

Bullying and Peer Pressure: By Erica Jermanus

In the world we live in today, it can be so easy to want to try to fit in with the crowd. It can be so easy to want to try to do what everyone else is doing, instead of doing what God wants us to do. It can be so easy to want to do our own will, instead of the will of God for our lives. Many of us make bad choices and decisions because we are following the crowd. Many of us are hanging around the wrong people in our lives. We feel pressure to be around the wrong people because we do not want to be alone or lonely.

The people in our lives may be leading us astray from God and to sin. We do not realize the influence that people have on our lives. The people we hang around we become most like. So, if we are hanging around bad company, then our morals or character is going to become corrupt. 1 Corinthians 15:33 says, "Be not deceived: evil communications corrupt good manners."

An example of following the crowd is shacking up with a boyfriend or girlfriend to have sex outside of marriage. Many Christians do not want to be alone or lonely, so they will settle for the wrong person. They will end up sinning with that person and their sinning leads them to their destruction and to hell if they don't repent.

1 Thessalonians 4:3 says, "For this is the will of God, even your sanctification, that ye should abstain from fornication." God's desire for us believers is to walk in holiness and uprightness. He does not want us having sex before marriage. He wants us to wait until marriage to have sex. Sex was created by God for marriage and for husbands and wives, not boyfriends and girlfriends. Many are with the wrong partners because they are operating out of their feelings and emotions instead of God's will for their lives.

When Christians are in the wrong relationships with the wrong people, they are tempted to go against God's will for their lives. They are tempted to do things they know they should not be doing. Christians are falling into sin and falling away from God. They are being led by their flesh and feelings to settle for the wrong people and relationships because they feel pressured. Christians are pressured to go to bars and clubs with their friends and drink and party. The Christians have no intention of drinking and smoking, but the people they are with are pressuring them into doing it with them. So, they fall into sin and go astray in their hearts away from the presence of God.

Christians also may have been delivered from past sins and addictions, but the enemy sends these people back into their lives to tempt them and distract them from God and from their purpose. So, Christians drinking ends up turning into drunkenness or their smoking turns into them getting high. They end up not being sober-minded. That gives the enemy access to their lives to torment them and tempt them against their will. Ephesians 5:18 says, "And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit."

These Christians may need to seek God for deliverance and freedom from these addictions and bad habits as well as sinful and ungodly relationships. Christians may need to ask for help to get free and delivered from their past hurt, pain, wounds, and trauma. They may need to break ties with certain friendships and relationships in their lives that are holding them back and keeping them in captivity to their sins and past. These people can get free if they really want it, but not everyone is willing to get the deliverance that is needed. God can give us the strength to overcome sin and bad habits and addictions if we ask Him to help us. John 8:36 says, "If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed."

Christians give into the pure pressure of wanting to fit in and be popular, which leads them further away from God and His will for their lives. Many Christians are entertaining the wrong people, places, and things that they know they should not. The enemy wants to try to get these Christians to go down the wrong path for their lives. The enemy wants Christians to do their own will and follow their own ways and that leads to destruction.

Matthew 7:13-14 says, "Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it." Matthew 7:21 says, "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven."

When we ask God to change our desires and to give us His desires and a love for what He loves. He will. Ask God to give you healthy and reverential fear of Him. You will not want to sin or displease God when you fear Him. You will want to do right by Him and walk in His will for your life. You will want to serve your purpose and use your gifts and talents for His glory and

kingdom. Proverbs 9:10 says, "The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom: and the knowledge of the holy is understanding." 1 Peter 4:10 says, "As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God."