

LEWDNESS

Have you been warned of lasciviousness, lewdness? It is any action offering a “sample” of unlawful sexual pleasure without offering sex itself. Lot saw this from homosexuals in Sodom (2 Pet. 2:7), and heterosexuals are equally guilty—

Lewd words (Eph. 5:4) lead the mind of the hearer to dwell on images or actions that are sexually pleasurable but sinful.

Lewd dress is everywhere today as *the shame of nakedness* is being lost (Rev. 3:17). When people claiming to be saints believe that undressing at the city pool is okay with God, lewdness is either unknown or ignored. According to God you are naked in an average bathing suit (Gen. 3:7-10, 21).

Lewd movements define many common dances (“Dancing With The Stars” likely provides ample examples). Much modern music and videos flaunt lewdness which is often imitated on occasions like prom. Even the “touch” appeal of the traditional slow dance is obvious to anyone, especially any man, who analyzes its popularity.

Jesus, Paul, and Peter all warned that *those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God* (Mk. 7:22; Gal. 5:19; 1 Pet. 4:3). [Send us your comments]

Editor’s Note: This week’s article needs just as much distribution as does an article on baptism or the church because many people today hear the same amount of teaching on all of these subjects—practically none. Others “used to hear” preaching on this but the leaven of liberalism has silenced it. But this article also challenges us—could you hand it to a classmate with whom you have danced or friend you met at the city pool? If our lives are not meeting God’s standard, who will pay attention to our articles?

We assemble each Sunday at 10AM, 10:45AM, 5PM & Wednesday at 7PM

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The Exhorter

Acts 11:23 *Exhorted them all... cleave unto the Lord*

Church of Christ--Quail Valley

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PAINLESS DISCIPLESHIP

Joe Price

Church attendance is down in America (that’s not news). One reason recently noted in a blog is the emphasis on children’s sports activities on Sundays (*The Main Reason for Declining Church Attendance: Children’s Sports?*, Christianity Today). Parents take their children to play soccer, baseball, football and more instead of Sunday Bible class and worship services. When we moved to Washington over 15 years ago I vividly remember being astonished at the amount of children’s sports being played on Sunday mornings. The huge soccer complex near the church’s meeting place was filled with the evidence that many people worship recreation instead of God on the Lord’s Day.

One way churches are addressing this decline is by rescheduling worship services to accommodate families. By offering Saturday afternoon services they remove Sunday conflicts. Folks are free to do as they please.

Painless discipleship is in vogue. Jesus said, “If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me” (Lk. 9:23). By taking children to sporting events instead of worshiping God we are teaching them they are more important than the Lord. We are teaching them they can make plans that hinder them from putting the Lord first (Matt. 6:33). We are teaching them discipleship is adaptable to “me”.

We must not have an inconsequential view toward attending worship services (Heb. 10:24-25). Does the illness that keeps you from worshiping on Sunday also keep you home from work on Monday? Being a disciple of Christ requires sacrifice; it is not always easy. Children who learn other things are more important than worshiping God will do those other things. So will adults.

Sacrifice is necessary in order to follow the Savior who sacrificed Himself for us (1 Pet. 2:21; Rom. 12:1-2). Christians gladly offer themselves to the Lord regardless of personal inconvenience. Being faithful means always putting the Lord first (Col. 3:1-4).

[The Spirit's Sword (XVI:03) - April 14, 2013]

LET'S NOT BE NARROW (Roy Cogdill)

One of the most dreadful things many people can imagine is that they will be accused of "narrow mindedness" in religion. That literally scares them to death; the very thought that they might be considered narrow drives them completely away from the truth. Yet it should not. Truth is narrow. There is nothing liberal or generous about truth; it all narrows down to just one fact. The proper answer to the mathematical summation of two plus two is four. There just isn't any other answer on earth that is right save that one. Out of all the infinite number of answers that might be given, only one is right. Every other is necessarily false. The answer is not "five"; neither is it "three." Two plus two gives "four" — no more and no less.

At what temperature does water freeze? If we use the Fahrenheit scale, it begins to freeze at 32 degrees at sea level. Of all the answers that might be given to this question, one is right; every other is wrong, just as wrong as wrong can be. What direction is Dallas, Texas, from Lufkin? If you wanted to be exact, you could take a compass and determine exactly and precisely how many degrees west of north the one city is from the other. There is only one correct answer to that question.

Suppose somebody wants to argue the question as to the temperature at which water freezes, or wants to dispute the geographical relationship between Dallas and Lufkin? Is it "narrow mindedness" to insist that there is only one right answer to each of these questions? If someone should prefer to believe that water will freeze at 34 degrees, or 36, or even 33, and should accuse me of being "narrow minded" because I insist on 32 degrees, would not everybody know that truth has no alternative save to be "narrow"? It seems like many people go almost stone blind, and lose all the good judgment they ever had, when it comes to the subject of religious truth. They will accept principles in religion which they would laugh to scorn in any other area of life.

The very same man who has no difficulty at all in understanding why there can be only one right answer in scientific, or mathematical, or geographical problems, glibly assures everybody that there can be a hundred right answers to religious questions — and those answers can contradict one another in the most open and obvious fashion possible. He says, "You answer the question your way; I'll answer it mine, and we'll be brethren, and everything will be all right for both of us."

If that be the case, truth does not matter. Why have a Bible? Why not let each one believe what he wants to believe, throw the Bible away and forget all about the word of God. Why all of the preaching? If men are perfectly right in believing and following a multitude of contradictory doctrines, then why should any man want to teach anybody anything that is in the New Testament?

Does Jesus teach contradictory doctrines? Can one take the New Testament and find one page of it teaching that a child is born in sin, another page teaching that he is born in Christ "safe in the arms of Jesus"? One human creed teaches that baptism is by immersion only; another teaches that it is also by sprinkling and pouring, according to the preference of the candidate. Both creeds make their appeal to the Bible for substantiation of their doctrines. But does the Bible give any such contradictory teaching? If so, who can believe for a single minute that the Bible is of divine origin? The Lord does not teach a thing two ways, or a hundred different ways. Somebody is bound to be wrong!

Is it all a matter of "interpretation"? That is the claim that has been made. While people are talking about such a thing as interpretation, they ought not to forget that there can be also misinterpretation. Somebody has misinterpreted the truth. The Lord does not teach immersion only on one page, then turn right around and teach sprinkling and pouring on the next page. If anybody actually thinks he can read such in the Bible, he simply believes that God is not trustworthy, and His word is not reliable or dependable. No one could have any confidence in a man who would talk "out of both sides" of his mouth; neither can man have any confidence in a God who would do such.

Just as certainly as there is religious division in the land, just that certain it is that someone has taught something which is not in God's book. The Lord does not teach, and did not teach, contradictory, doctrines. Christ is not divided in the message he gives. When all men speak "as the oracles of God," they will "be of the same mind, and speak the same things." Suppose we could get all the preachers in a certain city to agree that for one year not a one of them would preach anything save that which is clearly set forth in the Bible. They would lay aside their respective creeds, distinctive doctrines, and peculiar names, and all of them preach only that which they can find in the Bible. Is it not obvious to all that there would soon be complete unity and harmony prevailing among all? The Bible reads alike to all of us; it does not tell you one thing, and tell me something different. If all of us will determine to speak only that which the Bible speaks, leaving out all human tradition, we will soon find the believers completely united. There can be no other alternative.

When preachers and teachers are content to confine their preaching to those things for which they can furnish a "thus saith the Lord," religious division quickly disappears. It would be so in any city in this nation where it might be tried. Christ is not divided in message. The different "messages" that are taught in the name of Christ are not truly messages of the will of Christ. For his will is contained for us in his word. When we have his word, and understand what it says, we will soon overcome the turmoil and division which have disgraced the religious world for these many centuries. [Gospel Guardian - June 9, 1955]