

Lesson 8

WHAT ABOUT DANCING?

This lesson will concentrate attention on the modern social dance. Other types of dancing such as traditional dance, folk dancing, square dancing and ballet must fall into another category, for they are art forms and relatively free of sensual movements.

Modern social dancing is one of the more difficult doubtful things to deal with because of the implications that go along with it. Because dancing may lead to sexual lusts, some feel that this is taken out of the realm of doubtful and classified as sin. It is true that the believer is commanded in Scripture to abstain from all sexual lusts. However, dancing must still be dealt with on the basis of doubtful because nothing is said for or against it specifically in the Bible.

I. DANCING IN THE BIBLE

Old Testament

Dancing was a favorite social past time among girls and women. ***I will build you up again and you will be rebuilt, O Virgin Israel. Again you will take up your tambourines and go out to dance with the joyful (Jer. 31:4).*** Dance was engaged in by female companies in honor of national joys, especially of victories. ***When the men were returning home after David had killed the Philistine, the women came out from all the towns of Israel to meet King Saul with singing and dancing, with joyful songs and with tambourines and lutes (1 Sam. 18:6).*** Men and women performed certain dances for religious purposes. ***Let them praise his name with dancing and make music to him with tambourine and harp (Psa. 149:3). Praise him with tambourine and dancing . . . (Psa. 150:4).*** These dances were done by the sexes separately, so that men danced with men and women with women. ***In front are the singers, after them the musicians; with them are the maidens playing tambourines (Psa. 68:25).*** These dances probably were much like folk dances, consisting of circular movements, with artful rhythmical steps and lively gestures. David is said to have danced but this was probably just spontaneous excitement expressed by bodily movement. ***As the ark of the LORD was entering the City of David, Michal, daughter of Saul, watched from a window. And when she saw King David leaping and dancing before the LORD, she despised him in her heart (2 Sam. 6:16).***

New Testament

We read nothing at all in the New Testament about God's people dancing. History shows us that the early church had a form of religious dancing which was part of public worship. Again this was like folk dancing. This custom was soon laid aside, for some associated it with the pagan dances in the heathen temples. Prohibitions of dancing as an amusement abound in the Church Fathers and in the decrees of the councils.

II. ADVANTAGES TO SOCIAL DANCING

Dancing is a social outlet for people, especially teenagers and older.

Dancing, if done in the right places, can be a form of recreation and relaxation.

Dancing for many, especially women, is considered good fun.

Dancing may satisfy an inherent rhythmic desire in all mankind.

Dancing is an art, displaying graceful body movements.

III. DISADVANTAGES TO SOCIAL DANCING

These disadvantages are general and it must be remembered that a few individuals, of both sexes, are not psychologically and physically made up the same as the mass of humanity. There are exceptions to every rule, but the following arguments are based on general sociological data.

Dancing, more than any other recreational medium, profoundly involves the whole personality. Psychological factors are more significant than merely recreational. There is an emotional element in dancing that cannot be measured.

Modern social dancing produces a great deal of body contact between the man and the woman, which may lead to lust, especially on the part of the male. Often among adults and teen-agers, dancing becomes a prelude to what happens after the dance. Secular sociologists say that rhythm plus bodily movement produces sexual stimulation. Often the man dances simply for the sexual thrill and not because he enjoys dancing. This is not necessarily true for the woman however. A woman dances because she likes the fun, security and rhythm. Those who counsel young people on this question of social dancing frequently discover that honest men readily admit the sexual stimulation that accompanies dancing, whereas girls more frequently can see no problem, admitting only to a general excitement and pleasure.

Many men do not like to dance. This is why they often get "half drunk" before they enjoy it.

Usually for adults and sometimes for teen-agers, the environment where dancing takes place is very sinful. With dancing, usually comes excessive drinking and sexual promiscuity. What goes on in the average dance hall or night club does not honor God. From the sociological data alone one can see that there are warnings to heed when it comes to dancing.

IV. SOCIAL DANCING FROM A BIBLICAL VIEWPOINT

Dancing is not sinful in itself, but the side effects may become sinful. For instance, a husband and wife can dance in their own home whatever dances they please and it would not be sin. Yet most married couples feel silly dancing together in their home. Why? Because the sexual stimuli can be satisfied in the marriage relationship.

A Christian, especially the male, must face up realistically to what modern dancing does to him physically and question himself honestly as to why he dances in the first place. If dancing causes a person to lust then it is wrong. ***But among you there must not be even a hint of sexual immorality, or of any kind of impurity, or of greed, because these are improper for God's holy people (Eph. 5:3). Avoid every kind of evil (appearance of evil) (1 Thess. 5:22).***

A Christian should get a Christ-centered and Bible orientated view of sex because God has ordained and planned all sexual activity for marriage. Dancing may corrupt what God has intended to be a holy thing.

Dancing is one doubtful thing that could impair a Christian's witness to the world, for even the unsaved moralists see the dangers of dancing. Dancing also could be a real stumbling block to a weaker brother. The principles of love, expediency and supreme sacrifice should be applied in the case of dancing.

The Bible has much to say about sexual immorality, and if dancing causes one to lust, then it is morally wrong. Yet, a Christian is free to dance if his or her conscience allows it. ***Each man should be fully convinced in his own mind (Rom. 14:5).***

Each Christian must be able to dance to the glory of God. ***So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God (1 Cor. 10:31).***