

The Power of Peer Pressure

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Introduction: What People Will Do Under Peer Pressure!

- A. The power of peer pressure must not be underestimated.
 - 1. Many young people, under the pressure of their peers, will consume alcohol or drugs, commit fornication, dress, talk, and act a certain way.
 - 2. Older people will make foolish financial decisions, vote a certain way in politics, and compromise their moral values in order to fit into society.
 - 3. Christians are not immune to the pressures of the world and must learn to stand fast in the face of opposition as Jesus did (**John 15:18-20**).
- B. What is “peer pressure”?
 - 1. Peers are individuals with whom you identify, who are usually, but not always people of your same age.
 - 2. Peer pressure is when you experience the persuasion or even coercion from others who pressure you to adopt similar values, beliefs, and goals, or to participate in the same activities as they do.
 - 3. “Peer pressure” is not unique to modern times, but an ancient problem.
- C. Do you have what it takes to go against the will of the majority?
 - 1. It takes great moral character, courage, and faith to go against the will of the majority.
 - 2. There is a tremendous temptation to follow the crowds, to want to be like everyone else, yet to do so can be disastrous!
 - 3. Only by the help of our Lord and the power of His gospel can we overcome the “peer pressures” in this world.

I. Why Do People Succumb to Peer Pressure?

- A. The need to belong (fear of rejection).
 - 1. The Proverbs, addressed primary to the youth (**Prov. 1:4**), warns against the temptation to run with the crowd (**Prov. 1:10-16**).
 - 2. Afraid to be the odd one out, alone and friendless, many submit to the wishes of the group, desperate to be accepted and liked (**1 Pet. 4:3-4**).
- B. They are naïve.
 - 1. Why do people sometimes do such stupid and foolish things!?!
 - 2. People do very foolish things because they lack wisdom, experience, and proper judgment: Simply put, they are **naïve!**
 - 3. The naïve are easily deceived, believing in almost anything others may say (**Prov. 14:15**).
 - 4. Many adults remain naïve in refusing to listen to wisdom (**Prov 1:22**).
- C. Insecurity or fear of others
 - 1. Fear was the reason why the apostle Peter gave into the “peer pressure” of the Jews, when he separated himself from the Gentiles (**Gal. 2:11-13**).
 - 2. Many people compromise what they believe in out of fear of what others may say or do (e.g., ostracism, ridicule, violence).
 - 3. Many, especially the youth, are too insecure to make their own choices.

- D. They don't know how to get out of the situation.
 - 1. Often people feel helpless, unable to see their way out of a situation, so they give in to pressure time and again.
 - 2. Despite your circumstances, you can choose what is right! (**Ps. 119:10**).

II. The Consequences of Giving in to Peer Pressure.

- A. Bad decision making
 - 1. Pilate gave into "peer pressure" to have Jesus crucified, even after he, as governor, had determined that Jesus was innocent! (**Luke 23:22-25**).
- B. Great hardship in playing the fool
 - 1. Those who follow the crowd instead of God's wisdom will suffer hardship in life (**Prov. 1:10, 22-32**).
- C. Ultimately, giving in to peer pressure can cost you your soul (**Mat. 7:13-14**).

III. How to Overcome Peer Pressure.

- A. Learn to think for yourself
 - 1. Don't allow others to pressure you to decide one way or the other on what the truth is or what is right and wrong (e.g., **Exod. 23:2**).
 - 2. Choose for yourself right from wrong (e.g., **Josh. 24:15**).
 - 3. By "training your senses" by the word of God, you will be able to make the right decisions (**Heb. 5:14**).
 - 4. Don't believe everything people tell you; investigate, examine, and search for the truth! (**Acts 17:11**)
- B. Understand the will of the Lord (**Eph. 5:15-17**).
 - 1. Our "moral compass" is the Bible which enables us to walk in wisdom.
 - 2. *Ignorance is not bliss*; to avoid danger and playing the fool, we must be careful how we walk and this requires our devotion to Bible study.
- C. Be ready to give an answer and take your stand *before* you feel the pressure (**1 Pet. 3:13-15**).
 - 1. Deciding on the spot what your stand will be is foolhardy and risky.
 - 2. Having the courage to stand for what is right takes lots of preparation (e.g., Bible study, prayer).
- D. Befriend at least one person who will stand with you for what is right.
 - 1. Do you have a friend that will stand with you in the truth? (**Pv. 18:24**).
 - 2. Such support and encouragement helps us to be wise (**Prov. 13:20**).
- E. Remember, that even when you are all alone, the Lord will be with you and will help you (**2 Tim 4:16-18**).
 - 1. Even when "there is no way out", God will deliver you (**1 Cor 10:13**).
 - 2. Instead of giving in to peer pressure, let us confidently say: "*The Lord is my helper, I will not be afraid. What shall man do to me?*" (**Heb. 13:6**).
- F. Stand true to God by refusing to compromise the truth (**2 Cor. 13:8**).
 - 1. What God thinks of you is much more important than what the world thinks of you! (**James 4:4**).
 - 2. Some Christians compromise their stand for the truth, for fear of what their brethren may think instead of trusting the Lord (**Prov. 29:25**).
 - 3. Instead, stand true to the Lord, no matter what the cost (**2 Cor. 6:8**).

Conclusion: Peer Pressure is Overcome by Our Faith in the Lord (1 John 5:4-5).