

Problems Teenagers Face: Peer Pressure

➤ = next PowerPoint slide

➤ Intro:

- **illus.: an old man, boy, and donkey traveling** (source unknown, SermonIllustrations.com)
 - **1st village:** man was leading the donkey and the boy was walking behind
 - the townspeople said the old man was a fool for not riding, so to please them he climbed up on the animal's back
 - **2nd village:** people said the old man was cruel to let the child walk while he enjoyed the ride, so to please them he got off and set the boy on the animal's back and continued on his way
 - **3rd village:** people accused the child of being lazy for making the old man walk and the suggestion was made that they both ride, so the man climbed on and they set off again, both riding
 - **4th village:** townspeople were indignant at the cruelty to the donkey because he was made to carry two people, the frustrated man was last seen carrying the donkey down the road, never to be seen again
- **we can't please everybody**
 - **if we try** we end up carrying a heavy burden, that no one can carry
 - makes it **impossible to be a Christian**
 - **the only one we have to please is God, by obeying Him**
 - **which includes carry a cross, but not a donkey**
- **this series:** Problems Teenagers Face
- **this lesson:** dealing with **peer pressure** from a teenage perspective

➤ **It's cool to be a Christian**

- **it's cool to be a Christian, esp. in our culture**

- **often it's all in how you handle the situation** – be real, don't get mad, be a loving Christian

- **Col. 4:6** gracious speech, salt

- **grace:** sounds good to ears

- **salt:** taste as good as possible, as palatable as possible

➤ - **for those who act badly, stay cool**, don't let it bother you

- **Matt. 10:14** shake dust off feet – **move on** if they choose not to be friendly, you can't change that

➤ - **Rom. 12:14, 17, 18, 19-20** act this way – **kill'em with kindness** – if they reject you, move on

➤ - **illus.: Lacey Nicole Mosley**, born 1981, lead vocalist for alternative rock band Flyleaf – **not advocating beliefs**

- **pic:** Lacey, Cornerstone Festival in 2007

- she refers to herself as a "Christian", others respect that

- she talks about her faith, but doesn't push it on others – she doesn't like to talk about her past sins so she doesn't glorify them

- **it's cool to be a Christian** – there's no reason why you can't be a Christian and still be cool, without compromise

➤ - **illus.: Tony Dungy**, former head coach of the Tampa Bay Buccaneers, and now head coach for the Indianapolis Colts, though he still has a home in Tampa – **not advocating beliefs**

- **unashamedly tells people he's a "Christian"**

- **lives and coaches by Christian values**

- **story, training camp:** beginning of camp each year, tells the team members to listen carefully, this is the loudest I'll ever speak – doesn't yell at players

- **new book: Quiet Strength**, in which among other things he shares his "Christian" faith

- **comments by Tony Dungy** (Lovie is Lovie Smith, Bears head coach) (Wikipedia.com)

- Dungy said, "I really wanted to show people you can win all kinds of ways. I always coached the way I've wanted to be coached. I know Lovie has done the same thing. . . . I know I **probably didn't get a couple of jobs** in my career because people could not see my personality or the way I was going to do it ... **For your faith to be more important than your job, for your family to be more important than that job ... We all know that's the way it should be, but we're afraid to say that sometimes. Lovie's not afraid to say it and I'm not afraid to say it.**"

- **it's cool to be a Christian** – there's no reason why you can't be a Christian and still be cool, without compromise

- **illus.: Adam Smith**, high school, **peers tried to get him to go out and party**, refused, jokingly told them he didn't need that, **they respected him because he was cool about being a Christian** – **not afraid**

➤ - **if you're cool about being a Christian, others will be too**

- **for the people who aren't cool about you being a Christian**, you shouldn't care, other than feel sorry for them

- **be "real" about who you are, and others will respect that** – if they don't, then you shouldn't care if they don't want to be your friend – **not afraid**

➤ **Teenagers' brains aren't fully developed**

- **brain grows into the 20s** – connectivity of the brain is developing
 - **peer pressure is greater for teenagers than adults**, the connectivity of the **frontal lobe** of the brain has not developed to maturity
 - **illus.: I can't believe my son did that, it's like he doesn't have a brain** – actually, brain not developed

➤ - **teenagers aren't as mentally equipped to think critically and make decisions as adults**

- **thinking based more on emotions**
- **illus.: peer pressure to get in a car with a friend who is drunk is greater for a teen than an adult**
 - **teen's brain is not fully developed**, his critical thinking and decision making skills aren't fully developed
 - **teen fears rejection more than adult**, decision making based more on emotion than facts

➤ - **parents have known these things for a long time**, though **science hasn't explained it till recently**

- **this helps us better understand what teens need** to do to overcome peer pressure
- **this helps us better understand what adults can do** to help teens

➤ **What can teenagers do to overcome peer pressure?**

- study and learn the Bible and apply it to your lives – personal commitment, not just because of parents
 - **Rom. 1:16** gospel is the power of God unto salvation
 - **1 Th. 2:13** God's word performs it's work in those who believe
 - **2 Tim. 3:16** Scriptures profitable for teaching, reproof, correction, training in righteousness
 - result: man of God equipped for every good work.

- understand that foolishness is in your heart as a teenager, even into your early 20s
 - **Pr. 22:15** foolishness in heart, punishment needed to drive it out
 - understand you need help making important decisions, your brain isn't fully developed, your critical thinking and decision making skills are not fully developed
 - **caution:** don't give into peer pressure and reject parents, Christian friends, church, elders, etc.
 - **illus.:** talk to most adults, they confess they thought they knew everything as teenager and in early twenties
 - thought smarter than their parents, but learned differently when matured
 - know you'll be just like them one day – act accordingly today

- - understand you need clear guidelines from your parents, obey - some probably won't agree with because not fully developed
 - **Eph. 6:1-3** children obey, parents discipline and instruct
 - shows that children (teens) need clear guidelines form parents – obey, discipline, instruct

- - you have to learn to make decisions based on facts (truth), critical thinking, not emotion
 - **Jn. 8:32** Jesus, truth makes you free – decisions must be made on facts, truth of God's word
 - **Mk. 12:30** commanded to love God – agape, mental commitment, requires critical thinking not emotion
 - **illus.:** most teens want to be friends with the “popular” people, rather than basing choice on other more important factors
 - many girls want to date the popular boy – captain of the football team – emotion
 - many boys want to date the popular girl – captain of the cheerleading squad – emotion
 - few want to date the plain, comparatively unattractive person no one knows – emotion
 - few take into account the benefit or harm the person will cause them spiritually – emotion

- - your most important time in your life to have a good peer group – good peer pressure rather than bad
 - **1 Cor. 15:33** bad company (evil companions) corrupt good morals - bad friends = bad person
 - **illus.:** Gazing At Light (attached)
 - you get used to sin if you don't get away from it – bad peer group, bad friends, **1 Cor. 15:33**
 - if you don't get away quickly, you wake up one day and see that it's destroyed your whole life
 - **illus.:** The Crabs (attached)
 - bad friends keep dragging you down into sin – have to get away from the friends to escape sin
 - **2 Tim. 2:22** flee youthful lusts – pursue righteousness, faith, love, peace with those who call on the name of the Lord from a pure heart
 - get out of bad peer group – get in good peer group – those who fear Lord = Christians
 - most important peer group Christians – **Heb. 10:24-25**

- - always be true to yourself – comfortable with that – cool about being a Christian, unashamed, uncompromising values

- - **illus.:** Tim Russert and Tony Snow, men in news business, recently passed away, admired and respected by

people who vehemently disagree with them, because the men were always true to self

- **What can parents do to help their teens overcome peer pressure?** – help them do what discussed above
 - teenagers need their families, most of all – **support group, overcome peer pressure**
 - **Dr. James Dobson, Focus on the Family:** According to a recent study, young men with high self-esteem shared some common childhood influences. There were **three major characteristics** of their families.
 - 1. The high-esteem group was **clearly more loved and appreciated at home** than the low-esteem group.
 - 2. The high-esteem group came from homes where **parents had been significantly more strict in their approach to discipline**. By contrast, the parents of the low-esteem group had created insecurity and dependence through their permissiveness. Their children were more likely to feel that the rules were not enforced because no one cared enough to get involved.
 - 3. The homes of the high-esteem group were also **characterized by democracy and openness. Once the boundaries were established, there was freedom for individual personalities to grow and develop. Thus, the overall atmosphere was marked by acceptance and emotional safety.** (Dr. James Dobson, Focus of the Family Bulletin, July 1994) (SermonIllustrations.com)
 - **children need parents acting like parents in their lives, to be successful – Eph. 6:4**
- - **important for teens to spend time with parents (family) – most important peer group is family**
 - **Charles Francis Adams, 19th century political figure** and diplomat, kept a **diary**.
 - One day he entered: **"Went fishing with my son today--a day wasted."**
 - His son, Brook Adams, also kept a diary, which is still in existence. On that same day, Brook Adams made this entry: **"Went fishing with my father--the most wonderful day of my life!"**
 - **The father thought he was wasting his time while fishing with his son, but his son saw it as an investment of time.** (Silas Shotwell, in *Homemade*, September 1987) (SermonIllustration.com)
 - **what we as parents often think as a waste of time is most precious to our children**
 - **time spent with a child is not wasted time, no matter what we do**
- **children with involved fathers are:** ("USA Today Snapshots," USA Today - June 14-16, 2002)
 - more confident and **less anxious** in unfamiliar settings.
 - better able to **deal with frustration**.
 - better able to **gain a sense of independence**.
 - more likely to **become compassionate adults**.
 - more likely to **have higher self-esteem**.
 - more likely to have **higher grade-point averages**.
 - more **sociable**.
- **stat: if we spend time with our children, we will influence them positively - spiritually**
 - A study of 4,600 adolescents (11-18 years old) found:
 - **37% ate two or fewer family meals** with all or most of their family the previous week.
 - **26% ate seven or more meals with their family.**
 - **Researchers found that adolescents who ate more meals with their family** suffered significantly **lower rates of cigarette, alcohol, and drug abuse, enjoyed higher grade point averages, and struggled less with depression and suicide.** Citation: "Are Family Meals Good for the Health of Adolescents?" *American Family Physician*, volume 71, number 6 (3-15-04)

- - **while spending time with your children, have two-way communication** – suggestions discussed before
 - **Deut. 11:19** talk to them all the time about God and His will – when in the house, along the road, go to bed, and rise in the morning – **good peer pressure**
 - **Eph. 6:4** bring them up in the **training and instruction of the Lord**
 - **help child develop critical thinking skills to overcome peer pressure** by clarifying his responsibilities and asking questions relating to his responsibility, emphasizing the importance on the responsibility and associated tasks
 - i.e., be a good communicator with a teen, just as with an adult, only more instructive
 - **help them choose their friends to avoid and overcome peer pressure:** decisions relating to, importance of the overall responsibility, positives and negatives of different decisions – **rf - 1 Cor. 15:33**
 - set rules, approve friends – **be the parent**
 - **be good role model** – **teach and show** how to avoid and overcome peer pressure
 - most children grow up to be like their parents
 - **arrange for your child to be in a positive peer group** – family 1st, Christians 2nd, friends 3rd
 - **1 Cor. 15:33**
 - **set clear, detailed rules, enforce, while also teaching to think for themselves, loosen the rules as can**
 - **Pr. 22:15** **rod drives out foolishness** - punishment necessary to train a teenager (corporate especially)

➤ **Summary / Inv.**

- **peer pressure** is one of the most difficult roadblocks we all have to deal with, esp. for teens
- **remember: it's cool to be a Christian**, so just be cool about it
 - if someone's going to give you a hard time, feel sorry for them, but don't give in
- **remember: a teenager's (early 20s) brain isn't fully developed**, you need help overcoming peer pressure
 - family, Christians, friends
- **teens, be humble** enough to be disciplined, take direction, and heed good advise from parents and Chrsitians
- **parents (adults), do your part** to help young people overcome peer pressure – **they need your help!**