

Spiritual How-to's

How Can I Live Up to God's Laws?

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Intro. When we think of peer pressure, we generally think first about teens, don't we?

Like a story I recently read of an over weight, incoming high school freshman, who feared his first day of school and bullying from his peers. So much in fact, his brother found him hanging from the tree in the yard – he had taken his own life.

This is so sad and is representative of the despair that fills people that gets fueled by pressure from people around us.

What we are filled up with is what comes out under pressure. Just like a sponge.

We know if it is saturated with water, by simply taking one finger and pressing down on it, if water fills it, water comes out under that pressure.

I. Peer pressure is NOT just in teens, tho'. Is it? Peer pressure is inevitable. We all face it in many stages of our life.

A. Anytime an individual or group tries to get us to conform to something, that is peer pressure.

B. Peer pressure is the pressure to belong by being influenced by others.

1. **If you have picked up values, beliefs, goals or hobbies** because that's what people around you believe – you've experienced peer pressure.

2. **If you have purchased things** because others have, gone certain places, sent your kids to certain schools or shopped only at certain stores simply because others have, you have succumbed to peer pressure.

C. Here are some adult peer pressure tactics and phrases:

1. C'mon, don't make me drink alone

2. No one will know

3. That's the way we do things here

4. It's no big deal

5. That's the way he is – he doesn't mean it

6. staying out late with friends, when you just want to go home

7. overspending to keep up

8. All ages of people deal with the pressure that comes from others & our peers.

D. Developmental Psychology tells us that resistance to peer pressure increases between the ages of 14 & 18, but it basically remains unchanged from 18-30!

1. So, my friend, **adults, (even older than 30), still must learn to deal with peer pressure.**

2. If you are an adult, I am sure you can agree that there have been times in your life when you were presented with an **unethical work practice or shady business deal.**

II. How to overcome peer pressure.

A. This is Spiritual How-to's remember – so let's look at a spiritual approach to peer pressure. Our focus is the issue. Do we focus on pleasing God, or pleasing others? 1 Thes. 2:6; Eph. 5:11; Gal. 1:10

1. Through my life, **seeking God's approval is what motivated me & strengthened me** to stand against that pressure.
2. When I lost sight of that, I made wrong choices. There was and always is that correlation.

B. Here's a key verse. Proverbs 1:10 TPT

"When peer pressure compels you to go with the crowd and sinners invite you to join in, you must simply say "NO!"

1. v. 15 – refuse to go with them, and stay far away from them.
 2. We could call it another "Just say "no" campaign. like Nancy Reagan's
 3. It sounds so simple – just say no. But that **"no" has to be fueled** and come from the cornerstone of our heart – before the **pressure even presents itself**.
1. Remember, what the sponge is filled with is what comes out under pressure.
 2. What fills you will come out of you under peer pressure.

D. Standing true to **the values woven into your heart** is what empowers you to say "NO!"

E. As Christians, those **values are found in The Word** and **laid into the cornerstone of our heart by practice and through faith**.

1. I chose to say no to peer pressure - to cheat on those documents, or whatever, because **I am certain that God keeps track and rewards those who follow Him**. Heb. 11:6
2. **When I lose focus of that**, I stumble & make mistakes.
3. When I do fall, I try to be mindful of what happened and **learn from my wrong choices**. (and I do fall!)

F. Our ability to stand against peer pressure is found **inside of us**. Our spiritual resolve to **serve God and not man**.

G. But **surrounding yourself with people who support you** and your values is also needed.

1. Oprah once said, **"Only surround yourself with people who will lift you higher."**
2. Don't be ashamed to live for Jesus or to cut off those influences that are not helpful to your growth.

III. As we close, **Psalm 1** talks about this topic with some interesting observations.

"Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor who Stands in the way of sinners nor Sits in the seat of the scornful...." Psa. 1:1

Our succumbing to peer pressure is seen in this progression...

1. **We walk** follow the counsel of the ungodly. Walking like they walk, doing what they do. Following their ungodly advice rather than God's.
 2. That leads to **standing where sinners stand** and for those things that sinners stand for. **Forward motion has stopped**. You are stuck standing where they are.
 3. Until finally we are **sitting around and hanging out** with them, and their scorn for our values and lifestyle. Now we have stopped altogether, **sitting comfortably outside of our values and pleasing them and not God**.
- A. This is peer pressure and it is inevitable – But, **WHEN** peer pressure compels you... say “NO!” - to their advice, to their stands, and to their scorn.
1. **Follow your cornerstone values and keep on walking past their enticements**
 2. Even if you have to **disassociate** with them
 3. **You will please the Lord**
- B. Fill yourself up with God and His Word, and surround yourself with those who are like minded, so that **WHEN** pressure comes, your godly values will come out. And you will not succumb to peer pressure.

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