

The Old Hickory Bulletin

Old Hickory Church of Christ

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The Christian and Pressure

We live in a pressure filled world. The pressure that we are referring to is defined as: "A compelling influence; constraining force: as, social pressure." (Webster's New World Dictionary). Often someone speaks of another as being under pressure and that such accounted for his behavior that was not in keeping with the will of Christ. I firmly believe that anyone who endeavors to do right is faced with considerable pressure to do otherwise. It is not simply that such people have pressure placed on them and others are permitted to go free. If we are endeavoring to follow Christ, all of us face pressure. The problem evolves around whether or not we are strong enough to resist the pressure. We are thankful to say that some Christians are strong enough to endure and they joyfully bring forth fruit to perfection. On the other hand, there are others who wither under the pressure and fall away from the hope of eternal life. The Parable of the Sower suggests the feature of pressure and reveals failures along with the honest heart of success. Friend, don't think you are the only one who has to face pressures of life. We all have them. Some magnify them and make them worse than common, while other faithfully cope with the problem in the confidence that they can do all things through Christ who strengthens them. But let us notice a few of the pressures a Christian faces in his activities. He faces pressures to:

CONFORM TO THIS WORLD. The world is about the Christian. He is in the world, but is not to be of the world. The world doesn't desire for anyone to differ with it. This difference in righteousness condemns the world. (Hebrews 11:7). Hence, there is the continual pressure for Christians to be immodest, indecent, and immoral as is the world. The cry of truth rings out! "And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is the good and acceptable, and perfect will of God." (Romans 12:2). After some have left the world in becoming Christians, the pressure is there to return. "Wherein they think it strange that ye run not with them to the same excess of riot, speaking evil of you." (1 Peter 4:4). Pressure comes from sinful companions who want the Christian to be back with them and above all, not to condemn them. Yes, there is continual pressure to conform to this world, to give in a little here and a little there and before long to stand for nothing.

BE DISHONEST IN BUSINESS. Businessmen are constantly faced with this pressure. Around them are unscrupulous individuals who are ready to lie and cheat for the almighty dollar. On occasions, they are tempted to be as unscrupulous as some of these competitors. Pressure is upon them to be like others who might be dishonest in business. They get to thinking that such is necessary in this "dog eat dog" world of survival. Especially does one face such thoughts when it is evident that sales have taken a dip and expenses, etc. are rising with the present inflation. God would have His children to defy such pressure. His children are to "Provide things honest in the sight of all men." (Romans 12:17). In writing to the Corinthians, the apostle admonished them to receive him and his co-workers on the beautiful basis ". . . we have wronged no man, we have corrupted no man, we have defrauded no man." (2 Corinthians 7:2). There may have been pressure to do to the contrary, but they had not yielded. They may not have been the most prosperous in the eyes of the world, but they could live with themselves for they were honest with themselves and others. Jesus stated: "Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets". (Matthew 7:12). When we follow this rule, there is no room for dishonesty. Certainly, no one would have others treat him that way. In like manner, the Christian must not yield to pressure to be dishonest with anyone regardless of the circumstances. We need to always let our light shine and there is no light in dishonesty!

COMPROMISE THE TRUTH. Truth is not to be compromised. Christians do not determine truth. God has determined such and revealed it in His word. As God's children, we have the blessed privilege of following truth, but never of changing or compromising it. However, there is the pressure on Christians for them to compromise their convictions in the truth. Epithets of narrow-mindedness and "squares" are hurled at them and some yield to the pressure by compromising their convictions. An unbelieving husband attacks the convictions of his wife by saying, "If you love me, you will go with me and forget about worship this once." The pressure is on! Who will win? So many times the truth does not! Jesus said: "He that is not with me is against me." (Matthew 12:30). Compromise in one thing and it is much easier to do it again and even in a more devastating manner. Christians, don't let the pressure destroy your convictions!

- Bobby K. Thompson

In a World of Turmoil, God is Our Strength!

"God is our refuge and strength, A very present help in trouble. Therefore we will not fear, though the earth should change And though the mountains slip into the heart of the sea;" (Psalms 46:1-2).

For many hundreds of years, this Psalm has endeared itself to countless distressed hearts. It inspires great confidence in God. No matter what happens in this world, troubled believers can trust the mighty protection and great peace provided by our heavenly Father. The ups and downs of life are presented to all of us. We love the happiness of the ups. The downs challenge us. The believer should turn to Psalm 46 during the downside of life.

Early lessons in life encourage us to find our security and safe haven in earthly things: our homes, families, friends, our jobs, even our communities. But what happens when those things are shaken? What happens when they tumble? What happens when things we depend on are taken from us? The things of this world are not meant to last.

Only God remains trustworthy and steadfast forever. He is ever the stronghold and strength for His people, their refuge where rest and peace from invading trouble are found. Believers have full and immediate access to Him. Even in times of grave danger His effectiveness is more than sufficient for a stronghold of security.

The conclusion of this Psalm must be our conclusion: we take refuge in God. No matter what happens in the world around us, our hope is in God and we will not be afraid.

- Gary Smalley

* "Many people are making a good living, but only a few are making good lives!"

* "A smoker pays twice for his cigarettes: once when he gets them and second when they get him!"

* "He who thinks lightly of sin, thinks lightly of God!"

* "A man's character and a fence are alike; neither can be strengthened by whitewash!"

* "The company we choose is always an index of our character!"

What Must I Do To Be Saved?

HEAR THE GOSPEL

(Romans 10:14-17; John 20:30-31; Romans 1:15-17)

BELIEVE IN JESUS CHRIST

(Acts 8:37; John 8:24; Hebrews 11:6)

REPENT OF PAST SINS

(Luke 13:3; Acts 2:38; Acts 17:30)

CONFESS CHRIST

(Romans 10:9-10; Acts 8:37)

BE BAPTIZED

(Romans 6:3-4; Mark 16:15-16; Acts 2:38; Acts 8:36-39; 1 Peter 3:21)

LIVE A FAITHFUL LIFE

(Revelation 2:10; 2 Peter 1:5-11; John 15:1-8; Hebrews 10:23-25)