

The Danger of Prom Night

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“For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit. For to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace” (Rom. 8:5, 6). In this passage, the apostle Paul makes a clear connection between worldliness and the mind. It will do us well to recognize this connection. Furthermore, it will do us well to recognize that the mind is the beginning place of all worldliness. Jesus said, “A good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth good; and an evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart brings forth evil. For out of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaks” (Luke 6:45).

The battle against any form of worldliness must begin in the individual’s mind. One must control his thoughts. We should never underestimate the power of our mind in defeating worldliness. When Paul wanted the brethren at Colosse to “put to death your members on the earth,” what did he encourage them to do (Col. 3:5)? “Set your minds on things above, not on things on the earth” (Col. 3:2). If one wants to defeat worldliness, one must think on those things that promote moral purity (Phil. 4:8-9). One must not allow stimuli to enter his mind that leads to ungodly thoughts, stirs fleshy passions, and seeks fulfillment in various forms of worldliness.

Worldliness overcomes many because they have not guarded their minds against earthly thoughts. One form of worldliness that has caught many young people off guard is an event called the prom. Despite the fact that many social ills have become associated with the prom, it is still promoted as one of the greatest events in a young person’s life.

The Prom Is A Form of Worldliness

Webster’s Dictionary defines the word prom as “a formal dance held by a high school or college class.” Many treat a school prom as just a social event or another school activity. Some view the prom as an important event in a young person’s life that will make life long memories. For one arming his mind against worldliness, how people view the prom should not blind him to the fact that the prom is still a dance. One who is familiar with dancing and possesses some understanding of the sexual desire between males and females must understand that dancing is a form of worldliness.

In Galatians 5:16-26, Paul contrasts walking according to the flesh and walking according to the Spirit. These walks are so contrary to one another that to walk in one is to be at war with the other. Paul admonishes us to “walk in the Spirit and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh” (Gal. 5:16). Among those things by which “the works of the flesh are evident,” Paul mentions “lasciviousness.” When one understands the definition of “lasciviousness,” one can understand why dancing is a work of the flesh that will keep one from inheriting the kingdom of God (Gal. 5:19-21).

Webster's Dictionary defines "lasciviousness" as "tending to excite lustful desires." Does dancing tend to excite lustful desires? Vine's Expository Dictionary states concerning "lasciviousness" that it "denotes excess, licentiousness, absence of restraint, indecency, wantonness; the prominent idea of shameless conduct." Does dancing promote an absence of restraint, indecency, and shameless conduct? Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon defines "lasciviousness" as "unbridled lust, excess... indecent bodily movements, unchaste handling of males and females, etc." If the apostle Paul could view a prom today, would he not use the term lascivious to describe the attire and the bodily movements between the sexes?

I have often wondered what would happen if all the fanfare used to dress up the prom was removed. A young man and young woman wrapped up in each other's arms firmly press their bodies together, moving them back and forth against one another. If a formal dress and tuxedo are the attire and added with some music and decorations, people would call this a prom or a dance. However, remove the fancy clothing and the party supplies, and this activity between the young man and woman becomes "making out." It becomes an activity arousing and enticing sexual desires. It is no wonder that one of the things involved in making preparations for the prom is getting a room at a hotel to satisfy those desires ignited on the dance floor.

A great battle in the life of a young person is keeping oneself sexually pure. God designed the only honorable way to fulfill the sexual desire in the marriage relationship (Heb. 13:4). Any way outside the marriage relationship of fulfilling the sexual desire is a form of worldliness (Heb. 13:4; Gal. 5:19). Fornication includes premarital sex. Those young men and women who engage in premarital sex after the prom are fornicators.

The battle to overcome committing fornication begins in the mind. Going to an activity such as the prom is not going to prepare the mind to overcome this form of worldliness. However, it will sow the seeds that stir lust in the heart leading to sexual immorality.

Other Sins Associated With The Prom

Immodesty is rampant at a prom. Young ladies and their parents lack complete discretion in this area. Dresses that are backless, low cut in the front, above the knee, or slit in the side up to the hip bone define the attire of many young ladies on prom night. There is no need to wonder why a young girl who chooses to wear such attire loses the battle of worldliness. One's attire is a reflection of who one is inwardly (1 Pet. 3:3-4). The attire young ladies wear to a prom does not reflect a mind that is "set on things above," but reflects a mind that is "set on things of the flesh." The attire added with the indecent bodily movements overwhelm many young men.

Fornication is another sin closely connected with the prom. Many schools now have groups that promote abstinence before a prom. They ask students to sign statements promising not to engage in sexual activity. I have heard of some parents who give their children rings or other jewelry to remind them of their commitment to abstinence. Of course, there are those on the other hand who believe young people are going to have sex. So, instead of teaching them to behave morally, they teach them the importance of safe sex. Regardless of the view taken, evidently most people associate fornication with the prom.

The nature of the prom itself tends to promote fornication. It is often reserved for the upper grades. Some promote it as one of the key events in an individual's scholastic career. Young people are told the prom is an event they will look back on the rest of their lives. Some proms are conducted in the convention room of a hotel with the convenience of private rooms only minutes away. Furthermore, because the prom is a formal occasion for young men and women, it provides them an opportunity to act grown up. Should we wonder why those attending the prom would consider fornication as "icing on the cake"?

Another sin closely associated with the prom is drunkenness. Again there are those who promote abstinence from alcohol on prom night by asking students to sign pledges of sobriety. Some schools even use a breath test on any one suspected of using alcohol at the prom. There are parents who provide safe environments for their children to drink by renting hotel rooms for their children, chauffeured limousines, or having parties in their home. Again, regardless of one's view toward alcohol and the prom, evidently students, parents, and school officials associate drunkenness with the prom.

Alcohol numbs the senses and disables the mind against worldliness. Proverbs 23:31-33 says, "Do not look on the wine when it is red, when it sparkles in the cup, when it swirls around smoothly; at the last it bites like a serpent, and stings like a viper. Your eyes will see strange things, and your heart will utter perverse things." Later in Proverbs 31, notice why the warning is given to kings and princes against drinking intoxicating drink: "Lest they drink and forget the law, and pervert the justice of all the afflicted" (Prov. 31:5). If intoxicating drink has this effect on kings and princes, imagine the effects it has on young men and women.

Using a search engine on the Internet or investigating some of the web sites of the groups like Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD) or Students Against Drunk Driving (SADD), one can find statistics confirming the ills of alcohol and prom night. People have been killed as a result of drinking and driving on prom night. Statistics will not show the number of young men and women who engage in fornication on prom night because alcohol has lowered their inhibitions. Results of fornication often produce shame and regret, unplanned pregnancies, and sexually transmitted diseases. Yet, despite these ills, schools still include the prom among the social activities for students. Since the prom is seen as a school activity, many parents and students do not view the prom as a dangerous form of worldliness.

Conclusion

If a school had a service club that produced the same ill effects as the prom, how long would school officials continue to allow it? How many parents would allow their children to be involved in extra-curricular school activities that produces the fornication, immodesty, and drunkenness that is associated with the prom?

We must arm our minds against worldliness. Once this barrier has been broken down, it will be next to impossible to keep worldliness out. When one is sober minded and has set his mind on things above, it will be easy for him to recognize the dangers of prom night. However, if one allows his mind to think the prom is just another school activity or social event, it opens the door to unchaste handling of males and females, fornication, and drunkenness.