

FROM THE ELDERS AT PROM SEASON

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As the end of the school year approaches, there are many occasions of celebration. One long-standing tradition is the high-school prom, with many viewing it as a “rite of passage” that is part of the “high school experience.” While most in the world see the prom and other similar activities as a good thing, this is where we as Christians need to have the discernment to see the sin that will inevitably result. As Christians, this is a specific time where we need to have the resolve to “come out from the world and be separate” (2 Cor 6:17), and resist the pressure to be like everyone else.

Ungodly occasions

Mark 6:21-29 tells us about Herod the Tetrarch’s birthday feast and the death of John the Baptist. Jesus Christ said of this one who was murdered, “Verily I say unto you, Among them that are born of women there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist” (Matt 11:11). How did Satan provoke a man to murder such a righteous servant of God? Herod married Herodias, his brother Philip’s wife, and John the Baptist rebuked them for their sinful relationship, and was therefore imprisoned (Matt 14:1-5). Herodias hated John and looked for an occasion to have him killed. She used her own daughter to “please” Herod with her dancing (Mark 6:22). He was so pleased he made a rash promise that resulted in the murder of John the Baptist. There are many lessons to learn from what happened to John, but one is that ungodly occasions and events lead to sin. The Bible contains many other examples of this. Pharaoh had his chief baker hanged during his birthday feast (Gen 40:20-22). King Ahasuerus of Persia had his wife, Queen Vashti, brought out to provoke the lust of his princes and servants, though she refused to participate and was put out as queen (Est 1:1-12). Job’s children had birthday celebrations which caused their father to offer sacrifices to God in fear that his children were cursing the Lord in their hearts (Job 1:4-5). The famous “handwriting on the wall” came from God because Belshazzar, King of Babylon, was using the holy vessels from God’s temple to drink wine and worship idols in a “great feast to a thousand of his lords” (Dan 5:1-6). The princes of Israel made their king sick with drunkenness on his birthday (Hos 7:3-5). Proms, dances, parties, and other functions are well-known for their association with immodest clothing, alcohol consumption, illicit drug use, lust, fornication, fighting, and other sinful actions. Dancing and other lust-provoking activities lead to sin. Christians must have no part in these activities. By definition, we have been called out of this world to be separate (holy) to God (2 Cor 6:14-7:1).

Fleeing youthful lusts

Young people (and their parents) should consider the following scriptures which serve to protect our souls. James 1:13-15 says, “Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man: but every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death.” And 1 John 2:15-17 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

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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 for ever." Romans 6:12 says, "Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof." Romans 13:14 says, "But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof." First Corinthians 10:6 teaches us that "we should not lust after evil things." Galatians 5:16-17 says, "This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh. For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would." Galatians 5:24 says, "And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts." Ephesians 4:22-24 says, "That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; and be renewed in the spirit of your mind; and that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness." Second Timothy 2:22 says, "Flee also youthful lusts: but follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart." Titus 2:11-12 says, "For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world."

Being holy

First Peter 1:13-16 says, "Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ; as obedient children, not fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts in your ignorance: but as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation; because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy." First Peter 2:9-12 says, "But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light: which in time past were not a people, but are now the people of God: which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy. Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul; having your conversation honest among the Gentiles: that, whereas they speak against you as evildoers, they may by your good works, which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation." First Peter 4:1-5 says, "Forasmuch then as Christ hath suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves likewise with the same mind: for he that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin; that he no longer should live the rest of his time in the flesh to the lusts of men, but to the will of God. 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: wherein they think it strange that ye run not with them to the same excess of riot, speaking evil of you: who shall give account to him that is ready to judge the quick and the dead." Let us remember Proverbs 27:12: "A prudent man foreseeeth the evil, and hideth himself; but the simple pass on, and are punished."