

THE BIBLE VIEW

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Theme: Peer Pressures

Peer Pressure — *the other guy “made” me do it!*

Bill Brinkworth

Many claim an outside “force” compelled them to do things they usually would not do. Getting their peer’s approval and acceptance is that force for many.

Webster defines “peer” as an “equal; one of the same rank.” For some, it is essential to please people, even though they are not “equals,” and really cannot do anything to force them to do what they have done.

This invisible pressure to please one’s acquaintances has always been an overwhelming force in many lives. Here are some reasons, as illustrated by biblical characters, that the desire to have the approval of one’s peers can have such power in one’s life:

They do not want to be different. Peter, Jesus’ disciple, certainly attested to the power of peer pressure. He was the one who planned to be loyal and faithful to Jesus when he said, “... *Although all shall be offended, yet will not I*” *Mark 14:29.*

However, before the rooster crowed, as Jesus had prophesied, Peter denied having anything to do with his friend and leader. It was more important to Peter to fit in at the campfire of strangers than to be publicly identified with God’s only Son.

Too many have been led by similar pressure. They have sold out their testimony and future to “fit in” and be like everyone else. Selling out for social acceptance is usually temporary and has to be performed repeatedly for each group it is important to “fit in.” It is not long until a person has molded himself to please so many groups that he does not know who he is anymore.

They want to make others happy. Pilate succumbed to peer pressure when the rantings of a mob convinced him to have the Saviour put to death.

“And they cried out again, Crucify him. Then Pilate said unto them, Why, what evil hath he done? And they cried out the more exceedingly, Crucify him. And so Pilate, willing to content the people, released Barabbas unto them, and delivered Jesus, when he had scourged him, to be crucified.” Mark 15:13-15

Pilate allowed mob rule to cloud his judgment. His wrong decision helped put the nails into the body of God’s only Son. Many of us have also done things to make others happy, only to find that happiness is temporary as long as we do what others want. Later, we have to live with the side effects from the judgments we have made, often for the rest of our lives.

They think they are outnumbered. Instead of “winning others,” they are joining with them. Aaron was swayed by peer pressure when the people of God commanded him to make false idols. He gave in to the pressure of the opposing multitudes rather than doing right in God’s eyes.

“And Moses said unto Aaron, What did this people unto thee, that thou hast brought so great a sin upon them... For they said unto me, Make us gods, which shall go before us:...” Exodus 32:21-23

No matter if “everyone” is doing wrong, it does not make it right for us to do likewise. We should do what pleases God, if it is popular or not.

They blame others for their wrongdoing. For many, the reason for their not doing the righteous thing is that others “forced” them to do contrary to what God requires. Saul revealed his weakness to peer pressure when he insisted the people made him disobey God:
“Now go and smite Amalek, and utterly destroy all that they have, and spare them not; but slay both man and woman, ... And Samuel said, What meaneth then this bleating of the sheep in mine ears, and the lowing of the oxen which I hear? And Saul said, They have brought them from the Amalekites: for the people spared the best of the sheep and of the oxen, to sacrifice unto the LORD thy God; and the rest we have utterly destroyed.” I Samuel 15:3-15

Saul was the leader. It was his responsibility to lead the people in obeying God. Unless one is physically forced into doing what is wrong, which rarely is the reason, it is up to us to do what God expects us to do. We are the ones that are responsible for our actions.

It has become common to blame the environment, surroundings, people, or circumstances for our actions. Too many have become “victims” and think they are not responsible for their actions.

According to God’s Word, each is responsible for his actions. Our excuses for not doing right in God’s eyes and according to His Word do not take away from the fact that wrong is still wrong. The pressures felt from our peers do not give us any permission to disobey what God commands us to do. Each of us must one day give an account of our actions.
“For it is written, As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God. So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God.” Romans 14:11-12

“If you do things merely because you think some other fool expects you to do them, and he expects you to do them because he thinks you expect him to expect you to do them, it will end in everybody doing what nobody wants to do, which is, in my opinion, a silly state of things.” — George Bernard Shaw

Can’t Please Everybody

Author Unknown

Mullah Nasir-Ed-Din, an ancient Persian humorist, and his son were walking along a country road behind their donkey who was contentedly nibbling grass along the way.

Seeing Mullah and his son sweating profusely, a man remarked, “Look how foolish they are, walking instead of riding.”

Hearing the remark, Mullah and his son climbed on the donkey. They rode through the next village where they heard an old man exclaim, "They ought to be ashamed, making that poor old donkey carry two riders." Mullah dismounted and walked while the son rode the donkey to the next village.

There Mullah heard this commentary, "Poor old man! That boy should be ashamed, making his poor, old Dad walk!" Then Mullah got on the donkey while his son dismounted and walked for some distance.

Finally, another villager made this observation, "Look at that old man riding while his son has to walk. How cruel!" Mullah rubbed his beard, shook his head and said to himself, "You can't please any of the people any of the time."

"No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon."

— Matthew 6:24

The Two Brothers

Gospel Herald

There were two boys in the Taylor family. The older said he must make a name for his family and turned his face toward Parliament and fame. The younger gave his life to the service of Christ and turned his face toward China and duty. Hudson Taylor, the missionary, died, beloved, and known on every continent. When I looked in the encyclopedia to see what the other son had done, I found these words, "The brother of Hudson Taylor."

The Need of Many Churches

Author Unknown

- More workers and fewer shirkers.
- More backers and fewer slackers.
- More of God's plans and less of man's.
- More praying and less straying.
- More divine power and less human "pow-wow."
- More Good News and fewer book reviews.
- More burden-bearers and fewer talebearers.
- More love for the Word, less love for the world.
- More seeking for grace, less seeking for place.
- More holiness of life, less bickering, and strife.
- More tithes and fewer drives.
- More fasting; less feasting.
- More praying; less playing.

Value of the Church

Author Unknown

“Why should I go to church?” a young girl asked her grandfather.

The grandfather was silent for a moment, and then he said, “Tell me, child, has the piano-tuner been here yet? You said that the piano needed tuning.”

“No, I am still waiting for him. The piano needs tuning badly. I tried to play last evening, but my playing was a dismal failure.”

“Now, see my child, our souls are like a musical instrument,” said the grandfather. “The strings become slack and out of tune quickly. They must be tuned up from time to time.”

“What do you mean, grandfather?”

“All strings, goodness, faith, courage, generosity, reverence, love — all grow less vibrant in us, without our even knowing it. But, when we hear the truths from the Word of God proclaimed at church, we see how we have lost tune. We are tuned up once more to what is the true pitch of righteousness. However, the tuning does not last, and so one must regularly go to church to have one’s soul tuned right.”

“To some people, religious freedom means the choice of churches, which they may stay away from.” — *York Trade Compositor*