

Overcoming Peer Pressure

Ron Mosby

It is human to want to be accepted and develop friendships and be able to fit in with your own societal group. But Christians have to be very careful when choosing their friends. They should determine up front if the persons have the same values as they. A Christian must ever be aware that evil companionships corrupt good morals and the friendship with the world is enmity with God – 1 Cor. 15:33; James 4:4. Peer pressure can be strong!

Example: There was a young man, a student, who was following a well-known conservative TV personality who was asking questions while doing public interviews along a crowded street. He said, "I'm a conservative, but I don't dare say anything, because it will affect my friendships and my grades." When the interviewer tried to talk to the young man, he screamed, yelled, and jumped in front of the cameras to fit in with his friends. He was too scared to let anyone know how he really felt. This is peer pressure!

But how do you overcome peer pressure? The short answer is this: "Arm yourself with the mind of Christ and be willing to suffer for what you believe." If you are willing to suffer for righteousness, you will quit serving sin – 1 Pet. 4:1. Christ loved righteousness and hated iniquity – Heb. 1:8. Therefore, He was willing to suffer for our sins, the just for the unjust, so that He might bring us to God, having been put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the spirit - 1 Pet. 3:18. We are urged to follow in His footsteps – Phil. 2:5-8; 1 Pet. 2:21.

When we are baptized into Christ, we are making a covenant with God. We are made free from sin by the blood of Christ when we obey from the heart that form of doctrine delivered to us. It is at this point that we become servants of righteousness – Rom. 6:3-4, 6, 17-19. Therefore, we should never be ashamed to let our light shine that others may see our good works and be constrained to glorify God – Matt. 5:16.

You may be ridiculed and made fun of for what you believe, but you can be assured that you have nothing to fear; but sanctify Christ as Lord in your heart and be ready always to give a studied answer for what you believe, with gentleness and reverence, having a good conscience and knowing that they who revile your good behavior in Christ will one day be put to shame – 1 Pet. 3:14-16.

Also, when you abstain from fleshly lusts that war against the soul, you are setting a good example before unbelievers. They may slander you as evil, while running with the crowd, but they are still observing your good works. Maybe one day, because you stood against the crowd, they may glorify God in their day of visitation. The day of visitation here is that time when their hearts may be more tender and receptive to God's

law as they remember your good example – 1 Pet. 2:11-12.

Since you became accountable, how long was it before you became a Christian? That is how long you lived unforgiven while serving the devil. However long that was, Peter said that was long enough. Should you not now live the remainder of your life in service to God – 1 Pet. 4:3? Even though your friends may think you are strange for not indulging in worldly things, just know that one day they will have to give account for the choices they have made – 1 Pet. 4:4-5.

In Paul's letter to Timothy, he encouraged Timothy to show himself an example of those who believe; in speech, conduct, love, faith and purity. He urged Timothy to pay close attention to himself and to his teaching; to persevere in these things, for as he did this he would ensure salvation both for himself and for those who heard him – 1 Tim. 4:12, 16. Are you overcoming peer pressures?