

# THE GREENWOOD BULLETIN

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## **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 **1 Corinthians 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

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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.

***"I Don't Love Her  
Anymore"***

**By Greg Gwin**

A forty year old man, suffering through the classic "midlife crisis," sat down to talk to a preacher about his problems. He explained how his marriage of 20 years was no longer satisfying or fulfilling. Finally, he reached the "bottom line." "I just don't love her anymore," he said. "What can I do?"

After a brief moment of reflection, the preacher said decisively, "As I see it, you have only one option." The man perked up with anticipation. Was the preacher going to suggest a divorce? Would he be free to pursue the thrilling lifestyle of the younger generation that he had come to admire? Would this be his chance to regain his fleeting

youth? What was the preacher's advice? ..."Seems to me that the only thing left for you to do is REPENT and start loving her again."

So often we hear of married couples who complain that they have "fallen out of love." That's sad -- but it happens. The real issue is: What do you do when you realize that such a situation exists? The Bible still says the same thing that it has always said. Husbands are to "love your wives" (**Ephesians 5:24**), and wives are to "love their husbands" (**Titus 2:4**). Please note that these are not just suggestions -- they are commands. To fail to love your mate is to commit sin! And sin always requires repentance if there is to be forgiveness. Be careful. Do not confuse commanded love with the gooey, silly infatuation of a teenager. It is far more than that. It is a sacrificial love that seeks the interest of the one loved more than self. It is the kind of love that Jesus has shown us (**Ephesians 5:25**).