

Peer Pressure

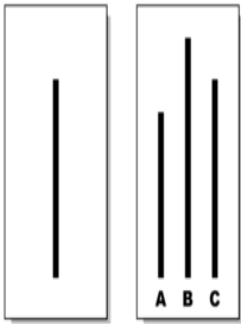
Influencing Others For Good Or
For Evil

Introduction

- Humans are social creatures who must live and relate to other humans around them
- Much of our behavior results from observing and imitating others
- Our behavior also is shaped by our desire to receive approval or fear of rejection by others
- We not only act like peers but they influence our thinking greatly

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Social Experiment Regarding Conformity



- Two cards shown to a group of people
- All persons but one give wrong answer about what lines are equal (C being right answer)
- 32% conform to wrong answer

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Introduction

- Nothing wrong in principle with thinking and acting like others unless this leads us away from God
- It has always been a challenge for Christians to stand up against peers who seek to influence us to disobey God

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Peer Pressure

1. The 12 spies
2. Peter, Paul, false brethren and circumcision

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12 Spies – God Directed Behavior

Num 13:1 Then the LORD spoke to Moses saying,
Num 13:2 "Send out for yourself men so that they may spy out the land of Canaan, which I am going to give to the sons of Israel; you shall send a man from each of their fathers' tribes, every one a leader among them."

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12 Spies – God Directed Behavior

Num 13:17 When Moses sent them to spy out the land of Canaan, he said to them, "Go up there into the Negev; then go up into the hill country.

Num 13:18 "See what the land is like, and whether the people who live in it are strong or weak, whether they are few or many.

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12 Spies – God Directed Behavior

Num 13:19 "How is the land in which they live, is it good or bad? And how are the cities in which they live, are *they* like *open* camps or with fortifications?

Num 13:20 "How is the land, is it fat or lean? Are there trees in it or not? Make an effort then to get some of the fruit of the land." Now the time was the time of the first ripe grapes.

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12 Spies – Peer Directed Behavior

Num 13:31 But the men who had gone up with him said, "We are not able to go up against the people, for they are too strong for us."

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12 Spies – Peer Directed Behavior

Num 13:32 So they gave out to the sons of Israel a bad report of the land which they had spied out, saying, "The land through which we have gone, in spying it out, is a land that devours its inhabitants; and all the people whom we saw in it are men of *great* size.

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12 Spies – Peer Directed Behavior

Num 13:33 "There also we saw the Nephilim (the sons of Anak are part of the Nephilim); and we became like grasshoppers in our own sight, and so we were in their sight."

Num 14:1 Then all the congregation lifted up their voices and cried, and the people wept that night.

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12 Spies – Peer Directed Behavior

Num 14:2 All the sons of Israel grumbled against Moses and Aaron; and the whole congregation said to them, "Would that we had died in the land of Egypt! Or would that we had died in this wilderness!

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12 Spies – Peer Directed Behavior

Num 14:3 "Why is the LORD bringing us into this land, to fall by the sword? Our wives and our little ones will become plunder; would it not be better for us to return to Egypt?"

Num 14:4 So they said to one another, "Let us appoint a leader and return to Egypt."

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Reason Why Joshua and Caleb Did Not Follow Their Peers

Num 13:27 Thus they told him, and said, "We went in to the land where you sent us; and it certainly does flow with milk and honey, and this is its fruit.

Num 13:28 "Nevertheless, the people who live in the land are strong, and the cities are fortified *and* very large; and moreover, we saw the descendants of Anak there.

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Reason Why Joshua and Caleb Did Not Follow Their Peers

Num 13:29 "Amalek is living in the land of the Negev and the Hittites and the Jebusites and the Amorites are living in the hill country, and the Canaanites are living by the sea and by the side of the Jordan."

Num 13:30 Then Caleb quieted the people before Moses and said, "We should by all means go up and take possession of it, for we will surely overcome it."

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Reason Why Their Peers Did Not Follow God

Num 14:5 Then Moses and Aaron fell on their faces in the presence of all the assembly of the congregation of the sons of Israel.

Num 14:6 Joshua the son of Nun and Caleb the son of Jephunneh, of those who had spied out the land, tore their clothes;

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Reason Why Their Peers Did Not Follow God

Num 14:7 and they spoke to all the congregation of the sons of Israel, saying, "The land which we passed through to spy out is an exceedingly good land.

Num 14:8 "If the LORD is pleased with us, then He will bring us into this land and give it to us--a land which flows with milk and honey.

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Reason Why Their Peers Did Not Follow God

Num 14:9 "Only do not rebel against the LORD; and do not fear the people of the land, for they will be our prey. Their protection has been removed from them, and the LORD is with us; do not fear them."

Num 14:10 But all the congregation said to stone them with stones. Then the glory of the LORD appeared in the tent of meeting to all the sons of Israel.

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Reason Why Their Peers Did Not Follow God

Num 14:11 The LORD said to Moses, "How long will this people spurn Me? And how long will they not believe in Me, despite all the signs which I have performed in their midst?"

Num 14:12 "I will smite them with pestilence and dispossess them, and I will make you into a nation greater and mightier than they."

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Reason Why Their Peers Did Not Follow God

Num 14:13 But Moses said to the LORD, "Then the Egyptians will hear of it, for by Your strength You brought up this people from their midst,

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Reason Why Their Peers Did Not Follow God

Num 14:14 and they will tell *it* to the inhabitants of this land. They have heard that You, O LORD, are in the midst of this people, for You, O LORD, are seen eye to eye, while Your cloud stands over them; and You go before them in a pillar of cloud by day and in a pillar of fire by night.

Num 14:15 "Now if You slay this people as one man, then the nations who have heard of Your fame will say,

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Reason Why Their Peers Did Not Follow God

Num 14:16 'Because the LORD could not bring this people into the land which He promised them by oath, therefore He slaughtered them in the wilderness.'

Num 14:17 "But now, I pray, let the power of the Lord be great, just as You have declared,

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Reason Why Their Peers Did Not Follow God

Num 14:18 'The LORD is slow to anger and abundant in lovingkindness, forgiving iniquity and transgression; but He will by no means clear *the guilty*, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children to the third and the fourth *generations*.'

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Reason Why Their Peers Did Not Follow God

Num 14:19 "Pardon, I pray, the iniquity of this people according to the greatness of Your lovingkindness, just as You also have forgiven this people, from Egypt even until now."

Num 14:20 So the LORD said, "I have pardoned *them* according to your word;

Num 14:21 but indeed, as I live, all the earth will be filled with the glory of the LORD.

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Reason Why Their Peers Did Not Follow God

Num 14:22 "Surely all the men who have seen My glory and My signs which I performed in Egypt and in the wilderness, yet have put Me to the test these ten times and have not listened to My voice,

Num 14:23 shall by no means see the land which I swore to their fathers, nor shall any of those who spurned Me see it.

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Reason Why Their Peers Did Not Follow God

Num 14:24 "But My servant Caleb, because he has had a different spirit and has followed Me fully, I will bring into the land which he entered, and his descendants shall take possession of it.

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A Warning To Us To Live By Faith Not Unbelief

Heb 3:12 Take care, brethren, that there not be in any one of you an evil, unbelieving heart that falls away from the living God.

Heb 3:13 But encourage one another day after day, as long as it is *still* called "Today," so that none of you will be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin.

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A Warning To Us To Live By Faith Not Unbelief

Heb 3:14 For we have become partakers of Christ, if we hold fast the beginning of our assurance firm until the end,

Heb 3:15 while it is said, "TODAY IF YOU HEAR HIS VOICE, DO NOT HARDEN YOUR HEARTS, AS WHEN THEY PROVOKED ME."

Heb 3:16 For who provoked *Him* when they had heard? Indeed, did not all those who came out of Egypt *led* by Moses?

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A Warning To Us To Live By Faith Not Unbelief

Heb 4:1 Therefore, let us fear if, while a promise remains of entering His rest, any one of you may seem to have come short of it.

Heb 4:2 For indeed we have had good news preached to us, just as they also; but the word they heard did not profit them, because it was not united by faith in those who heard.

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Peer Pressure

1. The 12 spies
2. Peter, Paul, false brethren and circumcision

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Sinful Peer Pressure From The World

- We turn now to the New Testament for help on overcoming sinful peer pressure
- From those in the world, we can expect exertion of sinful peer pressure
- But, we must overcome this by serving God influencing those in the world to turn to the gospel instead of letting them lead us into sin

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Beware of Sinful Peer Pressure From The World

1Co 15:33 Do not be deceived: "Bad company corrupts good morals."

1Co 15:34 Become sober-minded as you ought, and stop sinning; for some have no knowledge of God. I speak *this* to your shame.

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Overcome Sinful Peer Pressure From The World By Serving God

1Pe 4:1 Therefore, since Christ has suffered in the flesh, arm yourselves also with the same purpose, because he who has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin,
1Pe 4:2 so as to live the rest of the time in the flesh no longer for the lusts of men, but for the will of God.

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Overcome Sinful Peer Pressure From The World By Serving God

1Pe 4:3 For the time already past is sufficient *for you* to have carried out the desire of the Gentiles, having pursued a course of sensuality, lusts, drunkenness, carousing, drinking parties and abominable idolatries.

1Pe 4:4 In *all* this, they are surprised that you do not run with *them* into the same excesses of dissipation, and they malign *you*;

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Overcome Sinful Peer Pressure From The World By Serving God

1Pe 4:5 but they will give account to Him who is ready to judge the living and the dead.

1Pe 4:6 For the gospel has for this purpose been preached even to those who are dead, that though they are judged in the flesh as men, they may live in the spirit according to *the will of God*.

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Peter, Paul, False Brethren And Circumcision

- Peter, Paul and all apostles were directed by the Holy Spirit to teach the gospel without requiring anyone to be circumcised and keep the Law of Moses to be saved
- The gospel was not only miraculously revealed but confirmed by various miracles especially in the case of the household of Cornelius

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No One Has To Be Circumcised and Keep The Law of Moses To Be Saved

Act 11:6 and when I had fixed my gaze on it and was observing it I saw the four-footed animals of the earth and the wild beasts and the crawling creatures and the birds of the air.

Act 11:7 "I also heard a voice saying to me, 'Get up, Peter; kill and eat.'

Act 11:8 "But I said, 'By no means, Lord, for nothing unholy or unclean has ever entered my mouth.'

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No One Has To Be Circumcised and Keep The Law of Moses To Be Saved

Act 11:9 "But a voice from heaven answered a second time, 'What God has cleansed, no longer consider unholy.'

Act 11:10 "This happened three times, and everything was drawn back up into the sky.

Act 11:11 "And behold, at that moment three men appeared at the house in which we were *staying*, having been sent to me from Caesarea.

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No One Has To Be Circumcised and Keep The Law of Moses To Be Saved

Act 11:12 "The Spirit told me to go with them without misgivings. These six brethren also went with me and we entered the man's house.

Act 11:13 "And he reported to us how he had seen the angel standing in his house, and saying, 'Send to Joppa and have Simon, who is also called Peter, brought here;

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No One Has To Be Circumcised and Keep The Law of Moses To Be Saved

Act 11:14 and he will speak words to you by which you will be saved, you and all your household.'

Act 11:15 "And as I began to speak, the Holy Spirit fell upon them just as *He did* upon us at the beginning.

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No One Has To Be Circumcised and Keep The Law of Moses To Be Saved

Act 11:16 "And I remembered the word of the Lord, how He used to say, 'John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.'

Act 11:17 "Therefore if God gave to them the same gift as *He gave* to us also after believing in the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I that I could stand in God's way?"

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No One Has To Be Circumcised and Keep The Law of Moses To Be Saved

Act 11:18 When they heard this, they quieted down and glorified God, saying, "Well then, God has granted to the Gentiles also the repentance *that leads* to life."

Act 10:44 While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit fell upon all those who were listening to the message.

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No One Has To Be Circumcised and Keep The Law of Moses To Be Saved

Act 10:45 All the circumcised believers who came with Peter were amazed, because the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out on the Gentiles also.

Act 10:46 For they were hearing them speaking with tongues and exalting God. Then Peter answered,

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No One Has To Be Circumcised and Keep The Law of Moses To Be Saved

Act 10:47 "Surely no one can refuse the water for these to be baptized who have received the Holy Spirit just as we *did*, can he?"

Act 10:48 And he ordered them to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. Then they asked him to stay on for a few days.

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No One Has To Be Circumcised and Keep The Law of Moses To Be Saved

Act 2:38 Peter *said* to them, "Repent, and each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

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No One Has To Be Circumcised and Keep The Law of Moses To Be Saved

Col 2:11 and in Him you were also circumcised with a circumcision made without hands, in the removal of the body of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ;
Col 2:12 having been buried with Him in baptism, in which you were also raised up with Him through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead.

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No One Has To Be Circumcised and Keep The Law of Moses To Be Saved

Gal 5:3 And I testify again to every man who receives circumcision, that he is under obligation to keep the whole Law.

Gal 5:4 You have been severed from Christ, you who are seeking to be justified by law; you have fallen from grace.

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Both Paul and Peter Unite Together To Stand Against False Brethren

Gal 2:1 Then after an interval of fourteen years I went up again to Jerusalem with Barnabas, taking Titus along also.

Gal 2:2 It was because of a revelation that I went up; and I submitted to them the gospel which I preach among the Gentiles, but *I did* so in private to those who were of reputation, for fear that I might be running, or had run, in vain.

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Both Paul and Peter Unite Together To Stand Against False Brethren

Gal 2:3 But not even Titus, who was with me, though he was a Greek, was compelled to be circumcised.

Gal 2:4 But *it was* because of the false brethren secretly brought in, who had sneaked in to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, in order to bring us into bondage.

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Both Paul and Peter Unite Together To Stand Against False Brethren

Gal 2:5 But we did not yield in subjection to them for even an hour, so that the truth of the gospel would remain with you.

Gal 2:6 But from those who were of high reputation (what they were makes no difference to me; God shows no partiality)--well, those who were of reputation contributed nothing to me.

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Both Paul and Peter Unite Together To Stand Against False Brethren

Gal 2:7 But on the contrary, seeing that I had been entrusted with the gospel to the uncircumcised, just as Peter *had been* to the circumcised

Gal 2:8 (for He who effectually worked for Peter in *his* apostleship to the circumcised effectually worked for me also to the Gentiles),

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Both Paul and Peter Unite Together To Stand Against False Brethren

Gal 2:9 and recognizing the grace that had been given to me, James and Cephas and John, who were reputed to be pillars, gave to me and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship, so that *we might go* to the Gentiles and they to the circumcised.

Gal 2:10 *They only asked* us to remember the poor--the very thing I also was eager to do.

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Peter Does Not Stand For The Truth Because of Peer Pressure

- Although Peter knew, taught and practiced the truth, he at one point surrendered to peer pressure and acted hypocritically
- This shows us that even if we are strong in faith at times we can follow sinful peers, especially those who claim to be Christians in either not standing for truth or openly standing for error

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Peter Does Not Stand For The Truth Because of Peer Pressure

Gal 2:11 But when Cephas came to Antioch, I opposed him to his face, because he stood condemned.

Gal 2:12 For prior to the coming of certain men from James, he used to eat with the Gentiles; but when they came, he *began* to withdraw and hold himself aloof, fearing the party of the circumcision.

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Peter Does Not Stand For The Truth Because of Peer Pressure

Gal 2:13 The rest of the Jews joined him in hypocrisy, with the result that even Barnabas was carried away by their hypocrisy.

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Paul Lovingly Rebukes Peter Before All

- In spite of sinful peer pressure from Jewish false brethren, Paul publicly lovingly rebuked Peter for his hypocrisy
- Paul continued to be directed by the gospel, God's Word and should be an encouragement to us
- Peter accepted his rebuke and openly stated his love for Paul

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Paul Lovingly Rebukes Peter Before All

Gal 2:14 But when I saw that they were not straightforward about the truth of the gospel, I said to Cephas in the presence of all, "If you, being a Jew, live like the Gentiles and not like the Jews, how *is it that* you compel the Gentiles to live like Jews?

Gal 2:15 "We *are* Jews by nature and not sinners from among the Gentiles;

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Paul Lovingly Rebukes Peter Before All

Gal 2:16 nevertheless knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the Law but through faith in Christ Jesus, even we have believed in Christ Jesus, so that we may be justified by faith in Christ and not by the works of the Law; since by the works of the Law no flesh will be justified.

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Paul Lovingly Rebukes Peter Before All

Gal 1:8 But even if we, or an angel from heaven, should preach to you a gospel contrary to what we have preached to you, he is to be accursed!

Gal 1:10 For am I now seeking the favor of men, or of God? Or am I striving to please men? If I were still trying to please men, I would not be a bond-servant of Christ.

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Peter Accepted Paul's Rebuke

2Pe 3:15 and regard the patience of our Lord as salvation; just as also our beloved brother Paul, according to the wisdom given him, wrote to you,

2Pe 3:16 as also in all *his* letters, speaking in them of these things, in which are some things hard to understand, which the untaught and unstable distort, as *they do* also the rest of the Scriptures, to their own destruction.

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