

From My Bible

Sermon Notes
& Outlines

Peer Pressure

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Introduction

These messages are compiled from study notes and outlines of my own and many others. I hope they are a help to you.

I'm sure that all of us have at times "borrowed" or "used" a sermon we heard or read somewhere along the way. A thought, a word, or an idea jumped out to us from another preacher and we took that thing and ran with it. You have probably used an outline from a preacher brother but ended up preaching something that was uniquely different. Same idea, it just came out differently when you preached. Using your own thoughts, experiences, and illustrations.....the message became your own.

I heard an old-time preacher once say, "*Any message worth preaching ought to be worth preaching again!*" Well, I have certainly preached some sermons again and again. I have borrowed from others to preach theirs again too. Please use these messages as the Lord leads and preach His Word over and over again!

I make no claim of complete originality for this material. Also, please remember that these messages are not expected to substitute for your own personal study of the Word of God! The thoughts and ideas are given as a catalyst to help begin your ideas on a given passage of Scripture or trigger a seed thought to get you going. It is my prayer that the "stuff" contained here will further kindle the fire of God's message that is already in your heart. Your own thinking, praying, and studying will be necessary to guide you into the delivery of His Word to your own people.

May these sermons become *messages* from the Lord that He uses in your own life as He has used them in mine.

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The Definition of Peer Pressure

Text - Exodus 23:1-2, 24, 32-33

INTRODUCTION: Many teens, if asked, would say that they are not influenced by peer pressure. Yet those same teens use phrases like, “*everybody else is doing it*” and “*I’m not going unless you are.*” In fact, all people are influenced to a certain degree by the people around them. Teens are especially influenced and often don’t know it. They don’t understand what peer pressure is and how it works. They don’t know that giving in to peer pressure can change who they are. All teenagers need to understand this powerful force that affects their choices and their life.

According to a recent (9/10/2007) Barna report, when asked to identify the most significant or challenging issues facing their teenagers, **the #1 answer given by parents was peer pressure** (42%). This far exceeded any other answer, including performance in school (16%) & substance abuse (16%).

Peer pressure is nothing new. Even in the time of Moses, God warned of the problem of the negative peer pressure that the Israelites would face as they entered the Promised Land. He forbids giving into peer pressure, and He tells of some steps they should take to minimize peer pressure. This morning I want to deal with the subject of peer pressure. This problem was bad when I was in High School, but it is far worse today.

What Is Peer Pressure?

Peer pressure is the **influence** of your **friends** on your **decisions!**

Some Biblical language for peer pressure.

1. Conforming to and loving the world. Rom. 12:2 I John 2:15-17
2. Pleasing men, rather than God. I Th. 2:4
3. Fearing man, rather than God. Pr. 29:25
4. Being influenced by the ungodly. Ps. 1:1
5. Associating with ungodly companions. I Co. 15:33
6. Joining a wicked mob or a gang. Ex. 23:2 / Prov. 1:10-14, 16-19

THE TRUTH ABOUT PEER PRESSURE

(1) It impacts everyone. Proverbs 13:20

(2) It's both good and bad. I Corinthians 15:33
Hebrews 10:24-25

(3) Like attracts like. Amos 3:3

(4) Different levels create different levels of impact.
Matthew 11:18-19/I Corinthians 5:9-13/Mark 3:13-19

Peer pressure is the **influence** of your **friends** on your **decisions!**

The Influence

Peer pressure is a powerful force, especially in the life of a teenager. Every teen needs to be aware of what peer pressure does.

1. It causes us to do what we normally would not do

Friends can make an idea we never thought of sound good. That can be positive and negative.”

2. It allows others to think for us

God wants every person to think about what they do since each one will stand before Him someday. God has given everyone a mind, and He expects us to use ours (Rom. 14:4–5, 12).

Peer pressure is the **influence** of your **friends** on your **decisions!**

3. It promises a false acceptance

Many give in to peer pressure because they don't want to stand out. They want to blend in and feel accepted by the crowd. However, just because you give in to peer pressure doesn't mean you will be truly accepted. Many times teens put pressure on others just to see if they will cave in. They know if you'll do what they say, you can be used to do what they want.

4. It removes our focus from what God wants

Your friends might tell you that your hesitation to perform a certain action is unnecessary. You should do what feels right, they say. Your fun and happiness are all that really matter in life. If you've spent any time in God's Word, you realize that God says something quite different. His Word tells you who He is and how He behaves. Anything you do that is contrary to God's character is sin.

If your friends don't know God or don't want to please Him, the things that they pressure you to do are based on what pleases them best. You must decide whether your life will please the infinite God of the universe who truly cares for you or the finite people of this world who always care most for themselves.

The Dangers of Peer Pressure

INTRODUCTION: The youth of our generation faces incredible peer pressure and dangers every day in the world.

Every day:

(Taken from "Right from Wrong" by Josh McDowell page 18)

- 1,000 unwed teenage girls become mothers
- 1,106 teenage girls get abortions
- 4,219 teenagers contract sexually transmitted diseases
- 500 adolescents begin using drugs
- 1,000 adolescents begin drinking alcohol
- 135,000 kids bring guns or other weapons to school
- 3,610 teens are assaulted; 80 are raped
- 2,200 teens drop out of high school
- 6 teens commit suicide

Every generation has had its own pressures but the current faces perhaps the toughest and most dangerous of challenges.

Peer Pressure Nowadays

1. Pressure to drink/try alcohol
2. Pressure to experiment with drugs
3. Pressure for Pre-marital sex
4. Pressure to disobey parents
5. Pressure to disobey God

1 ALCOHOL

These sobering statistics show how alcohol affects the world of a child. Alcohol is the #1 drug of choice among our Nation's youth.

- Research indicates that adolescents who abuse alcohol may remember 10% less of what they have learned than those who don't drink.
- In a 2003 National Survey on Drug Use & Health, persons reporting first use of alcohol before age 15 were more than 5 times as likely to report past year alcohol dependence or abuse than persons who first used alcohol at age 21 or older (16% vs. 3%).
- Almost 20% of 8th-graders, and 42% of 10th-graders have been drunk at least once. More than 11% of 8th-graders, 22% of 10th-graders, and 29% of 12th-graders report binge drinking (five drinks in a row in the last two weeks)

Dangers of Alcohol

- Nearly 75% of all Americans drink at least occasionally
- 13 million people in America have alcohol problems
- 7 million people in this country are in some form of alcoholism
- 50% of fatal car crashes involve drunkenness
- 64% of murders are associated with alcohol
- 1 out of every 10 "social drinkers" become alcoholic
- Alcohol is the # 2 killer behind heart disease, even more than cancer
- 500,000 Americans die each year from alcoholism

What does the Bible say about Alcohol?

Proverbs 20:1

The things we're talking about today (Alcohol, Drugs, Sex) are all things that Satan tries to tempt you into in order to defile your body. Your body is not really your own, it belongs to God

1 Corinthians 6:19,20

(Beer, Drugs, Sex, wouldn't do them in or at church, don't do them outside of it)

2 DRUGS

Campus Drugs: A recent Columbia National Center survey finds that 28% of middle-school-students reported drugs are used, kept or sold at their schools, up 47% since '02. 62% of high-schoolers say drugs are at their schools. (PWB 8/19/05)

Sad Scene - A recent survey of teens in U.S. drug treatment centers found that 20% of teens have shared drugs with their parents and that in about 5% of cases, parents introduced their kids to drugs. (CT 10/13)

- Loving Drugs more than God is a form of Idolatry.
- Other than Alcohol, Marijuana is the most common and easily accessible drugs.
- Marijuana is a "gateway drug"-opens up road to other hardcore drugs.
- Drug addiction will lead you into breaking all of the 10 Commandments. (Steal, Lie, Murder, Covet, Dishonor Parents)

Drugs are an incredible temptation.

James 1:14,15

Temptation for escape, power(steroids) (ILLUS-Chris Benoit Story)

1 Corinthians 10:13

God can rescue the most unlikely of people and call on us at the most unlikely times to help him out.

3 SEX

Teen Sex

Roughly 20% of young teens (ages 13-16) are sexually active; not counting those who don't think oral sex is really sex. 12% have had oral sex. Only 15% of parents say their young teen is sexually active beyond kissing while nearly 30% of teens admit going there. About 85% of parents think they talk to their kids about sex and relationships, but only 41% of kids agree. (Beverly LaHaye Institute 1/28/05)

STATS

- 1 in 4 teenagers have an STD
- A teenage female who is sexually active and doesn't practice safe sex has a 90% chance of getting pregnant within 1 year.

Matthew 5:27, 28

Sex outside of marriage is Adultery.

ILLUS-Attitudes of Sex

Teens are facing an intimacy crisis that could haunt them in future relationships. Casual teen attitudes toward sex —

particularly oral sex — reflect their confusion about what is normal behavior. “When teens fool around before they’re ready or have a very casual attitude toward sex, they proceed toward adulthood with a lack of understanding about intimacy. What it means to be intimate is not clearly spelled out for young people by their parents and people they trust,” writes Sabrina Weill in her book *The Real Truth About Teens & Sex*. (USA Today 10/18/05)

1 Peter 1:14 1 Thess. 4:4-5

- **Teen boys**-pressured by friends and sometimes Fathers.
- **Teen girls**-Pressured by boyfriends.

TEENS AND SEX / RESEARCH REVIEW

Pauley, J. (1995). Sex, teens, and public schools. NBC.

- One million U.S. teenagers become pregnant each year.
- U.S. has highest rates for teenage pregnancies, abortions, and child bearing in the industrialized world.
- In 1970, 70% of U.S. teenage births were to married teenagers.
- By 1990, 70% of U.S. teenage births were to unmarried teenagers.
- The U.S. spends \$34 billion a year in welfare payments to families headed by teenage mothers.
- As mentioned in the documentary, “Nobody, not politicians, not pastors, nor parents know what to do about it.”

The following statistics are staggering:

- Eighty-three percent of all babies born to teens are born to poor, low-income girls.
- One third of teen mothers gives birth to a second baby within two years.
- Two thirds of all teenage girls who become pregnant have been sexually or physically abused.
- Seven out of ten teens become sexually active while in high school.
- Four out of ten girls will become pregnant while teenagers.
- Two out of ten girls will become teenage mothers.
- Eight out of ten teen mothers drop out of school and eight out of ten of their children will grow up in poverty.

How are we to combat this?

By living by the Spirit of God and not following desires or pressures for sex.

Galatians 5:16-17

Boys/Girls-Your bodies are precious gifts that are meant to only be given to your Husband or Wife.

1 Corinthians 6:18

Best way to combat against things we've discussed so far-FAMILY

- In a study of 14,700 teens, University of North Carolina sociologist Kathleen Harris discovered that girls with involved fathers are more likely to delay sex and less

likely to use drugs or alcohol. (Children's Ministry 11-12/98)

4 DISOBEY PARENTS

Perhaps the most common pressure to succumb to. God recognizes the importance of children obeying their parents.

Exodus 20:12

This was the first commandment that had a promise attached to it. "Live Long"

Ephesians 6:1-3

Leviticus 19:3 and Colossians 3:20

God recognizes that the family is the first and foremost influence on a child.

As kids, your view of parents changes with age.

"Children and Their Changing Attitude Towards Their Parents."

- Age 4: "My parents can do anything"
- Age 8: "There might be one or two things they don't know."
- Age 12: "Naturally, my parents don't understand."
- Age 14: "I never realized how hopelessly old fashioned they are."
- Age 21: "You would expect them to feel that way; they are out of date."
- Age 25: "They come up with a good idea now and then."

- Age 30: “I wonder what Mom and Dad think I should do?”
- Age 40: “Let’s be patient until we discuss it with our parents.”
- Age 50: “What would Mom and Dad have thought about it?”
- Age 60: “I wish I could talk it over with them one more time”

Do you want your parents to be proud of you?

Proverbs 23:22,24,25

The parent who suffers the most with disobedient children is the Mom

Proverbs 10:1

It is a parents job to discipline you when you mess up. They are doing it out of love.

“If they love me why are they so hard on me?”

Proverbs 3:11,12 Proverbs 1:7

5 DISOBEY GOD

“Don’t listen to your parents.” “Don’t Go to Church, there is no God.”

“Let’s go get drunk/stoned.” “You’re not a man unless you’ve had sex.”

Some of the things you might hear from ungodly friends.

Friends will pressure you to disobey God because they are not believers themselves.

They don’t know God themselves, therefore they will never

give you Godly advice.

Proverbs 14:7

One of the keys to understanding our relationship to God is in understanding that God wants us to obey Him not for His sake, but for ours. God loves us so much that He wants us to avoid the pitfalls and disappointments of this life. He knows that when we take on the attitude of Christ, we will be happy and satisfied. Our obedience to Him is to our great benefit in our lives today and forever.

It takes effort to be obedient to God. It doesn't "just happen".

Respected Bible scholar D. A. Carson said this:

"People do not drift toward holiness. Apart from grace-driven effort, people do not gravitate toward godliness, prayer, obedience to Scripture, faith, and delight in the Lord."

Amos 5:14

The actions of a person disobedient to God demonstrate a will that is not surrendered to God.

- That great saint and missionary pioneer, **Hudson Taylor** said, "*The real secret of an unsatisfied life lies too often in an un-surrendered will.*" *Halfhearted obedience satisfies neither us, nor God.*

It takes a person who is willing to let go of their arrogance to surrender their will and realize that God is in charge.

Roger Staubach who led the Dallas Cowboys to the World Championship in '71 admitted that his position as a

quarterback who didn't call his own signals was a source of trial for him. Coach Landry sent in every play. He told Roger when to pass, when to run and only in emergency situations could he change the play (and he had better be right!). Even though Roger considered coach Landry to have a "genius mind" when it came to football strategy, pride said that he should be able to run his own team.

Roger later said, "I faced up to the issue of obedience. Once I learned to obey there was harmony, fulfillment, and victory."

All of the things we've talked about (Alcohol, Drugs, Sex, Disobedience) are Satan's ways to draw you away from God and bring hardships upon your family. But you may be asking "Why should I bother? What's in it for me?"

God has made us a promise.

Isaiah 1:19,20

I urge you today to choose the path of righteousness that leads to God and Heaven. Don't be a friend of the world. You cannot love the world and God at the same time.

James 4:4

While in the world some unbelievers constantly play "Simon says". Well the world is Simon and many are doing exactly what the world says. The world says have same sex relationships, so they do! The world says get drunk and do drugs and they do! The world says rebel against your parents, and yes you know they do! But once God sets you apart from the world there is a new game that should be learned called "Jesus says." It's sad, but many Christians

are still playing “Simon says” instead of doing what Jesus says. At the end of time many will find themselves lifting their eyes from hell standing right next to Simon.

So how are we able to resist following the peer pressures of the world?

Conclusion: Romans 12:1-2 I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, *which is* your reasonable service. 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.

Facts About Teens & Peer Pressure

1. Most common in Adolescents
2. Peer pressure comes in all stages of life
3. Peer pressure can be negative or positive
4. Can Influence choice of appearance
5. Can change growth
6. Main reason leading to bad things (sex, drugs, alcohol)
7. 30% of teens are offered drugs while in high school
8. 74.3% of HS students have tried alcohol
9. 3.1 million teens smoke in the United States
10. Half of teens are pressured into sex
11. Can lead to lack of self esteem
12. Can become an addiction
13. Marijuana use has raised 275% between 1992 and 1997
14. 9.5% of high school students have tried cocaine
15. The average starting age for drinking among teens today is 13 years old
16. 32.2% of teens have drank before 13
17. 30.2% of students are offered drugs
18. 3.1 million teens smoke tobacco
19. There are 4 million reports of STD's by teens annually.
20. 23 % of teenage girls are pressured into having sex
21. 25 % of teen girls are pressured into drugs and alcohol
22. 41 % of teen girls are pressured to be mean to others
23. 44 % of girls are pressured to lie, steal or cheat
24. 67 % of teen girls pressured into dressing a certain way
25. Approximately 9 % of 14-year-olds
26. 18 % of 15- to 17-year-olds
27. 22 % of 18- to 19-year-olds experience a pregnancy each year
28. 20% of them have tried a cigarette
29. 66% have tried alcohol
30. 25% reported having been involved in a binge drinking
31. More than one-third of teens are sexually active
32. Peer pressure feels lousy to the teen who is pressured

The Distinctives of Peer Pressure

Text - 1 Corinthians 15:33

Introduction: The Bible is full of stories of young men and women who battled with peer pressure. When the pressure was on they either stood their ground or caved in miserably. Either way, their lives are examples of how we should or shouldn't deal with peer pressure today. Let's look at these distinctives and how each contributes to the way we deal with peer pressure.

Influences

Are you bowing to the pressure?

- Drugs
- What you do for love
- Alcohol / Smoking

Intimidation

Bullying

- He knows just how you feel, he was probably bullied himself at one time
- Getting your own life back

Insecurity

Popularity

- You're accepted, not an exception

Individuality

Happy being me

- Forgiving / Forgetting / Forward Progress

Independence

Dealing with the pressure

- Misfits
- Finding the road to freedom

Involvement

Having good friends

- Be-attitudes for friends
- Who are you hanging around?
- Everybody needs somebody, but make sure it's the right somebody

Peer Pressure - Good & Bad

Introduction: In more than thirty-five years as a pastor, I've done my share of counseling. Occasionally, I have to deal with a family situation in which a teenager has rebelled against the spiritual training which the parents have tried to give. Yet, in spite of a parent's best efforts and fervent prayers, the young man or woman decides to take a different path. One of the first questions I ask mom and dad is: "Do you have any idea what brought this on?" The answer is almost always the same in every case: "It all started when he (or she) began hanging out with *the wrong crowd.*"

The real issue is not just the wrong crowd as much as it is the "peer pressure" that the crowd exerts on a person. It can undo in one weekend what a parent's has tried to build and protect over fourteen or fifteen years.

1. Iron sharpeneth iron; so a man sharpeneth the countenance of his friend. (Pr. 27:17)
2. Peer pressure can be both a hindrance and a help.
3. Bible is clear about the consequences of both types.
4. Bad peer pressure = temptation,
5. Good peer pressure = encouragement.

I. Examples of Bad

- A. Gen. 3 - Eve tempted by serpent, Adam tempted by Eve - **Fall of Man**
- B. 2 Chr. 10:8 - Rehoboam listens to friends' advice - **Divided Kingdom.**
- C. Gal. 2:11-13 - Peter withdraws from Gentiles, other Jews follow him - **Segregation.**

D. John 12:42 - Nevertheless among the chief rulers also many believed on him; but because of the Pharisees they did not confess him,: - **Fear**

II. Examples of Good

A. Gen. 39 - Joseph denies Potiphar's wife - (goes to prison) **Exalted in Egypt.**

B. NT epistles - Paul encourages and exhorts many congregations - **Growth.**

C. Matt. 4 - Jesus tempted - Devil gives up, James 4:7 **Resist the devil and he will flee from you.**

Conclusion

1. We cannot conform to the world, what our friends want us to be, James 4:4
2. Bible is our standard for living, not the world view.
3. Proverb 13:20, He who walks with wise men will be wise, But the companions of fools will be destroyed.
4. We have to have faith and rely on God to lead us in the right direction. Heb 11:24,25
5. Are we looking for acceptance from our peers, or the eternal reward from God's acceptance?

50 Facts About Peer Pressure

1. Most common in Adolescents
2. Peer pressure comes in all stages of life
3. Peer pressure can become a habit
4. Peer pressure can be negative or positive
5. Positive peer pressure is when the overall change is for the better
6. Can influence choice of appearance
7. Can change growth
8. Can become permanent
9. can lead to unprotected sex, pregnancy, STD's
10. Main reason leading to bad things (sex, drugs, alcohol)
11. Can be overcome by treatment and help
12. 30% of teens are offered drugs while in high school
13. 74.3% of HS students have tried alcohol
14. 3.1 million teens smoke in the United States
15. Half of teens are pressured into sex
16. Can lead to lack of self esteem
17. Can become an addiction
18. parents have the strongest influence over teens when it comes to peer pressure
19. Marijuana use has raised 275% between 1992 and 1997
20. 9.5% of high school students have tried cocaine
21. the average starting age for drinking among teens nowadays is 13 years old
22. 32.2% of teens have drunk before 13
23. 30.2% of students are offered drugs
24. 25% of girls in High school
25. 25% of ages 17-18 smoke tobacco
26. 25% of ages 17-18 smoke tobacco
27. 3.1 million teens smoke tobacco

28. There are 4 million reports of STD's by teens every year.
29. Can even start in Kindergarten.
30. Pressure from one's peers to behave in a manner similar or acceptable to them.
31. 51% of parents do not have monitoring software for their teens.
32. 42% of parents do not review the content read or typed in chat rooms or IM's
33. 99% of parents couldn't identify POS (parent over shoulder) or P911 (Parent alert.)
34. 28% of parents do not know if their teen talks to strangers online
35. 30% of parents allow their child to take their computer or laptop to a private place in the house.
36. One in thirty three children received an aggressive sexual solicitor who asked to meet them somewhere, called them on the telephone, or sent them regular mail, money, or gifts.
37. Nearly two-thirds of teenagers who drink end up buying their own alcohol.
38. 23 Percent of teenage girls are pressured into having sex
39. 25 percent of teen girls are pressured into drugs and alcohol
40. 41 percent of teen girls are pressured to be mean to others
41. 44 percent of girls are pressured to lie, steal or cheat
42. 67 percent of teen girls pressured into dressing a certain way

43. Positive peer influence will affect results on tests (A MSU study on 6th grade girls)
44. junior and senior high school students drink 35% of all wine coolers sold in the US
45. Approximately 9 percent of 14-year-olds, 18 percent of 15- to 17-year-olds, and 22 percent of 18- to 19-year-olds experience a pregnancy each year
46. 20% of them have tried a cigarette
47. 66% have tried alcohol
48. 25% reported having been involved in a binge drinking episode
49. More than one-third of teens have had sexual intercourse
50. Peer pressure feels lousy to the teen who is pressured

Peer Pressure

Introduction: One of the major influences on your life will be your peers (friends and other people of your own age). The temptation to be like those around you is strong. As a result, peer pressure is something that must be addressed. That does not intend to convey the message that all peer pressure is bad. On the contrary, depending on whom you choose to have as peers, this pressure may be a positive influence.

On a scale of 1-10 (10 being best), how do you think you do handling peer pressure?

What would have to change about your life for this score to be higher?

Conforming Versus Transforming

Rom. 12:1-2 *I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. 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.*

What does this passage say about conforming and transforming?

List some ways you could become transformed by the renewing of your mind?

We must choose transformation over conforming. The consequences of conformity have far-reaching effects. For example, if you allow peer pressure to convince you the

guy you like is the one for you (in spite of what you know to be right), you may soon see devastating consequences related to that choice.

1 Cor. 15:33 - *"Be not deceived: evil communications corrupt good manners."*

Why do you think this verse does not say, "Good company will fix bad morals"? What can we learn from this verse?

"A man is known by the company he shuns as well as the company he keeps." CH Spurgeon

2 Tim. 2:22 - *"Flee also youthful lusts: but follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart."*

What are we told to flee, and what are we told to pursue?

You cannot chase both in life. It is not possible to pursue the "evil desires of youth" while also chasing after "righteousness, faith, love, and peace." In order to be transformed into what God desires us to become, we must not conform to the standards of the world.

Ephesians 5:6-7 *Let no man deceive you with vain words: for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience. Be not ye therefore partakers with them..* What advice is given in this passage?

Proverbs 13:20 *He that walketh with wise men shall be wise: but a companion of fools shall be destroyed..* What would you list as some differences between wise individuals and fools?

Galatians 1:10 *For do I now persuade men, or God? or do I seek to please men? for if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ..* How would you answer the

questions asked by the first part of this verse? Explain.

How well do you think your lifestyle relates to the answer given above?

Specific Peer Pressures

Much about peer pressure can be focused on specific issues. Peer pressure is often linked to sex, drinking, drugs or other mind-altering substances, or rebellion against authority.

In what area of your life (perhaps those listed above, or perhaps something not listed) do you face the most peer pressure?

The pressures that specifically come your way in life will be unique. They will come in many forms and across many years.

"If you find yourself loving any pleasure better than your prayers, any book better than the Bible, any house better than the house of God, any person better than Christ, any indulgence better than the hope of heaven -- take alarm!"
Thomas Guthrie

Peer Influence

In addition to the question of how you handle peer pressure in your own life, we must address what kind of peer you are to others.

Everyone is an influence to those around them. You are either a positive influence to others or a negative influence.

Standing alone against a group of powerful peers can be

very difficult. It will be important for you to associate with as many Christian friends as possible. In so doing, you will find the encouragement and strength you need to be a positive influence to others around you.

Peer pressure is a double-edged sword. You must resist negative peer pressure. At the same time, you must attempt to positively influence your peers toward the things of God.

Carefully evaluate your life regarding peer pressure. List several ways you are a positive / negative influence to your peers.

The Power of Your Peers

Mark 15:1-15

THE TRUTH ABOUT PEER PRESSURE

(1) It Affects Everyone.

Proverbs 13:20

(2) It Can Be Both Good And Bad.

I Cor. 15:33 Hebrews 10:24-25

(3) Like Attracts Like.

Amos 3:3

(4) Different Levels Of Friendship Create Different Levels Of Impact.

Matthew 11:18-19 & I Cor. 5:9-13 Mark 3:13-19

Mark 15:1-15

1. Your Peers Don't Always Ask For The Right Thing

2. Your Peers Don't Always Listen To The Right People

3. Your Peers Don't Always Inspire The Right Decision

Introduction: I read an article once about an old carnival headliner nicknamed "Cannonball." In his younger days he was blasted out of a cannon 1,200 times. When asked why he did this, he replied, "Do you know what it's like to feel the applause of 60,000 people? That's why I did it!"

The power of your peers - it's real; it's pervasive; and it's intimidating.

"Your peers " has power in the most prominent areas of our society: morality, politics, and religion.

Take *morality* for example. "Your peers" have many brainwashed into thinking that the "gay" lifestyle is acceptable rather than deplorable and wicked.

"Your peers " have mind-boggling power to influence how we think and act.

I read a definition of "peer pressure" recently that went like this:

"Peer pressure" is:

When we make a decision based on someone else's values.

For the message, let's look at three things about "your peers" that threaten your spiritual well-being.

Your Peers Don't Always Ask For The Right Thing - V. 8

The crowd came to Pilate to ask him to release Barabbas. They could have asked for Jesus to be set free - the one who spoke truth, the one who healed the sick, the one who set people free from demonic bondage, the one who

showed kindness and compassion. But instead they asked for Barabbas, a murderer.

William Barclay was right, however, when he said that in asking for Barabbas over Jesus, they wanted lawlessness over law, war over peace and hatred over love.

But this is nothing original. People have been asking for the wrong things for thousands of years.

In Exodus 32, the people demanded a golden calf to worship, and Aaron, Israel's high priest, willingly, even enthusiastically, complied.

Paul predicted that the time would come when the crowd would want to hear a certain kind of message. We are seeing its fulfillment in our day.

2 Tim 4:3-4 – “For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables.”

Your peers don't always ask for the right thing. As a matter of fact, the crowd - conditioned by the Bible-despising, God-hating, Christ-rejecting, sin-embracing media - more often than not *asks for the wrong thing.*

Your Peers Don't Always Listen To The Right People - V. 11

Mark tells us in verse 11 that "the chief priests stirred up the crowd to have Pilate released instead of Barabbas."

The crowd listened to those who had no use for Christ; no reverence for him; no devotion toward him. As a matter of fact, *they hated him*. They hated him for his holiness. They hated him for his claim to exclusivity. *Because the crowd listened to the enemies of Jesus*, because they allowed their choice to be conditioned by those who hated Jesus, they chose poorly. They settled for a bargain-basement, second-rate, dime-store substitute. They could have had Jesus. They chose Barabbas.

Are there "chief priests" today among your peers who hate Christ and work against him, attempting to turn the minds of their hearers against the historic Christian faith and the teachings of the Bible?

There were many opportunities for Christians to listen to wrong voices. Paul said, "Leave sin alone. Don't mess with it. Separate yourself from it. If you don't, it will destroy you."

Your Peers Don't Always Inspire The Right Decision - V. 15

The fifteenth verse records Pilate's sad and cowardly reply, recorded to his everlasting infamy: "*Wanting to satisfy the crowd*, Pilate released Barabbas to them. He had Jesus flogged, and handed him over to be crucified."

Conscience didn't inspire his decision. His conscience said "Release Jesus. He's an innocent man."

Common sense didn't inspire Pilate's decision. Common sense said that the serene, peaceful, dignified man standing before him could not be the traitor and the terrorist that the chief priests claimed him to be.

Evidence didn't inspire Pilate's decision, for there was not a scrap of proof to convict Jesus *of any civil crime*, much less a capital offense.

Here's where he made his fateful error: *he allowed someone else to make a life-or-death decision for him*. Remember the definition of peer pressure earlier:

"Peer pressure" is when *we make a decision based on someone else's values*."

There are times when we can give in to peer pressure and it's no big deal. Sometimes when I go to a restaurant with friends, I'll wait to see what everyone else orders before I order. I may be in the mood for a steak, but if the others order soup and salad, then I'll make my selection for lunch based on someone else's values.

But when it comes to moral choices, I cannot allow anyone else to make these choices for me. I must not be pressured to conform to the values of those who are in rebellion against God and his Word.

Decisions provoked by peer-pressure, or fear, or a desire to take the easy way out, always come back to haunt us. There is a price to pay for compromise, and the bill eventually comes due.

Those familiar with American history know about Aaron Burr. Aaron Burr had a great spiritual heritage. He was the grandson of the great preacher and revivalist, Jonathan Edwards. Burr eventually became the Vice-President of the United States under Thomas Jefferson. But hatred overtook him and he eventually killed his long-time political rival, the first Secretary of the United States Treasury, Alexander

Hamilton, in a duel. Burr later turned against his country in an attempt to start his own independent nation in the southwest with New Orleans as the capital. Aaron Burr lay on Staten Island at the age of eighty - a lonely, forsaken, bitter old man. Such promise: the grandson of Jonathan Edwards, the son of Rev. Aaron Burr, the President of the College of New Jersey (now Princeton), Yale-educated. Aaron Burr could have gone down in history as a great man, but we remember him as a murderer and a traitor.

What many historians don't tell us is that earlier in life, he attended an evangelistic meeting at Yale University. When the invitation was given to receive Christ as Savior and Lord, Burr was deeply moved to give his life to Christ. As he started forward to make public his profession of faith, someone whispered loud enough to be heard, "Look at Aaron Burr. He's going to get religion!" Embarrassed by these words, Burr turned around and returned to his seat. He said to the student who made the comment, "Don't get excited! I was only fooling." In that one defining moment, Aaron Burr determined his destiny for time and eternity. *The crowd doesn't always inspire the right decision.*

Conclusion: "Peer pressure" is dreadful and scary. Without a genuine relationship with Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord, we don't stand a chance of resisting its attraction.

Conquering Peer Pressure

Introduction: Frequently old problems are given new names. Peer pressure is a term not used in the Bible. However the idea is clearly there. Peer comes from the Latin *par* which means “equal.” One’s peers are one’s *equals, friends* and *associates*.

According to a recent survey of 337 teenagers, 90 percent experienced peer pressure and 80 percent admitted giving in to peer pressure at least weekly, even if it meant doing something they knew was wrong.

Peer pressure is another way of referring to the problem of *evil associates* or *the wrong crowd* or *bad friends*. Paul wrote, 1 Corinthians 15:33 "Be not deceived: evil communications corrupt good manners."

Satan knows that peer pressure is one of the most efficient ways people are led to sin. Remember, Adam was led astray through Eve's peer pressure. Peer pressure led Abraham to tell a half-truth on two occasions (Gen. 17:11-20; 20:2-5). Isaac spoke in a comparable way and with less basis when he sought to deceive for fear of peer pressure (Gen. 26:7).

Peer pressure led Israel into idolatry and associated sins over and over. Because of such a great danger, God wanted his people to be separate in diet, dress, life and religion. Marriage with unbelieving inhabitants was wisely forbidden by God. Solomon, the wisest man in his time, disregarded this and married many foreign women. In his old age he succumbed to peer pressure (1 Kings. 11:1-13). So peer pressure is not just a problem of the young.

Peer pressure was involved when Israel came to Samuel and said, “Make for us a king to judge us like all the nations” (1 Sam. 8:5). The prophets had to deal with this problem all during the existence of Israel and Judah.

One of the most disgusting examples of peer pressure is told in 2 Samuel 13. David’s son Amnon felt such lust for his half-sister Tamar that he became sick. He knew it was improper for him to do anything to her. However, Amnon had a friend and relative named Jonadab. He was sinister and crafty. Jonadab suggested a hypocritical and diabolical plan by which Amnon could take advantage of his half-sister. Amnon followed the suggestion. The result was he was not happy, he disgraced and ruined the life of his half-sister, hatred was generated in the family, and finally Tamar’s brother Absalom murdered Amnon. David, as a loving father was deeply hurt. All of this because of peer pressure from an evil associate.

Peer pressure can make a wicked person even more wicked. When Ahab became king in Israel he continued “to walk in the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat.” In other words, they continued to have altars and golden calves at Dan and Bethel. Then he married princess Jezebel and was influenced to introduce Baal worship in Israel (1 Kgs. 16:30-33). Peer pressure from Jezebel caused him to “provoke the Lord God of Israel to anger” more than all who had been king before him. Herod, to whom John the Baptist preached, was a wicked man but he had respect for John, heard him gladly and did many things in connection with him. He was influenced to have a righteous man murdered because of the influence of his wife, dancing stepdaughter and those who sat with him (Mk. 6:14-27).

Sometimes we may feel we are so strong that we think peer

pressure is no risk to us. Watch out! Even someone who had been with Jesus for three years, who had healed people, cast out evil spirits, and felt so strong that nothing could turn him aside, yielded to peer pressure and denied Jesus three times and with an oath and cursing. Peter's fall is in Matt. 26. We must take heed lest we fall (1 Cor. 10:12).

Conquering Peer Pressure

Conquering Peer Pressure Starts At Home.

Parents need to teach an individual accountability to our personal, powerful, all-seeing and all-knowing God. We cannot be with our children everywhere and all the time. We must instill the idea that there is One who is always with them who sees and knows what they are doing (Psa. 139:112).

Conquering Peer Pressure Continues Through A Person's Own Commitment.

Each individual needs to develop a personal commitment to the Lord. When Peter denied the Lord, cursed and swore, the thing that overwhelmed him was not that he had rebelled against the Divine law of God. That which brought him to tears and regret was a consciousness that he had hurt the heart of his Savior; he had trampled on his loving heart!

Conquering Peer Pressure Must Be Defined As More Than Breaking Certain Set Of Laws.

The Bible states that it actually grieves the Holy Spirit (Eph. 4:30) when we sin. A child will not deliberately choose a course that brings grief to parents that he really loves. The prodigal son was not thinking when he took all and went to live as he pleased in a far country. Later he thought about home, his caring father and how he had grieved him. Sin had no appeal when he thought of the

grief he had caused.

Conquering Peer Pressure Must Include Teaching That Is Directed To The Issues They Actually Face.

They have a lot of peer pressure to smoke, drink, abuse drugs, lie, cheat, dance, fornicate, be immodest, proud and greedy. We live in perilous times. Young people must be led to see men are "For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, Without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, Traitors, heady, high-minded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away." (2 Tim. 3:2-5)

Conquering Peer Pressure Involves Making Parents Aware Of Who Their Children Associate.

Help them to associate with those who will aid them to live better. Be willing to open your home to the friends of your children. In this way you will have some knowledge of your children's friends and control over their activities.

The wise man of Proverbs warned his son over and over of dangers which threatened him (Prov. 1:10,11,15; 2:12,16; 4:14,15; 5:8; 13:20; 20:19; 22:24,25; 23:6,20, etc.).

Peer pressure is great, but it can be overcome. Jesus did. The Apostles did. We have help. "I have written to you, young men, because you are strong, and the word of God abides in you, and you have overcome the wicked one" (1 Jn. 2:14b).

Dealing With Peer Pressure

Text - Exodus 23:2

Introduction : Peer Pressure affects ALL of us. Societal/Vocational/Educational/etc.

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Why fight it?

1. For Your Testimonies sake
2. For Your Saviour
3. For Your Usefulness to Him

Remember that the Majority is not always right

Be willing to stand up for what the Bible says

Expect your convictions to be tested

Trust God to work everything out

**“Christian Young People Are Not Supposed To Fit In;
They Are Supposed To Stand Out!”**

- * Peer pressure can be very powerful at times.
- * Most of us would not like to admit how many times we have buckled underneath it.
- * We like to think of ourselves as independent thinkers, unpersuaded by what others think of us.
- * Sometimes it's people and/or their opinions of us that influence what we do and how we live.
- * Peer pressure can be both positive and negative.
- * Negative example -
Humor - Divorce vs. Murder

A nice, calm, respectable lady went into the pharmacy, walked up to the pharmacist, looked straight into his eyes, and said, "I would like to buy some cyanide."

The pharmacist asked, "Why in the world do you need cyanide?"

The lady replied, "I need it to poison my husband."

The pharmacist's eyes got big and he exclaimed, "I can't give you cyanide to kill your husband. That's against the law! I will lose my license! They'll throw both of us in jail! All kinds of bad things will happen. Absolutely not! You CANNOT have any cyanide!"

The lady reached into her purse and pulled out a picture of her husband at a fancy restaurant, having dinner with none other than the pharmacist's wife.

The pharmacist looked at the picture, surprised, and replied, "Well now, that's different. You didn't tell me you had a prescription."

Reporter interviewing a 104-year-old woman: "What is the best thing about being 104?" "No peer pressure."

Ways to Handle Peer Pressure

- Walk away from a bad/dangerous situation
- Make the decision for yourself as to what you do
- Think ahead about the outcome of your actions --- can you live with the consequences?
- Avoid those people who might lead you to do things you don't want to do
- Hang with friends who have the same values
- Find friends who have a good reputation
- Identify those negative behaviors that peer pressure might lead you to try:
 - Drugs
 - Smoking
 - Drinking
 - Sex
 - Stealing
- Talk to your parents about limits (especially if they haven't initiated it)
- Determine whom you are willing to hurt or lose (peer pressure always puts you in the middle)
- Use others to help fight peer pressure, but don't completely rely on others
- Spend time with many different people/groups; not just one group of friends
- Set your lifetime goals and stay focused
- Realize that everything you do in life impacts the future
- When dating, spend time in groups rather than as a couple
- Choose a best friend with the same Christian values and beliefs as you

- Don't compare yourself to others --- you never win!
- Remember that Christ died for you and that you are special
- Being "cool" is being yourself!
- Recall fads and peer pressure from years past to realize how foolish they can sometimes be
- Identify that peer pressure seems to be a friend at first, but turns into a bitter enemy
- Use humor to say "no"
- Be honest and say that although your friendship with someone is important, you don't feel comfortable
- Blame your parents! "My mom/dad wouldn't be happy if I did that!"
- Say "I promised I'd never do that, and I want to be true to my word."
- Say "Sorry, I've got to go now" and leave immediately
- Simply and firmly say "No"
- Realize that others will pressure you to act, but you alone live with the consequences.
- If possible, have a cell phone with you to call a loved one in cases of emergency!

The Importance of Friends

Introduction: The relationships we have with friends is extremely important. The Positions, Posture, and Purpose of friends is given to us in Psalm 1. Notice the words..."Walketh", "Standeth", "Sitteth".....how does someone end up "sitting" with this crowd.....gradually thru poor relationships!

Your Friends Define You (Ex.: Lot)

- *Talk* with your friends I will soon know you
- *Meet* with your friends I will soon know you
- *Eat* with your friends I will soon know you
- *Hang* with your friends I will soon know you
- *Go with* your friends I will soon know you

Your Friends Direct You (Ex.: Rehoboam)

Influence your decisions & choices in life

Impact your life often permanently

Your Friends Can Destroy You (Ex.: Amnon)

"Amnon had a friend"...cp. Prov. 13:20b