

When the Crowd Is Wrong

Lessons from Noah's Obedience

Introduction. Peer pressure is one of the most powerful forces in a person's life because it quietly asks, "Will you belong to the crowd, or will you belong to God?" Every day, people are pushed to compromise their convictions, silence their faith, or follow the path of least resistance just to fit in. But the people of God aren't called to be shaped by the crowd; they're called to be shaped by Christ.

From the beginning, God's people have faced pressure to bow, blend in, and go along. Noah faced enormous pressure, and while the world fell apart around him, he was faithful, witnessing the power of God and His plans for the world.

He can teach us a lot about peer pressure, so we're going to discuss the account of his life, then comment about peer pressure, and close with some practical tips to help you, no matter what your age, to stand firm in the grace of God.

I. The Narrative

- A. What happened in the garden was no isolated case. When there were only two, mankind sinned. When they were blessed by God in multiplying, they rebelled.
- B. God determined to judge them after He has striven with them through Noah who preached righteousness by the Holy Spirit (1 Peter 3:20; 2 Peter 2:5). After 120 years of longsuffering (Genesis 6:3), His patience had run out.
 - 1. When making man, God saw it as very good and intended to bless him (Genesis 1:28, 31).
 - 2. In viewing man's rebellion, God saw it as very bad and changed His intention toward him (Genesis 6:6, 13; cp. Jeremiah 18:1-12).
- C. By God's grace one man revered and served God. While the earth corrupted its way (6:12), Noah walked God's way (6:9).
- D. The construction of the ark would've commenced before any of his sons were born. He had to provide for them while he was yet childless!
 - 1. Its dimensions (Genesis 6:14-16).
 - 2. Its inhabitants (Genesis 6:19-21; 7:2-3).
- E. Noah did everything God commanded (Genesis 6:22; 7: 5, 16).
 - 1. The narrative of the flood is vivid and forceful, though entirely wanting in the description in which a modern historian would have recorded it.
 - 2. We see nothing of the death struggle; we don't hear the cry of despair; we don't witness the frantic agony of husband and wife, of parent and child, as they fled in terror before the rising waters.
- F. The water covered the entire earth and prevailed 150 days (Genesis 7:19-20, 24). The ark rested on Mt. Ararat (Genesis 8:4-5).
- G. Noah tested the dry land with the raven and the dove (Genesis 8:6-14). He spent just over a year in the ark.

II. The Applications

- A. Peer pressure is a term describing the pressure exerted by a peer group in encouraging a person to change their attitude, behavior and/or morals, to

conform to, for example, the group's actions, fashion sense, taste in music and entertainment, or outlook on life (Proverbs 1:10; 28:7; Exodus 23:2; 34:12; 1 Corinthians 15:33).

- B. Unfortunately, even God's most renowned people succumbed to peer pressure (Peter, John 18:17, 25), but one who can withstand peer pressure will be blessed (Psalm 1:1-6).
 - 1. We often think of ourselves as good people with some bad habits, but remember that Genesis 8:21 is talking about us (1 John 1:8, 10)!
 - 2. We rightly lament the power of a bad example (1 Kings 11:2); it's essential that we recognize the power of a good one (Hebrews 11:7).
 - 3. It doesn't matter that senators and congress members aren't jamming your phone lines asking for advice. We need to a difference with those you do influence and let them influence others.
- C. You have to live in front of your friends, for your eternal destiny depends on it (Matthew 7:13-14; 2 Corinthians 5:10; Hebrews 9:27). Because of this extreme seriousness, let's finish the lesson with some action items to fight peer pressure:
 - 1. Fear God more than man (Matthew 10:28). When God's approval matters most, peer approval loses power.
 - 2. Renew your mind with Scripture (Psalm 119:11; Romans 12:2). Filling your mind with truth helps you resist pressure.
 - 3. Choose wise company (Proverbs 13:20; 1 Corinthians 15:33). It can't be overestimated how much friends shape character.
 - 4. Stand firm and be courageous (1 Corinthians 16:13; Ephesians 6:13). You're a child of the heavenly King who doesn't fold under pressure.
 - 5. Pray for strength and a way of escape (1 Peter 5:6-7; 1 Corinthians 10:13). Actively find the help God provides in temptation.

Conclusion. Isn't it wonderful that in all of the darkness of a world gone mad, ungodly men and women couldn't extinguish the flickering light of Noah's life?

Stephen and Antipas were martyrs for Christ (Acts 7:60; Revelation 2:13). They paid what we refer to as the "ultimate price" for their faith. But let's be honest, for most of us, how hard can it be to not resemble the world? How hard is it really to dress differently, to talk in a godly way, to have spiritually-minded friends, and to be faithful to something you've put your whole heart into?

Peer pressure will always try to shape your choices, but God calls you to stand firm in truth. The crowd may be loud, but it's not lord. The voices around you may push, but only the voice of Christ can lead you into life, holiness, and peace.

When the pressure comes, remember that the same God who calls you to live differently also gives you strength to do it. You don't have to bow to the world in order to belong to Christ.

Resolve to follow Jesus above every other voice. Choose courage over compromise, conviction over conformity, and faith over fear. And may our lives prove that when Christ is Lord, no crowd can decide our destiny.