

Should I Go To The Dance?

Introduction: Too often, when we hear another viewpoint from our own we respond in one of two very unhealthy ways. (1) We become so upset that we cannot actually hear what is being said or (2) we quickly turn the person off and, therefore, we not only refuse to listen, but we also refuse to benefit from what is being said.

I want to share some information with you this morning, ask some questions, encourage consideration of Biblical teaching and principles and invite us all to strive to consistently reason in a godly manner.

The question, "Should a Christian go to a dance?" is not only an issue our young people face, but it is also a question we face as parents. This is a topic that in the past was addressed somewhat frequently in local churches. However, in recent years, far too many churches have refused to address the issue. There used to be a general consensus among Christians on the subject, but attitudes have changed. It is not that this is a new issue. When I was 18 years old I can remember being asked to speak on this very question by numerous churches.

What has changed is not the issue or what the Bible teaches, but our attitude on the subject. I would ask that regardless of where you may be on this question that we conscientiously and fairly study together this morning.

I. An Attitude On Which We Should All Agree:

- a. Am I a person that is intent on applying Biblical principles to every decision I make and every activity in which I participate (Colossians 3:17)?
- b. Am I a person who seeks to avoid questionable decisions in my life?

- c. Or am I a person who seeks to get away with as much as is possible and sacrifice as little as possible for the Lord?
- d. Am I more concerned about God's approval or acceptance from my peers?
- e. Where does the Bible say "Thou Shall Not Dance?"
 - i. Those who make this argument really know better, but this is often an attempt to justify something not authorized in Scripture, e.g. "Where does the Bible say 'thou shall not use instrument in worship to God?'" or "Where does the Bible say, 'thou shall not have a pope?'"
 - ii. There are Biblical principles that do address decisions we make that impact our walk in the Lord and pursuit of holiness.

II. Arguments In Defense of the Christian Attending A Dance:

- a. "Dancing is in the Bible."
 - i. There are three kinds of "dancing" mentioned in the Bible.
 - 1. Questions for us to ask?
 - a. Who danced?
 - b. With whom did they dance?
 - c. Why did they dance?
 - d. Was the dance similar to today's dances?
 - ii. Dance as public rejoicing: To leap for joy, circle dancing often segregated by gender.
 - 1. Definition of term: מְהֹלָה (m^ehō·lā(h)): n.fem.; ≡ Str 4246; TWOT 623h—1. LN 15.244 **circle-dancing, round-dancing**, i.e., a series of rhythmic body movements, **likely segregated by sex**, possibly accompanied by rhythm instruments and/or

musical instruments, with the associative meaning of being properly joyful (Ex 32:19; Jdg 11:34; 21:21; 1Sa 18:6; 21:12[EB 11]; 29:5; SS 7:1[EB 6:13]+). [Swanson, James. *Dictionary of Biblical Languages with Semantic Domains : Hebrew (Old Testament)*. Oak Harbor: Logos Research Systems, Inc., 1997.]

2. Bible Passages:

- a. Judges 11:34: "...Behold his daughter was coming out to meet him with tambourines and with dancing..."
- b. I Samuel 18:6-7: "It happened as they were coming, when David returned from killing the Philistine, that the women came out of all the cities of Israel, singing and dancing, to meet King Saul, with tambourines, with joy and with musical instruments. The women sang as they played, and said, 'Saul has slain his thousands, and David his ten thousands.'"
- c. Lamentation 5:15: "The joy of our hearts has ceased; our dancing has been turned into mourning."
- d. Luke 15:25: "Now his older son was in the field, and when he came and approached the house, he heard music and dancing."
 - i. «χορός **chōrōs**, *chor-os*´; of uncert. der.; **a ring, i.e. round dance** ("choir"):—dancing." (Strong, James. *A Concise Dictionary of the Words in the Greek*

Testament and The Hebrew Bible. Bellingham, WA: Logos Bible Software, 2009).

iii. Dancing as Worship to God: Leaping for joy or circle dancing in worship to God.

1. Exodus 15:20-21: “Miriam the prophetess, Aaron’s sister, took the timbrel in her hand, and all the women went out after her with timbrels and with dancing. Miriam answered them, ‘Sing to the Lord, for He is highly exalted; the horse and his rider He has hurled into the sea.’”
 2. 2 Samuel 6:14-23: “Therefore I will celebrate before the Lord” (21).
 3. I Chronicles 15: 29: “...Saw King David leaping and celebrating...”
 4. Psalm 149: 3: “Let them praise His name with dancing; let them sin praises to Him with timbrel and lyre.”
- iv. Dancing, which involves men and women interacting with each other in a very close way, bodies touching, or movements that would gain the sexual attention of others.
1. The dancing associated with idol worship was also accompanied by drinking (Exodus 32:19-20).
 2. Herod imprisoned John for telling him it was not lawful for him to have Herodias as his wife, because she was his brother Philip’s wife (14:3, 4).
 3. When Herod’s birthday came the daughter of Herodias “danced before them and pleased Herod,”

to the point that he made a rash promise to give her whatever she wanted, which ended up being the head of John the Baptist (14:6-12).

4. The term for dance is *ὀρχέομαι; χορός, οὐ μ:* *patterned rhythmic movements of the whole and/or parts of the body, normally to the accompaniment of music—‘to dance, dancing.’* (Louw, Johannes P., and Eugene Albert Nida. *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament: Based on Semantic Domains*. New York: United Bible Societies, 1996).
5. Which one of these categories does the modern dance fall into? It is definitely not a worshipful celebration, but it is *“patterned rhythmic movement of the parts of the body.”*

b. “I can dance without having lustful thoughts.”

- i. Due to the nature of the dancing that goes on, the lyrics of music, the desires of young men and women, and the temptation presented I would seriously question this notion.
- ii. Jesus said, “I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman with lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart” (Matthew 5:28; cf. see 29-30).
- iii. How will it affect others (Rom. 14:15)?
- iv. “People will have those thoughts anyway” (I Thess. 5:22).
- v. But we must also be concerned about contributing to lustful thoughts in others as well.

c. “It is accepted socially.”

- i. There are many things that are accepted in our society and culture that we would all agree are sinful (Rom. 12:1-2; Col. 3:1, 2; I Peter 1:13-16).
 - ii. In order to be “salt” and “light” we must be different than the world (Matthew 5:13-16).
 - iii. While, we are not taught to be different just for the sake of being different, we are to be distinctive in our conduct when it concerns glorifying Christ (2 Cor. 6:14-7:1; I Peter 2:9).
- d. “I’m just there”
 - i. “I’ll just go and watch” (Mark 6:21-25).
 - ii. I realize that it is possible to be there and not participate, but why attend an event in which the primary purpose of the event itself subjects you to temptation (2 Tim. 2:22).
 - iii. Is this where Christ would want us to be?
 - iv. Are we compromising with the world? Have we become desensitized to the enticements of sin?
 - v. Does this activity not have the potential to hurt our spiritual wellbeing and influence (Eph. 5:10-12; Psalm 1:1, 2).

III. Biblical Principles Concerning Dancing.

- a. The Bible condemns “carousing” (Gal. 5:21; Rom. 14:13; I Pet. 4:3).
 - i. “Nocturnal and riotous procession...used generally of feasts and drinking parties that are protracted till late at night and indulge in revelry” (Thayer, 367).

- b. The Bible condemns “lasciviousness,” “debauchery,” or “sensuality” (2 Cor. 12:21; Gal. 5:19; Eph. 4:19; 2 Peter 2:2, 7, 18; Jude 4).
 - i. The term is defined as “unbridled lust, excess, licentiousness, lasciviousness, wantonness, outrageousness, shamelessness, filthy words, **indecent bodily movements, unchaste handling of males and females**” (Thayer 79-80).
 - ii. “They interpret divine goodness as an opportunity to ignore God and do what they please (BADG, 141).
- c. Is dancing “sensual”? Does “dancing involve one in activities which excite lusts?”
 - i. When you put young people who are attracted to one another with raging desires in a dark room, with sexually suggestive music, low cut dresses, bodies rubbing together, and hands in the wrong places – how can we think such does not subject our children to temptation?
 - ii. Professor Louis J. Guyon, who owned and operated *Paradise Ballrooms*, one of Chicago’s largest dance halls, once wrote, “*We know that sex is the strongest impulse planted in the human race. You can just picture the effect on a boy or girl of 18 or 20, when this hunger is keenest, when knowledge and experience are lacking in the formation of judgment, of one of these dances which calls for close bodily contact and frequently brings the cheeks together and entwine the limbs. Yet, we find thousands of boys and girls dancing in this very way who do not realize*

they are doing anything out of the way, and whose fool parents look on complacently. When you are told that youth of both sexes can...survive this experience without mental, moral, and physical pollution, you know the teller lies...If you can believe youth is the same after this experience as before, then God help your child or your charge, for you are not fit for your responsibility If you do not believe I have correctly described the modern dances and their effect, you either have not seen them performed or you are willfully blind to their true character.”

- iii. Article regarding schools' concerns about dances and proms, *“What is the difference between frontal body rubbing and one person rubbing a backside against a front side...it’s all sexy. Dancing is sexy. But so what? It’s not sex. It’s flirtation.”* The article ended by saying, *“What it is, educators from New Hampshire to Washington state are growing increasingly agitated”* (Seema Mehta, Times Staff Writer, October 17, 2006).
- iv. Grinding or Freaking is simulated sex with clothes on – would a Christian want to be subjected to such actions?
- v. Prof. W.C. Wilkerson of Chicago University: *“It is a ‘system of means, contrived with more than human creativity, it is mean to excite the instinct of sexual action.”*
- vi. Dr. Rita Rollingsworth: *“Dancing is an exciting, pleasurable activity as it affords a partial satisfaction of the sex impulse...Dancing in fact, is such an erotic stimuli*

that it even works for boys and girls as young as the age of 11.”

- vii. Not only do dances fall into this category, so do man cheerleading routines. When the dress is immodest and the routines are intended to be sensual – then scriptural principles are being violated.
- viii. Christians must ask themselves, “Am I putting myself in a compromising situation?” or “Am I putting someone else in a compromising situation?”

d. Does Dancing Create Sinful Lusts (Matt. 5:28).

- i. Cybergown.com says this: “The sexy necklines look good but try not to wear a necklace for a more astonishing sexy look...This time the prom dresses have become more and more seductive.”
- ii. The headlines say it all: “How To Have The Most Romantic Night Ever,” “Tonight Will Last Forever,” “Dresses So Hot They Sizzle,” “Your Hottest Prom Body,” “Sex-Its Your call.”
- iii. These are the messages being marketed to teens regarding the Prom from Magazines such as “Seventeen,” “Young and Modern,” “Prom Magazine,” and “Your Prom.”

e. Dances Can Be A Prelude To Other Things:

- i. Immodesty will certainly be present (I Tim. 2:9-11; I Peter 3:1-4; Titus 2:11-15; Rom. 6:11-13).
- ii. Post Dance activities often include drinking and sexual immorality (I Cor. 6:12-18).

- iii. Thoughts that should not be a part of our heart (Eph. 4:19-24).
- iv. Pictures will be posted to Social Media and your presence will send the message that you support dancing in general.
- v. Why subject yourself to such temptation?
- vi. Why risk your influence (Matt. 5:13-16; Eph. 5:10-11).
- vii. Are there times when we are subjected to incidental issues at events? Yes, but we know with certainty that the primary purpose of this event and many of those things associated with it are not wise.
- viii. It takes “moral courage” to say “no” (2 Peter 1:5-8; cf. I Peter 4:3-4)

IV. How To Overcome:

- a. “Arm yourselves with the mind of Christ” (I Peter 4:1).
- b. Pray and watch (I Pet. 4:7).
- c. Consider your example and influence (Phil. 2:14-16).
- d. Think about the value of discipleship (Matt. 16:24).