

IS DANCING SINFUL?

INTRODUCTION:

1. What is dancing?
 - a. As with anything, dancing can be either good or bad depending upon which definition that one takes.
 - b. There are many forms of dancing.
2. Old Testament dancing.
 - a. The Old Testament definition of dancing means to: jump for joy; a whirling about; to skip...
 - b. This type of dancing was done by a single individual or by a large group.
 - c. The sexes never intermingled except where pagan influence had crept in (Ex. 32:19).
 - d. Dancing was normally performed by women being led by a woman as in the case of Miriam (Ex. 15:20-21).
 - e. Dancing usually took place outdoors.
3. The modern dance.
 - a. Can be defined simply as “the rhythmic movement of the body to music.”
 - b. The *Wycliffe Bible Dictionary* states, “The dance as we know it today, performed by pairs of persons of opposite sex, seems to be entirely unknown in the bible” (Pg. 419).
4. Anytime that a topic is discussed the definition must be agreed upon in order to come to a valid reason for its acceptance or its refusal.

DISCUSSION:

- I. IS ALL DANCING SINFUL?
 - A. There are several examples in the Old Testament of dancing that was not sinful.
 1. People DID dance in the Old Testament.
 - a. Some people danced alone.
 - b. Some people danced with the same gender in celebration.
 - c. Some danced for joy, and some danced to praise God (2 Sam. 6:14-16).
 2. Solomon spoke of dancing.
 - a. He said, “To every *thing there is* a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven: A time to be born, and a time to die; a time to plant, and a time to pluck up *that which is* planted; A time to kill, and a time to heal; a time to break down, and a time to build up; A time to weep, and a time to laugh; a time to mourn, and a time to dance” (Ecc. 3:1-4).
 - b. It matters not that most of the examples we have of people dancing is in the Old Testament; that fact does not make the dance wrong or sinful.
 - c. Why? Because God has never endorsed a person’s involvement in sinful activity no matter the dispensation.
 - B. There are examples in the New Testament of dancing that is not sinful.

1. Dancing figuratively represents one's joyful response to the gospel, which the Jews lacked (Mt. 11:17; Lk. 7:32).
2. There was dancing in the home of the prodigal son upon his return (Lk. 15:25); representing the joy that should be present when one repents.
3. **All these dances that have been named, as they relate to the people of that culture, were not sinful.**
 - a. These dances were not the sexually provocative dances that we think of when we consider the modern dance and the activities that accompany today's proms and nightclubs.

II. SOME DANCING IS SINFUL!

- A. There are two more references in the New Testament of dancing that is different from the previous three that have been named.
 1. Matthew and Mark record the same event.
 - a. Matthew writes, "But when Herod's birthday was kept, the daughter of Herodias danced before them, and pleased Herod" (Mt. 14:6).
 - b. Mark records, "And when the daughter of the said Herodias came in, and danced, and pleased Herod and them that sat with him, the king said unto the damsel, Ask of me whatsoever thou wilt, and I will give *it* thee" (Mk. 6:22).
 2. How was Herodias's daughter's dance different?
 - a. Robertson's Word Pictures states, "This was Salome, daughter of Herodias by her first marriage. The root of the verb means some kind of rapid motion. "Leaped in the middle," Wycliff puts it. It was a shameful exhibition of lewd dancing prearranged by Herodias to compass her purpose for John's death. Salome had stooped to the level of an *almeh*, or common dancer" (RWP, e-sword).
 - b. This dance would be in line with what we know as the "modern" or "ballroom" dance.
- B. From where did the modern dance originate?
 1. Historians point to the low-class road houses and brothels of France.
 - a. They point out that French prostitutes used dancing as a means of seducing and excite their clientele.
 2. Satan is in the business of enticing men to sin!
 - a. The lust of the flesh is a favorite device of man's greatest foe.
 - b. David was ensnared by it as he looked upon the nakedness of Bathsheba.
 3. But one does not have to see complete nakedness in order to be caught up in the works of the flesh.
 - a. God's definition of naked (Ex. 28:42); the loins begin at the small of the back: *môthen*: *mo'-then*: From an unused root meaning to *be slender*; properly the *waist* or small of the back; only in plural the *loins*: - + greyhound, loins, side
 - b. Gen. 3:21; Coats: *kāthēph*: *kaw-thafe'*: From an unused root meaning to *clothe*; the *shoulder* (proper, that is, upper end of the arm; as being the spot where the garments hang); figuratively *side*

piece or lateral projection or anything: - arm, corner, shoulder (-piece), side, undersetter.

4. Has anyone heard of *Dancing With The Stars*?
 - a. Satan is trying to bait the men and women of the world by programs like these.
 - b. Those that participate on the show are naked according to God's definition.
5. Dancing does not require nakedness though.
 - a. Fashion designer, Christian Dior, said he removed the stays from dance dresses because men were complaining that "they could not feel a living form under their partner's dress."
 - b. Dancing will cause one to have impure thoughts.
6. Paul said, "Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are *these*; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told *you* in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God" (Gal. 5:19-21).
 - a. Could the modern dance be described as "indecent bodily movements" or "unchaste handling of males and females?"
 - b. The answer is, of course, yes!
 - c. That is also what the Greek word from which we get our word, lasciviousness intends: ἀσελγεία: aselgeia: Unbridled lust, excess, licentiousness, lasciviousness, wantonness, outrageousness, shamelessness, insolence
 - d. J.H. Thayer connected the term with such things as "wanton (acts or) manners, filthy words, indecent bodily movements," and "unchaste handling of males and females" (pp. 79-80). It is a comprehensive term for evil and perversion (Balz, p. 169). For example, it describes the moral environment of ancient Sodom and Gomorrah (2 Peter 2:7), and one hardly needs to be reminded of the shameless practices characteristic of those communities (<https://www.christiancourier.com/articles/1123-what-is-lasciviousness>).
7. When viewed by others dancing can make one commit sin.
 - a. Paul encouraged the Corinthian brethren to do what was best for their neighbors (1 Cor. 10:24).
 - b. He also commanded that they never do anything that might cause another to sin (1 Cor. 10:32).
 - c. Jesus said, "It is impossible but that offences will come: but woe *unto him*, through whom they come! It were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and he cast into the sea, than that he should offend one of these little ones" (Lk. 17:1-2).

III. WHAT SHOULD WE DO?

A. As with any question that is not specifically named in the Bible we should always adhere to basic Bible principles.

1. **We are to glorify God in our bodies.**

- a. Paul said, “What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost *which is* in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's” (1 Cor. 6:19-20, emphasis RGO).
- b. He told the Philippians, “According to my earnest expectation and *my* hope, that in nothing I shall be ashamed, but *that* with all boldness, as always, so now also Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether *it be* by life, or by death” (Phi. 1:20).
- c. If a dance displays one’s body inappropriately, or included movements that are unbecoming a Christian, it always brings shame upon God.
- d. We cannot involve ourselves in such activities.

2. **We are to be honorable and respectable.**

- a. Paul told the Romans, “Recompense to no man evil for evil. Provide things honest in the sight of all men” (Rom. 12:17).
- b. He commanded the Philippians, “Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things *are* honest, whatsoever things *are* just, whatsoever things *are* pure, whatsoever things *are* lovely, whatsoever things *are* of good report; if *there be* any virtue, and if *there be* any praise, think on these things” (Phi. 4:8).
- c. We are to obey God in everything that we do (Acts 4:19; 5:29).
- d. Is the modern dance an honorable and respectable activity that God endorses?
- e. If our culture deems a particular dance inappropriate then Christians should avoid it (1 Cor. 11:6).

3. **We should never engage in lustful or sensual behavior.**

- a. Paul said, “Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof. Neither yield ye your members *as* instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members *as* instruments of righteousness unto God” (Rom. 6:12-13).
- b. The lust of the flesh is one of the avenues of sin (1 Jn. 2:16).
- c. The church in Corinth were battling these types of sins, “For I fear, lest, when I come, I shall not find you such as I would, and *that* I shall be found unto you such as ye would not: lest *there be* debates, envyings, wraths, strifes, backbitings, whisperings, swellings, tumults: *And* lest, when I come again, my God will humble me among you, and *that* I shall bewail many which have sinned already, and have not repented of the uncleanness and fornication and lasciviousness which they have committed” (2 Cor. 12:20-21).
- d. Lust is a strong desire to sin and licentiousness is an unbridled lust.

- e. Dancing can cause both these sins as with the dancing of Herodias's daughter.
4. **We should never engage in questionable behavior or that which we are unsure.**
- a. Concerning eating meat offered to idols Paul said, "And he that doubteth is damned if he eat, because *he eateth* not of faith: for whatsoever *is* not of faith is sin" (Rom. 14:23).
 - b. He told the Thessalonians, "Prove all things; hold fast that which is good. Abstain from all appearance of evil" (1 Thess. 5:21-22)
 - c. Paul's use of "every appearance" means every type of evil.
 - d. One must be absolutely sure that in what they are engaging is not sinful.
 - e. If there is a question whether a particular dance is sinful it should be avoided.
- B. Are these dances wrong?
1. **Children's dances.**
 - a. Is it sinful if our children dance the "Hokie Pokie?"
 - b. These dances are not sinful.
 - c. Jesus referenced these types of dances when He spoke of the joyful response to the gospel that one should have (a particular cultural response), "They are like unto children sitting in the marketplace, and calling one to another, and saying, We have piped unto you, and ye have not danced; we have mourned to you, and ye have not wept" (Lk. 7:32).
 - d. However, if this were to violate one's conscience then it would be a sin (1 Cor. 8:7-13).
 2. **Celebratory dances.**
 - a. What about a dance skit that is performed after a touchdown?
 - b. This is a dance similar to what David performed when he was victorious in bringing the Ark of the Covenant back to Israel (1 Chron. 15:29).
 - c. It can be sinful if any type of sinful or lascivious moves are incorporated.
 - d. Much like "high fiving" a teammate, it can be sinful if a sinful gesture is added.
 - e. **We must be very careful when it comes to things of this nature.**
 3. **Husband and wife.**
 - a. All people should understand that a married couple can dance in the privacy of their own homes in ways that would be considered sinful to an unmarried couple.
 - b. God allows for married couples to enjoy the physical intimacies of marriage (1 Cor. 7:3-4; Heb. 13:4).
 - c. Can married couples dance in public?
 - d. NO! Why? Whether the dancing couple is married or not has no bearing on the results of the dance.

- e. I can result in lustful desires of those that are watching as previously discussed.
 - f. Also, it would be a bad example to younger Christians that would see mature Christians dancing and possibly encourage teen Christians to participate in dancing (1 Tim. 4:12; Titus 2:7).
4. **Father-daughter dances.**
- a. Have you ever heard of “Purity Balls” or “Purity Dances?”
 - b. These are where young ladies (usually still in high school) are escorted to the dance by a father, grandfather, brother, or an uncle.
 - c. The young lady pledges to remain pure while the father pledges to protect his daughter in the area of purity, while remaining pure in his own life as a man.
 - d. Is this a permissible dance?
 - e. NO! Why? On the same grounds as the husband and wife dance.
 - f. The problem lies with those that are watching, just as with husband and wife.
 - g. While the father and daughter remain absolutely pure in their thoughts those watching likely will not.
5. **Wedding receptions.**
- a. This is wrong on the grounds already discussed.
 - b. This would bring reproach upon the church if it was hosted in the building.
6. **Ballroom dancing.**
- a. Many “churches” today are offering ball room dancing classes at their locations.
 - b. *Dancing With The Stars* is a ballroom dance competition.
 - c. Most of these dances are erotic and are designed to be so.
 - d. The Tango and the Salsa are two of the prominent dances and their purpose is to arouse sexual desire.
 - e. Dr. Edward Dreyfus, a Clinical Psychologist, wrote an article for SelfhelpMagazine.com in which he uses ballroom dancing to teach lessons in intimacy and sexuality. In the article, he has a section titled “The Dance of Sex” and says “Love-making is similar to ballroom dancing” (<http://www.selfhelpmagazine.com/articles/sex/sexther1.html>).
 - f. In Broowaha, an online citizen newspaper, Joan W. wrote an article titled, “The Dirty Little Secret of Ballroom Dance.” In it she says, “It’s dirty little secret is that men do ballroom dance for sex and money and women do it to get a husband...With more than a dozen women for every male, the odds favor the men.” (<http://sf.broowaha.com/article.php?id=2840>).
 - g. Jean Kim, with the Harvard Medical Area Ballroom Dance Club, wrote an article about the “perverts” that attend classes. Writing about *do nots* for men, she says, “Wandering hands, indiscreet stares, stalking, unwanted advances, men who circle the dance floor checking out women and the list of lecherous behavior goes on and

on and on. You know who you are. You are fooling yourself if you think that we don't." (<http://www.hcs.harvard.edu/~hma-bdc/>).

h. **Christians should not ballroom dance!** For the previously mentioned reasons.

7. **Square dancing.**

a. The old form of folk dancing known as square dancing, like clogging, is not sinful.

b. Modern square dancing, however, is sinful.

c. Most of the time the partners have to hold each other tight in order to be able to swing their partners around during the dance.

d. This type of square dancing has been promoted as a means of "touch therapy, and physical cognitive stimulation"

(<http://www.pasadenaweekly.com/cms/story/detail/?IssueNum=22&id=2958>).

e. Denise Mann, promoted square dancing by saying, "And the touching in itself can be beneficial to health, according to studies conducted at the Touch Research Institute in Miami, which showed that regular touching can reduce stress and depression and enhance immune system function" (Mid-Williamette Area Federation of Square and Round Dance Clubs, "Don't Be Square – Dance!" (<http://midwillamettearea.homestead.com>)).

f. There can also be a very sexual component to square dancing; girls wearing short skirts that fly into the air and their male partners holding them tightly as they perform each move. Anyone that discounts this type of dance as innocent is either uninformed or dishonest with themselves.

g. **Christians should not participate in this type of square dance for obvious reasons.**

8. **Line dancing.**

a. Some line dances are performed with no touching what so ever or lascivious movements, however, it may still be inappropriate to participate.

b. First of all, these types of dances are usually if not always performed in a bar or club.

c. Dress is mostly immodest and after drinking alcohol the movements become licentious in nature.

d. Many of the moves in the dance are lascivious to begin with.

e. **Christians should not participate in this type of dance.**

9. **School dances.**

a. Peer pressure is great when it comes to the school dance.

b. "Freaking or Grinding" is a large part of the modern dance.

c. This style of dance imitates the act of sex on the dance floor as the couple grind against each other.

d. Catherine Gewertz in Education Weekly said, "It looks like sex, but it's dancing."

e. Cindy Kranz in the Cincinnati Enquirer said, "Many describe it as simulated sex with clothes on."

- f. One student vented her frustrations with school dances, “Anyways the point is that dancing has continually gotten worse over the years. It started with girls just shaking their hips and Elvis making pelvic thrusts and has moved to full on sex on the dance floors (at least they’ve kept on their clothes, so far). It is really disturbing to see girls bending over for guys and afterwards saying that it was nothing, ‘just dancing.’ Come on now, it’s not just dancing” (<http://www.progressiveu.org/173143-freak-dancing-grinding-more-like-sex-on-dance-floors>).

CONCLUSION:

1. Christians should never consider participating in any activity that:
 - a. Doesn’t glorify God and exalt Christ (1 Cor. 6:19-20; Phi. 1:20).
 - b. Isn’t honorable and respectable in the sight of all men (Rom. 12:17; Phi. 4:8).
 - c. Causes one to lust after another and presents licentious behavior (Rom. 6:12; 2 Cor. 12:20-21; 1 Jn. 2:16).
2. Most forms of dancing are sinful and will cause one to lose their eternal salvation.
3. Paul commanded that we “walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God” (Col. 1:10).

MEMORY WORK

Lk. 17:1-2

1 Cor. 6:19-20; 10:32

Gal. 5:19-21

Phil. 1:20