



## Innocence Lost

A child's innocent gift of dance is twisted into something evil. Though she walks of the pages of scripture and into the fog of history, what happened to this little girl? Generation to generation, children learn patterns of behavior that effect them the rest of their lives. What are the influences working to undermine childhood today and what are possible faith-filled responses?  
*Mark 6:14-29*

For Herod himself had sent men who arrested John, bound him, and put him in prison on account of Herodias, his brother Philip's wife, because Herod had married her. For John had been telling Herod, "It is not lawful for you to have your brother's wife." And Herodias had a grudge against him, and wanted to kill him. But she could not, for Herod feared John, knowing that he was a righteous and holy man, and he protected him. When he heard him, he was greatly perplexed; and yet he liked to listen to him. But an opportunity came when Herod on his birthday gave a banquet for his courtiers and officers and for the leaders of Galilee. When his daughter Herodias came in and danced, she pleased Herod and his guests; and the king said to the girl, "Ask me for whatever you wish, and I will give it." And he solemnly swore to her, "Whatever you ask me, I will give you, even half of my kingdom." She went out and said to her mother, "What should I ask for?" She replied, "The head of John the baptizer." Immediately she rushed back to the king and requested, "I want you to give me at once the head of John the Baptist on a platter." The king was deeply grieved; yet out of regard for his oaths and for the guests, he did not want to refuse her. Immediately the king sent a soldier of the guard with orders to bring John's head. He went and beheaded him in the prison, brought his head on a platter, and gave it to the girl. Then the girl gave it to her mother. When his disciples heard about it, they came and took his body, and laid it in a tomb. *Mark 6:17-29*

## For Personal Study

The death of John the Baptist is reported in varying amounts of detail throughout the Gospels. In Mark's Gospel, John the Baptist was arrested and imprisoned because of King Herod's fear of him. John had been openly criticizing Herod for taking his sister-in-law as his own wife, and Herod was afraid that John's preaching would start a revolt against him.

Although Herod feared John, he would not kill him because he knew John was a righteous and holy man, and he liked hearing him speak. Herodias, Herod's wife, did not share his respect for John and looked for any chance to have him killed. Herodias' chance came when her daughter Salome's dancing so pleased Herod that he promised her anything she desired. Herodias prompted her daughter to ask for the death of John. Herod granted Salome's wish and John was killed.

Herodias used her daughter to get revenge against John. Salome probably trusted her mother and asked for her advice. Herodias could just have easily asked for John the Baptist's freedom. However, she was bent on getting revenge and didn't think about (or even care) how she was influencing Salome?

There are many influences on our children. The biggest influences on them are the adult role models in their lives – parents, teachers, pastors, etc. Children learn their patterns of behavior from these adults. We can blame the internet, television, music, books, etc., but in the end the example we set is what's important.

God gave us the gift of free will – the freedom to make choices. One of the greatest gifts we can give our children is the ability to use the gift of free will to make appropriate choices. If children see adult role models making appropriate choices, it helps them to do the same.

## Readings & Questions

### for Daily Discovery or Group Discussion

#### Monday, July 17

John the Baptist dared to tell the king it was wrong to take his brother's wife. If you were John, what would you have done?  
*Mark 6:18*

#### Tuesday, July 18

Have you ever faced a time when the truth was difficult but necessary to say to someone? What happened?  
*Acts 6:8-15*

#### Wednesday, July 19

Would you consider John the Baptist's ministry a success or a tragedy? How do you measure spiritual success?  
*Galatians 5:22*

#### Thursday, July 20

Who are your role models of faith? Who are your children's role models of faith?  
*Matthew 7:7-12*

#### Friday, July 21

What would you like to pass on to the next generation?  
*Matthew 18:1-6*