

# Glad Tidings

“And we bring you good tidings of the promise made unto the fathers...” (Acts 13:32)

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## Overcoming Peer Pressure

(Jerry Fite)

Your “peers”, by definition, are those with whom you are “equal”. These are people with whom you are of the “same rank”, which may be classified by “age” or “ability.” How could you ever feel pressure among your equals to do something wrong?

God answers by highlighting when a multitude goes the wrong way. A multitude going a certain way may influence you to join, even if it is wrong. God exhorts his people to overcome those critical situations with “*Thou shalt not follow a multitude to do evil*” (Exodus 23:2). Sheer numbers can influence you, even if they are not the same age as you. But the pressure can be even more intense, when the multitude is comprised of your peers.

In school, students spend much of their day among those with whom they share the same age. They are passing through life at the same time, and what their peers value, and how they dress, speak and act can strongly influence one’s thinking. The young, who are beginning the ma-

turing process, are gradually cutting away the parents’ protective apron strings. At this critical time in life, they are vulnerable as they seek their own identity.

Desiring to fit in with others, and please others are not harmful motives. Such desires can help one be a good citizen fitting in with government’s laws (Romans 13:1). Seeking to please another can be helpful in enriching a loving marriage relationship (Ephesians 5:28-29, I Corinthians 7:33-34). Good motives become harmful when pleasing man or our peers puts us at odds with God and His will.

Paul properly channeled the motive of pleasing another when he saw pleasing man contradicted the one revealed faith of the Gospel: “*For am I now seeking the favor of men, or of God? Or am I striving to please men? If I were still pleasing men, I should not be a servant of Christ*” (Galatians 1:10).

Proactive parents and godly children following God’s revealed word can overcome peer pressure. Like Paul, we can begin

by determining to be a “*servant of Christ*”. It is not what the multitude or majority wants, nor is it what I want, but it is what my master Jesus wants me to do (Galatians 2:20, Luke 6:46).

Knowing the truth of God’s word abides (Psalms 119:160); especially after error and deception is exposed, helps create the necessary courage to overcome peer pressure. Chuck Swindoll writes of an experiment led by psychologist Ruth. W. Berenda. Ten teenage adolescents were asked to identify which printed line was the longest on a page. Nine of the ten were told beforehand to pick out the second shortest line as the longest. 75% of the time, the one student not in on the plan, would finally raise their hand agreeing with the others in error. They lacked the courage to stand for what was clearly true. However, when the lie is exposed, who wants to be on the side of error? But I am alone against ten! No, you are standing with truth. Truth will abide, and God’s truth will abide forever. Withstand and stand (Ephesians 6:13)!