

## **MORAL PURITY AT WEDDINGS**

*Mike Willis*

From time to time, various authors have addressed pertinent applications regarding moral principles as they apply to such things as smoking, social drinking, immodest dress (wearing modern swimsuit attire around those of the opposite sex, shorts, skin-tight jeans, etc.), dancing, and other issues. I would like to address what will probably be a topic sensitive to some of our readers. That topic is the application of our moral principles at weddings. I suspect that the observations which I shall make will be similar to those that other conscientious Christians likewise have observed.

**MODEST DRESS AT WEDDINGS.** Perhaps I am not the only one who has been alarmed at the number of Christian ladies who are immodestly clad at weddings. Low-cut bridal gowns with plunging backs are commonplace in today's bridal fashions and not a few Christian ladies are choosing those gowns for their bridal attire. The dresses chosen for the maid of honor and other bridal attendants are frequently low cut with plunging backs.

The commandment to dress

modestly has just as much application on the day of one's wedding (or the wedding of a friend) as it has the rest of one's life. Paul wrote, *“In like manner also, that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety; not with broided hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array; But (which becometh women professing godliness) with good works”* (1 Tim. 2:9-10). One does not escape the temptations of lust just because one is at a wedding. Jesus warned, *“Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not commit adultery: But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart”* (Mt. 5:27-28). I do not understand the thinking of those Christian ladies who forget their modesty at their wedding ceremony!

There are modest gowns for the bride and her attendants on the market. In one's desire to find the most beautiful wedding gown for herself, the bride should not forget her responsibility to dress modestly before the Lord and men. The dresses are white for purity and decency, but cut for lust and immorality. Preachers who conduct weddings may need to take a more assertive role in this regard. At least, they have the right/obligation to be sure that

they not participate in those occasions in which sin is being committed. A preacher can certainly ask if the bride and her attendants will be dressed modestly before he consents to participate in the wedding. He must not embarrass or needlessly offend a pure, lovely Christian who would not think of dressing indecently, but he can state in a kind and non-accusatory fashion that he is asking these questions because of his own conscience — he does not wish to participate in those weddings in which the bride and/or her attendants dress immodestly.

**ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES AT THE WEDDING.** On some occasions, I have attended weddings of Christians and been surprised at the wedding reception to see alcoholic beverages served. This most frequently happens when a Christian marries a non-Christian. Frequently, the defense is offered by the Christian and her family, “We didn't pay for the alcoholic drinks.”

Am I missing something here? The Christian is the one getting married and she or he can choose whether or not to be part of such festivities. Why can't the person simply say, “I do not drink alcoholic beverages and they will not be a part of my wedding”? What am

I missing?

If this creates a problem, I would suggest that it better to get those problems on the table before the marriage rather than after the marriage. What part Christ is going to play in one's life needs to be clearly discussed between the husband/wife and the in-laws (as might be necessary).

The decision of whether or not to have alcoholic beverages at one's wedding is not a morally neutral choice. Peter wrote, *"For the time past of our life may suffice us to have wrought the will of the Gentiles, when we walked in lasciviousness, lusts, excess of wine, revellings, banquetings, and abominable idolatries"* (1 Pet. 4:3). Note that *"drunkenness"* is not the only sin one can commit by drinking intoxicating beverages.

**DANCING AT THE WEDDING.** I have been to two weddings by Christians which had dancing; I suspect that there are a lot more weddings among

Christians which have dancing to which I am not invited. In one of the weddings, I was surprised to see the Christian father dance with his Christian daughter and it was obvious that this was not the first time that either of them had been dancing. A DJ was brought in to play music for all who wished to dance.

If dancing is wrong in other settings, isn't it also wrong at the wedding? Does it cease to have a lascivious appeal just because it occurs at the bridal reception?

#### **CHURCH DISCIPLINE.**

Churches that close their eyes to immodest dress, drinking, and dancing at weddings bear responsibility for the increase in these sins at weddings. Paul wrote, *"Your glorying is not good. Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump?"* (1 Cor. 5:6). Teenagers who watch the young ladies have such a "pretty wedding" with its dancing, drinking, and immodest dress will want a wedding just as pretty for

themselves. As a result, these lax moral standards will profligate among us.

Let's not forget our moral principles on the wedding day. One can have a modest wedding gown, leave out the drinking and dancing and still have a very beautiful and memorable day. Surely, participating in sinful activities at one's wedding is not a good way to start a marriage! And, Christian parents allowing their children to have such a wedding on the day that they leave the home is a poor way to end parental oversight. Think about it!

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***"And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God."***

**—Romans 12:2**

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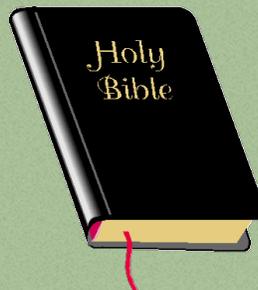
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