

Shall We Dance?

Kathy [a work colleague], I hope you find the following information helpful. Perhaps you've already looked this up in the books mentioned below. I know that you're looking for a Biblical *principle*, which is the safest method for defending our beliefs. I believe you'll find ample reason to agree with the traditional church position on this issue.

I won't get into religious dancing, since we already agree that there was nothing wrong with it. Miriam and David were good examples of this type of dancing. *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Dictionary*, article, "Dance," p. 262, happens to add that "the Biblical dance bears little resemblance to the society dance (or even the so-called 'square dance') of modern Western civilization." Here's what the new 1996 edition of *The Seventh-day Adventist Encyclopedia*, vol. 11, article "Recreation and Amusements," section on "Dancing," p. 426, has to say:

. . . social dancing as it is known today is not found in Scripture, and from the beginning the Seventh-day Adventist Church has objected to it. "The amusement of dancing, as conducted at the present day, is a school of depravity, a fearful curse to society" (MYP 399). Because it is maintained that the dance tends to lessen interest in spiritual life, usually involves unchristian associations, and creates excitements that can lead to immorality, baptismal candidates are instructed to refrain from dancing (*Church Manual* [1990], p. 182).

I highly recommend that you look this up in the above book. The very next section, "Biblical Principles," pp. 426, 427, provides several Scripture texts grouped around the *stewardship* of the Gospel, of time, of finance, of influence, and of self. It's a bit long to quote here, but if you have trouble getting to it, let me know and I'll photocopy these pages.

In *Seventh-day Adventists Believe . . . : A Biblical Exposition of 27 Fundamental Doctrines*, p. 284, under "Unacceptable activities," we read:

Adventists . . . teach that . . . dancing [is] to be avoided (1 John 2:15–17). . . . Any activity that weakens our relationship with our Lord and causes us to lose sight of eternal interests helps to bind Satan's chains about our souls. Christians will rather participate in those wholesome forms of leisure activities that will truly refresh their physical, mental, and spiritual natures.

So here's the principle. In 1 John 2:15–17, the inspired apostle says: "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 forever." In note 18 of *27 Fundamental Doctrines*, the *Messages to Young People* quote referred to above is followed by several Bible texts, which I hope you'll look up. Besides 1 John 2:15–17, they are 2 Cor. 6:15–18; James 4:4; 2 Tim. 2:19–22; Eph. 5:8–11; Col.

3:5-10. "In view of these influences to sin," the note quoting *SDA Church Manual*, p. 148, continues, "Christians would do well not to 'patronize the commercialized amusements, joining with the worldly, careless, pleasure-loving multitudes who are 'lovers of pleasures more than lover of God [2 Tim. 3:4].'"'"

This is a controversial topic. My understanding of it is not the same as others I know, for example. Some tell me that the sexual temptation aspect was never a problem for them. I can tell you that for me, it was. I therefore want nothing to do with dancing.

You'll work this out for yourself. Why not ask God to give you peace on this issue? To me, it's something like being the only vegetarian at a wedding, or recently, at my company's 3,000-guest Christmas party. I find that by abstaining, I get chances to talk to others interested in the reasons. Maybe you could do something similar with the dance question. Take it as a challenge to "be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear" (1 Pet. 3:15).

May the Lord bless you as you study this out for yourself.

Sincerely,

Jerry Stevens
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