

Our Gospel Meeting with Bob Waldron Begins Today!

Sunday AM Class - Accessing the Strength of God
Sunday AM Worship - Draw From the Springs of Salvation
Sunday PM Worship - Their Fear of Me is a Commandment of Men
Monday - The Prophets Speak to Our Generation
Tuesday - Decisions
Wednesday - Witnesses
Thursday - A Study of Ezekiel 18
Friday - Dealing with Sins Committed

Peer Pressure By Bob Waldron

Much of God's covenant with Israel of old dealt with human relations. Various and sundry laws pointed out how the Jew was to conduct himself among his peers. One of these admonitions was, "Thou shalt not follow a multitude to do evil" (Ex. 23:2). This was a very important decree; it showed the danger of peer pressure and pointed out very explicitly the dangers of being led astray by evil men. Peer pressure was an important factor in their lives; it has been from that time to the present. And perhaps as never before, peer pressure is an issue we have to wrestle with.

A leading educator noted that peer pressure is the strongest influence exerted on young people today. He stated that in most cases it is twice as strong as the influence of home and family, and yields a far greater influence than religion. I share this educator's convictions. All young people want to be accepted by their peers. And if to do so means disobeying parents and selling out personal convictions, some are willing to do so just to be a part of the bunch. In dealing with young folks and their problem of peer pressure, we often quote and expound on 1Corinthians 15:33 -- "Evil companionships corrupt good morals." I contend this is a very important verse dealing with this subject. This admonition does caution against the dangers of peer pressure being exerted by those who are void of spiritual convictions and virtues. Let us continue to warn our young people of the dangers of their associates that rob them of their virtues.

But is all peer pressure centered in young people? Does this pressure cease when we become adults? Well, certainly at all stages of life there are peer pressures put on us by those with whom we mix and mingle day by day. The Bible is not silent on this matter. Men and women of God have always faced immense pressures in dealing with their peers. And when God has spoken, He has always done so with a stern warning against letting our associates rob us of our moral integrity.

One of the most striking examples of this occurred in the life of Peter. Peter is one of our favorite Bible characters. He was truly one of Christ's most ardent followers. We hear him saying, "Even if I must die with thee, yet I will not deny thee" (Matt. 26:25). We hear him declare, "Lord, with thee I am ready to go both to prison and death" (Luke 22:33). But on that fateful night of the arrest and mock trial of the Lord, Peter "followed afar off" (Matt. 26:53); he stood with the wrong crowd, the enemies of the Lord (Matt. 26:69). And upon being asked of his allegiance to Christ, he cursed, swore, and denied that he even knew Him (Matt. 26:69-74). Peter, when alone in a crowd of unbelievers who were the enemies of Christ, relented to peer pressure.

What a lesson for the Christian today. I contend that when we are alone, with the wrong crowd, those with no regard for the Lord nor spiritual values, we are at the most vulnerable moment of our spiritual life. And so often, like Peter, the pressures from our peers lead to our downfall.

There are numerous other examples in the New Testament on this subject. Peer pressure played a leading role in the rejection of Christ by the rulers of the synagogue (John 12:42,43). The Scriptures tell us they believed on Him, "but because of the Pharisees they did not confess it, lest they should be put out of the synagogue. For they loved the glory that is of men more than the glory that is of God."

Likewise, peer pressure was the deciding factor in the heinous crime of Herod (Matt. 14:1-12; Mark 6:23). Herod feared and respected John, but his oath, along with "them that sat at meat with him" (his peers) prevented him from backing down on his promise, and resulted in the vile deed of having John the Baptist put to death. In this we see the influence and power of wicked men and the insidiousness of peer pressure.

But there is another side of the coin of peer pressure. Not all the characters of the Bible collapsed under the pressure of their associates. Many stood, often alone, in the face of severe pressures put on them by others.

Let us ever be aware of the immense pressures put on us by our peers, especially those with no regard for God and spiritual values. And let us profit from the mistakes others made and redouble our efforts to not yield to these peer pressures as they did.

Index Card Remembrances

As a preacher, I am often asked to lead funeral services. Typically, the funeral director would give me a 5 x 7 index card with the obituary of the deceased so I will be informed about him or her. As practical and necessary as it may have been, it seemed a bit trite to take a person's earthly sojourn and reduce it to an index card. Life is too big for that. Even though I spend some time speaking of my remembrances of the departed, it is only a means to stir others to consider their own more profound experiences with them.

After David received news of Jonathan's death, he spent time recalling the life of his friend—even writing a moving and beautiful lament that others could sing as a way to respect Jonathan (2Sam. 1:17-27). David recalled his friend's courage and skill, and he spoke of the grief that caused him to sorrow deeply. He honored a rich, pleasant, heroic life. For David, it was an intense time of mourning and remembrance.

When we grieve for a loved one, it is vital to recall the cherished details and shared experiences of our lives together. Those memories flood our hearts with far more thoughts than an index card can hold. The day that grief visits our hearts is not a time for short summaries and quick snapshots of our loved one's life. It is a time to remember deeply, giving God thanks for the details, the stories, and the impact of an entire life. It's time to pause, reflect, and honor. Precious memories of life can temper the profound sadness of death.

A Moments Wisdom

- Age mellows some people; others it makes rotten.
- A friend can tell you things you don't want to tell yourself.
- Similarities create friendships while differences hold them together.
- To know the value of generosity, it is necessary to have suffered from the cold indifference of others.
- If you get up one more time than you fall, you will make it through.