



# LIFE LESSONS FROM THE MASTER CARPENTER

## WEEK 6— Standing Up to the Crowd

1. What is peer pressure? Pastor Rick said that adults are just as susceptible to peer pressure as teenagers, do you agree? Why or why not? Is there anything from the past that you did because of peer pressure that you wish you hadn't done? What was it? Can you think of a time when you resisted the peer pressure around you? Can peer pressure be a positive thing or is it always negative?

*Answer—Peer pressure is the pressure put on us by the people we hang around to do something they want us to do, the pressure to fit in by doing what others want us to do. Peer pressure can be either positive or negative, depending on whether what you are being pressured to do is something God wants you to do or doesn't want you to do.*

2. Read Psalm 1:1-3, Proverbs 1:10-15, and 1 Corinthians 5:9-11. What do these passages warn us not to do? Why? If we obeyed what these passages tell us, what would it look like in our lives? Do you think that God wants us to go to church, be part of a small group, and have friends who are Christians so that we have positive peer pressure?

*Answer—All three of these passages warn us not to spend a lot of time with people who want to do things that God says are wrong. The reason is obvious: If we spend a lot of time with people who do the wrong thing, then we will be influenced to do the wrong thing. If we obeyed what these passages tell us, then we would not have close friendships with people who influence us to do or think things contrary to what God's Word teaches us to do. Basically, God says to hang out with other Christians who want to serve God because they will then influence us to do good things instead of bad.*

3. What are the five characteristics that Pastor Rick gave of a godless crowd? Read Matthew 26:11-26. Can you identify these five characteristics in this passage?

*Answer— 1. The crowd always overreacts; 2. The crowd is easily influenced; 3. The crowd rarely thinks before it acts; 4. The crowd has undeniable power; and 5. The crowd makes the worst decisions most of the time.*

4. Pastor Rick gave us three ways to stand up against the crowd, what were they? Which one is easiest for you to do? Which one is the hardest? Why is it so hard many times to go against

the crowd?

*Answer—The three things were: 1. Speak the truth boldly but with humility, 2. Stand up courageously knowing the crowd is slow to change, 3. Selflessly show the grace of God through my sacrifices for those in the crowd.*

5. Read Ecclesiastes 4:9-12. What does this tell us we need when we are in danger of failing? Have you ever experienced a failure that you recovered from because you had people who helped you? Have you ever gone through a storm where you had no one in your life to help you? Why is it often so hard for us to seek help from others? How can we as a small group get better at helping each other through difficulties?

*Answer—God never intended us to “go it alone” as Christians. There is no such thing as the “Lone Ranger” Christian. Now, there are times in our lives when there is no one to rely on but God, but that it is not the way God designed us to function. We need each other, we are family. The main reason we find it hard to ask for help is usually two reasons: First, we do not want to be an imposition on other people, we may feel our problems are too small or too large to bother others with. This is a lie from the pit of hell, it is Satan who wants to isolate us and make us feel like no one would want to help. The second reason can be summed up in one word: Pride. We do not want to reveal that we do not have everything together and that we need help. Pride is also the main thing that keeps us from trusting God, the belief that we are able to handle everything ourselves. In order for our small groups to get better at this, every person needs to be committed to two things; to share with others when we are struggling and to let each other know that we are willing to help regardless of the struggle.*

6. Pastor Rick said that we must identify our faith deficiencies or we are destined to repeat our failures. What did he mean by this? What area of your life do you feel you have the greatest faith deficiency? Read Hebrews 4:14-16. What does this passage tell us we should do to overcome these deficiencies?

*Answer—Hebrews 4:14-16 calls Jesus our high priest. A priest was a person who interceded to God on the behalf of others. It says that as a human, he experienced everything that we experience. So he knows your struggles, where your faith is deficient and he is waiting, as our priest, for you to come to him for help and he is always there to help you. You must make the decision to go ahead and trust him in the areas where your faith is deficient and do what you are afraid to do. When you don't fail because you are trusting in Jesus for your success, then your faith will grow and you will no longer be deficient in that area. Faith always requires a first step on our part and then God takes over from there.*

7. Pastor Rick said that we need to harness the courage from the Holy Spirit to try again. Is there an area of your life where you have given up because of failure, but you know God wants you to get up and try again? What can you do differently this time to increase your odds of success?

*Answer—To succeed where you have failed in the past you will need to do two things; first, trust in God to give you the strength you need and anticipate success because you are involving him and his power. The second thing you need to do is seek the help of the Christians in your small group to give you encouragement and prayer and assistance where needed.*