

Gospel Power



"For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ for it is the power of God unto salvation..." (Romans 1:16)

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Peer Pressure

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" (Exodus 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 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" (Matthew 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" (Matthew 26:53);

he stood with the wrong crowd, the enemies of the Lord (Matthew 26:69). And upon being asked of his allegiance to Christ, he cursed, swore, and denied that he even knew Him (Matthew 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 (Matthew 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.

~via *Gospel Observer*, Avondale, Pennsylvania.

Disciplined Children

Steven C. Harper

Throughout the book of Proverbs, the wise writer speaks to the need for parents to discipline their children. In 13:24, he writes, “He who spares his rod hates his son, but he who loves him disciplines him promptly.” Not a popular concept in today’s litigious and politically-correct society, but that’s what it says. He later writes, “Chasten your son while there is hope, and do not set your heart on his destruction” (19:18). And again, “Do not hold back discipline from the child, although you strike him with the rod, he will not die. You shall strike him with the rod and rescue his soul from Sheol” (Prov. 23:13-14). In 3:12, he writes, “For whom the Lord loves He corrects, just as a father the son in whom he delights.” And, finally, in 29:17, he writes, “Correct your son, and he will give you rest; Yes, he will give delight to your soul.”

Though these words are not popular in today’s society, they are still worthwhile instructions for all parents today, no matter what culture may seem to dictate or prefer. What we should note in all of these instructions are the motivating factors behind the discipline and the goal of discipline. We should also note that discipline does not always mean using “the rod,” but it certainly may be appropriate in some circumstances. Discipline is defined as training that develops self-control, character, or orderliness and efficiency. It is not, as some suppose, just physical punishment; it is much more than that. True discipline requires training.

But let’s take a quick look at why discipline is important in the family.

Love. As the wise writer said in Proverbs 13:24 and 3:12, love is a good portion of why we discipline our children. In these passages, we find that the parents who truly love their children will discipline them. In other words, he will train them in such a way that self-control will be the result. A parent who recognizes that,

someday, their children will be on their own and will have to make their own decisions, will discipline them because it will lead to the self-control they will need when that day comes. A parent who cares about their children and their future will teach them that they are responsible for their actions, and will act as if that idea is true. They will not try to run their children's lives because they understand parenting is not a matter of control, but instruction and influence. They will also not be picking up behind them when they make messes or apologizing for them when they make mistakes, but will discipline — because they love them.

Many parents today do not seem to know what discipline is — and I'm not talking about the behavior of their children! These parents do not teach their children self-control because they do not know self-control. When a child is raised in an environment where the parents go into debt to get the material goods they want, go into debt to go on vacations, and see their parents constantly in a race to keep up with "the latest," is it any wonder then that their children do not know how to exercise self-control? The parents whose apparent goal is self-indulgence will be teaching that to their children — if not in word, at least in deed. And often, their "love" is shown to the children by the amount of material goods they purchase for their children, trying to soothe their own consciences for the lack of real love they show. Meanwhile, discipline is laid aside and love is not love at all. And the children know the difference better than even the parents will admit.

Peace In This Life. The wise writer also wrote that when we correct our children, they will give us rest (29:17). Again, the motivation behind this should always be love, but there is a residual result of discipline: peace. There will be peace when they are still in the home and peace even after they leave.

It is difficult sometimes as parents to be consistent when we are disciplining our chil-

dren because it just gets tiring. We get tired of saying "no," we get tired of correcting them when they say or do something wrong, we get tired of hearing the crying and the whining. And after awhile, it just seems like it would be much easier if we just "gave in" and let them have their way. It would certainly be easier for the moment, but **don't do it!**

Yes, it is easier to give in to their requests and just give them what they want. I know they will stop crying if we just let them have their way. I also know that if we give in and let them have their way, they will not be disciplined children and they will learn nothing about self-control, and our lives will only get more difficult as they get older. When they do not learn self-control, they will continue to whine and cry to get what they want. As a baby, they cry because they don't know how else to communicate, but that should change when they grow older. If they cry and whine for something at 6 or 8 or 12 or 16, and we still run to them and give them what they want, the only lesson they have learned is that crying and whining will get Mom and Dad to do what they want. They will have no self-control and there will be no peace in the house as long as this is the way of life. And when they move out on their own, the parents — knowing they have failed in their responsibility to instill self-control — will have many restless nights wondering what their grown children are doing, and the troubles will just be passed down to the next generation and the next.

Peace In Death. The final reason for discipline is the most important: their soul. I can think of no greater responsibility for a parent than leading their children to a knowledge of the truth that they might obey. As parents, we have the direct command to "bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord" (Ephesians 6:4), and the end goal is to lead them to obey the gospel. When that is done, there will be peace at death because we know they have done the will of the Lord and they have the hope of eternal salvation. When we place more emphasis on secular education,

career advancement, and a higher social standing, they will see that as the most important thing, and God will often be forgotten or at least de-emphasized.

I cannot emphasize enough the importance of a consistent, continuous pattern of discipline in the life of our children. We do it because we love them, but the results will be rewarding in both this life and the one to come. If you love your child, discipline him.

~via *Burn Park Beacon*, North Little Rock, Arkansas.

News & Notes

THE SICK: *Wynell Ridgeway* continues her recovery at home following her recent surgery ... *Angie McCrary's uncle, Hubert Newton*, is now home following a brief stay in the hospital with his heart... *Jerry Dickey's mother, Pat Dickey*, continues in the ECM hospital room 665... *Tyler and Hunter Cox* are both sick with the chicken pox ... *Sheila Moore* was able to be at Bible study Wednesday night after being sick last weekend.. *Janice Glass* was sick and unable to be at services Wednesday night ... *Arvel Newton's nephew, Chester Newton*, continues at home with his battle with cancer... Remember *Kerry Cox's grandfather, Coy Lowman*, continues at home ... *Millinea Word* as she continues her treatments/medication ... *Mattie Blanche Word* continues at home and not able to be out ... *Aldeen Noles* is in the SunBridge Nursing Home in Lawrenceburg ... *Sheila Moore's mother-in-law, Laurene Whitehead*, is in the Athens Convalescent Center ... *Mary Best's nephew, Shannon Johnson*, who is at home ... *Millinea Word's mother, Nola McCafferty*, and *Tisha Thomas' grandmother, Nellie Hunter*, who are both in the Meadow Brook Nursing Home in Pulaski.

OUT OF TOWN: *The McConnells: James and Freda* are to return the first of the week from their vacation in Florida... *Signa Skipworth* is visiting her sister in North Carolina.

Gospel Power

is published in interest of New Testament Christianity and to enhance the work of the Anderson church.

Schedule of Services

Sunday

Bible Classes 9:45 a.m.

Morning Worship 10:45 a.m.

Evening Worship 6:00 p.m.

Wednesday

Bible Classes 7:00 p.m.

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Anderson-church.org

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