close bodily contact between unmarried males and females.
- * Dancing that involves indecent and suggestive bodily movements.
- * Dancing that involves impure handling of a dance partner.

There are examples of dancing described in the Bible. In many instances it was simply an expression of religious enthusiasm or rejoicing over some great victory. The kind of dancing that God's word condemns is the kind of dancing that stirs one to have impure thoughts, and act in impure ways. That is the problem with most of the dancing that takes place today. Its appeal is sex. Now, there is nothing wrong with sexual attraction either. In fact, sexual attraction is a perfectly healthy matter that God created and put within us. However, that attraction must be kept within proper bounds. It should not be tantalized or it will very likely get out of hand. Unmarried people who have no legitimate means to fulfill their sexual desires need to be extremely careful to avoid any situation that could feed or flame such desires. We see an example of such in Matthew 14 when the daughter of Herodias played upon the desires of Herod so that he promised her anything she wished. It cost John the Baptist his head.

In determining whether a Christian can engage in modern dancing, we must simply answer one question. Can a Christian participate in modern dancing and be consistent with the principles of purity demanded of the Christian life? Is modern dance a fruit of the Spirit or a work of the flesh? Does participating in modern dancing draw us closer to God or does it separate us from Him? Does participating in modern dance help us bring others to Christ or is it a stumbling block?

A number of you might be thinking at this point that I am overstepping. Some might even be saying to themselves, "The modern dance is not mentioned or condemned in the New

Testament!" It isn't? The word "dance" in the sense that we use it might not appear in the New Testament, but the idea which it represents is mentioned and condemned.

In Galatians 5:19-21, Paul says, "Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are [these]: fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousies, wraths, factions, divisions, parties, envyings, drunkenness, revellings, and such like; of which I forewarn you, even as I did forewarn you, that they who practise such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God." There are three points I would like to discuss from this passage.

The first point focuses in on the word lasciviousness. It is derived from the Greek word *Aselgeia* which means unbridled lust, excess, licentiousness, lasciviousness, wantonness, outrageousness, shamelessness, insolence. The Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament notes that it references filthy words, indecent bodily movement, unchaste handling of males and females. It is obvious that modern dancing has it's basic appeal in fleshly passion. No one can deny that dancing is made up of indecent bodily movements, unchaste handling of males and females set to music. Consider the following facts presented by another minister, Steve Higginbotham, concerning events surrounding the local prom where he lives:

- * Guys and girls rent cabins at a state park where some spent the night drinking and engaging in sexual immorality.
- * Public intoxication and arrests made by the local police force.
- * "Dirty dancing" (and that's the way I'll describe it. To get specific would probably be offensive) performed on the "chaperoned" dance floor which is broadcast over our local television cable system.
- * Immodest, revealing clothing worn, intended to solicit the attention of the opposite sex. I remember overhearing two girls trying to "outdo" each other as to which one was showing more cleavage.
- * Young people lying to their parents about their whereabouts while they stay out all evening and return home in the morning.

And here's the kicker...Every one of the actions mentioned above were done, not by the non-Christians living in Glasgow, but by young people and parents who are members of the Lord's church; Christians! If this is the way that disciples of Jesus conduct themselves, then how are we different from how the world acts?

The second point deals with the word revellings. It comes from the Greek word *Komo* which means boisterous merrymaking or festivity, an occasion of merrymaking or noisy festivity with dancing, drinking, carousing. Again, these activities fall into the realm of "works of the flesh."

The final point deals with the phrase "and such like." It is rendered from the Greek *kai ta homoia toutois*. Paul is making clear that he is not limiting the works of the flesh to specific acts characteristic of his day and time but to all such conduct. Surely we can see that the modern dance clearly places one in a situation to participate in the works of the flesh. From such things we must flee!

Consider these other passages:

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

Peter was writing to Christians who were being tempted to follow after the ways of the world to fit into society. He tells them that they need to abstain from fleshly lusts. Fleshly lusts are evil desires that come from a love of the world and not a love of God. These fleshly lusts are

said to war or fight against the soul. By this we understand him to say that by fulfilling these lusts, these desires, we will put ourselves into a situation where our Christianity will be challenged--where Satan will have opportunity to tempt us and where we will be discouraged from trying to do what is right. Now if the modern dance does not fall into this category, I do not know what does. Those who participate in the modern dance will be challenged in their Christianity, they will give Satan an opportunity to tempt them and they will be discouraged from trying to do what is right. Why would a Christian want to place oneself into such a situation?

* 1 Thessalonians 5:22 - "Abstain from all appearance of evil."

If it even looks like it might be wrong, then we need to keep away from it. There can be no doubt that some of the movements in the modern dance have the appearance of evil and so we should abstain from it.

* 1 John 2:15-17 "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever."

The modern dance is a thing of the world and when we demonstrate that we love things of the world more than we love God, God's love no longer abides in us. Why would we want to remove ourselves from the love of God for an hour or two of worldly pleasure?

* 1 Corinthians 15:33 "Be not deceived, evil companionships corrupt good morals."

Those in the world who go to and participate in the modern dance go there expecting to engage in something enticing and titillating. They go with evil purposes in mind. The Christian who chooses to go to the dance surrounds himself with these evil companionships.

The Spirit of Christ is to dwell in us when we put Him on in baptism. So the question I ask you, in regards to the modern dance, is "What would Jesus do?"