

Peer Pressure

It Affects Everyone

Introduction:

- A. Everyone has a desire to be accepted and thus there is tremendous pressure to conform. Peer pressure is usually thought to be so intense that it is irresistible.
- B. We think of young people as face a lot of “peer pressure.” But young people are not the only ones that do so. Each one of us faces it every day. It is used by employers, friends and others to get us to conform to their wishes and ideas.
- C. We need to understand, peer pressure is nothing new. It has been around since God created man. Thusly, we can look into God's word and see the results of peer pressure.

I. Peer Pressure Can Cause Us To Do Things We Should Not

- A. Adam fell prey to the pressure of a peer - Gen 3:6

Genesis 3:6 - When the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was desirable to make one wise, she took from its fruit and ate; and she gave also to her husband with her, and he ate.

- 1. Pressure not always verbal
- 2. Can be visual

- B. Adam did what he knew was wrong - Gen. 2:15-17

Genesis 2:15-17 - Then the LORD God took the man and put him into the garden of Eden to cultivate it and keep it. The LORD God commanded the man, saying, "From any tree of the garden you may eat freely; but from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat from it you will surely die."

- 1. Peer pressure can override knowledge and common sense
- 2. We must know what the will of the Lord is and do it - Eph 5:17

Ephesians 5:17 - So then do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is.

- 3. We need to learn to say "no" and mean it

- C. Adam was responsible for his own actions - Gen 3:17-19

Genesis 3:17-19 - Then to Adam He said, "Because you have listened to the voice of your wife, and have eaten from the tree about which I commanded you, saying, 'You shall not eat from it'; Cursed is the ground because of you; In toil you will eat of it All the days of your life. Both thorns and thistles it shall grow for you; And you will eat the plants of the field; By the sweat of your face You will eat bread, Till you return to the ground, Because from it you were taken; For you are dust, And to dust you shall return."

- 1. We will suffer the consequences of our own action - Gal 6:7

Galatians 6:7 - Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, this he will also reap.

- 2. We cannot blame the devil, environment, or others - Ezek. 18:20

Ezekiel 18:20 - "The person who sins will die. The son will not bear the punishment for the father's iniquity, nor will the father bear the punishment for the son's iniquity; the righteousness of the righteous will be upon himself, and the wickedness of the wicked will be upon himself.

- D. Adam was not the only one affected by peer pressure

- 1. Our own peers can pressure us

II. *Peer Pressure Can Cause Us To Lower Our Standard Of Conduct*

A. Aaron yielded to the pressure of his peers - Exo 32:1-6

Exodus 32:1-6 - Now when the people saw that Moses delayed to come down from the mountain, the people assembled about Aaron and said to him, "Come, make us a god who will go before us; as for this Moses, the man who brought us up from the land of Egypt, we do not know what has become of him." Aaron said to them, "Tear off the gold rings which are in the ears of your wives, your sons, and your daughters, and bring them to me." Then all the people tore off the gold rings which were in their ears and brought them to Aaron. He took this from their hand, and fashioned it with a graving tool and made it into a molten calf; and they said, "This is your god, O Israel, who brought you up from the land of Egypt." Now when Aaron saw this, he built an altar before it; and Aaron made a proclamation and said, "Tomorrow shall be a feast to the LORD." So the next day they rose early and offered burnt offerings, and brought peace offerings; and the people sat down to eat and to drink, and rose up to play.

1. Gave in to the request of the people
2. Must always stand for what is right

B. Aaron lowered his standard of conduct and participated in idolatry

1. Peer pressure can override our better judgment

C. Aaron was responsible for his own actions - Exo 32:21

Exodus 32:21 - Then Moses said to Aaron, "What did this people do to you, that you have brought such great sin upon them?"

1. Notice Aaron's lame reasoning in Exo 32:22-24

Exodus 32:22-24 - Aaron said, "Do not let the anger of my lord burn; you know the people yourself, that they are prone to evil. For they said to me, 'Make a god for us who will go before us; for this Moses, the man who brought us up from the land of Egypt, we do not know what has become of him.' 'I said to them, 'Whoever has any gold, let them tear it off.' So they gave it to me, and I threw it into the fire, and out came this calf."

D. Aaron was not the last to lower his standard of conduct

1. People are lowering their standard of morality today

III. *Peer Pressure Can Cause Us To Look And Dress Like Others*

A. Judah felt the pressure of her peers

1. God told the His people not to be like the other nations - Lev 21:5-6

Leviticus 21:5-6 - "They shall not make any baldness on their heads, nor shave off the edges of their beards, nor make any cuts in their flesh. 6 'They shall be holy to their God and not profane the name of their God, for they present the offerings by fire to the LORD, the food of their God; so they shall be holy.

2. Nevertheless, Judah yielded to the pressure - Jer 9:25-26

Jeremiah 9:25-26 - "Behold, the days are coming," declares the LORD, "that I will punish all who are circumcised and yet uncircumcised-- Egypt and Judah, and Edom and the sons of Ammon, and Moab and all those inhabiting the desert who clip the hair on their temples; for all the nations are uncircumcised, and all the house of Israel are uncircumcised of heart."

3. We must look like Christ-like people - Rom 8:29; 12:1-2

Romans 8:29 - For those whom He foreknew, He also predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son, so that He would be the firstborn among many brethren;

Romans 12:1-2 - Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.

- B. Judah looked and dressed like the ungodly pagans
 - 1. Not satisfied with God's ways
 - 2. Always had a problem of wanting to be like others - 1 Sam 8:5

1 Samuel 8:5 - and they said to him, "Behold, you have grown old, and your sons do not walk in your ways. Now appoint a king for us to judge us like all the nations."

- C. Judah was responsible for her actions - Jer 39:1-2

Jeremiah 39:1-2 - Now when Jerusalem was captured in the ninth year of Zedekiah king of Judah, in the tenth month, Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon and all his army came to Jerusalem and laid siege to it; in the eleventh year of Zedekiah, in the fourth month, in the ninth day of the month, the city wall was breached.

- D. Judah was not the only one pressured to look alike
 - 1. We also must face the temptation

IV. Peer Pressure Can Cause Us To Act Like Others

- A. Peter succumbed to the pressure of his peers - Gal 2:11-15

Galatians 2:11-15 - But when Cephas came to Antioch, I opposed him to his face, because he stood condemned. For prior to the coming of certain men from James, he used to eat with the Gentiles; but when they came, he began to withdraw and hold himself aloof, fearing the party of the circumcision. The rest of the Jews joined him in hypocrisy, with the result that even Barnabas was carried away by their hypocrisy. But when I saw that they were not straightforward about the truth of the gospel, I said to Cephas in the presence of all, "If you, being a Jew, live like the Gentiles and not like the Jews, how is it that you compel the Gentiles to live like Jews? We are Jews by nature and not sinners from among the Gentiles;

- 1. He wanted to be a part of the "in crowd"

- B. Peter wanted to act like the crowd
- C. Peter was responsible for his own actions - Gal 2:11

Galatians 2:11 - But when Cephas came to Antioch, I opposed him to his face, because he stood condemned.

- D. Peter was not the only one pressured to act like others
 - 1. It is still with us today

V. Peer Pressure Can Be Overcome

- A. Solomon gives us some good advice in Proverbs - Prov 23:17-21

Proverbs 23:17-21 - Do not let your heart envy sinners, But live in the fear of the LORD always. Surely there is a future, And your hope will not be cut off. Listen, my son, and be wise, And direct your heart in the way. Do not be with heavy drinkers of wine, Or with gluttonous eaters of meat; For the heavy drinker and the glutton will come to poverty, And drowsiness will clothe one with rags.

- 1. Be careful of what or who you admire (17 a)
- 2. Examine your thoughts and motives carefully (17b)
- 3. Accept responsibility for guiding your heart (19)
- 4. Choose the right company (20)

5. Remember the rewards of sin (21)

B. Avenue of escape available if we will look - 1 Cor. 10:13

1 Corinthians 10:13 - No temptation has overtaken you but such as is common to man; and God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will provide the way of escape also, so that you will be able to endure it.

Conclusion:

A. Peer pressure is alive and well in the 21st century so we must be on constant guard.

B. We need to identify peer pressure and combat it.

C. Our greatest source of strength is found in Jesus Christ (2 Cor 12:9; Phil 4:13).

2 Corinthians 12:9 - And He has said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for power is perfected in weakness." Most gladly, therefore, I will rather boast about my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may dwell in me.

Philippians 4:13 - I can do all things through Him who strengthens me.