

The Shield

by Terry W. Benton

In all the armor of God there is a piece of protection called "the shield of faith" with which "you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one" (Eph.6:15). That is a powerful thing to have and use. Another way of saying that is, "nothing Satan tries to throw at you is more powerful than the shield of faith that God has given you." Now, here is the thing. If you lay down your faith shield every time a problem comes along, then Satan wins every time. He gets to you, discourages, disheartens, and defeats you. You have to see what is coming, actually hold the shield of faith up, and when you do, you are never defeated. You learn the value of lifting the shield into place. The shield is composed of faith in God, faith that He is with you, and that He is greater than all the evil forces. Don't lay the shield aside when problems come at you. That is the very time to pick it up and use it. Think of the times David picked up the shield of faith to protect him from the many dangers and attacks of evil people with evil motives.

Ps 3:3-4 - But You, O Lord, are a shield for me, My glory and the One who lifts up my head. 4 I cried to the Lord with my voice, And He heard me from His holy hill.

Ps 5:12 - For You, O Lord, will bless the righteous;

With favor You will surround him as with a shield. NKJV

Ps 18:2-3 - The Lord is my rock and my fortress and my deliverer;

My God, my strength, in whom I will trust; My shield and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold. 3 I will call upon the Lord, who is worthy to be praised; So shall I be saved from my enemies.

Ps 18:30 - As for God, His way is perfect; The word of the Lord is proven; He is a shield to all who trust in Him.

The difference between us and David may come down to which one of us actually picked up the shield of faith and used it when the fiery dart was slung toward us. Did we use the shield? We are not promised a problem-free life here. We are given powerful armor to deal with whatever comes at us. Learn quickly to use the shield.



Quita Wilson (Amy Godwin's mom)	Jesse and Martha Godwin (Troy's parents)	Bob Simpson	Louise Pack (Anna and Christopher's grandmother)
Howard Vaughan (Mary Ann's grandfather)	Mary Edwards (Sandra Chason's mom)	Vicki Stevens	Ruth Addison (gmom of April and Julie)
Danylu Burnett (Joanetta's mom)	Maria Williams	Cletus McGee (Kristen Diehl's dad)	Howard Jones (Timothy's Father)
Betty Bradford	Frank Hand (Laura Humphrey's dad)	Earl & Ann Mitchell (Debbi Coleman's dad)	Abbie Harrison
Gerald White (Christopher, Anna and Wesley's Father)	EB & Ara Belle Rich (Joanetta's uncle and aunt)	Bobby Jennings (Brooke's uncle)	Doug Bailey (Keith's brother)
Kimzey Simpson (Bob's daughter -in-law)	William and Toni Herd	Taina Acuff (Anna's aunt)	Cheri Russell

January Birthdays

- 1-David Ogle
- 2-Chuck Hunt
- 4-Phillip Box
- 6-Erica Seymore
- 7-Charles Painter
- 11-Spencer Hall
- 11-Shepherd Hall
- 12-Rosita Chavez
- 14-Andrew Williamson
- 16-Preston Jennings
- 17-Sarah Cicero
- 18-Scott Vaughn
- 18-Nakia Strickland
- 18-Allison Bishop
- 21-Jacob Jerkins
- 21-Britton Stagner
- 23-Connor Godwin
- 23-Cristin Chavez
- 25-Caleb Daniels
- 25-Tucker Mills
- 27-Hannah Slay
- 27-Terez Strickland
- 28-Juliana Anderson
- 28-Reagan Wiginton
- 31-Jennifer Daniels

News and Notes

- ☒ - Seth Humphrey's mom, Carla, came home from knee replacement surgery on Thursday and has begun physical therapy!
- ☒ - Former student, Darryl Taylor, had successful quadruple bypass surgery this week.
- ☒ - Cards for our upcoming meeting next week are in the foyer. Please be telling and inviting others!
- ☒ - Also remember the weekend student study next week on January 10-11!
- ☒ - Please pray for our expectant mothers: Chandler Sullivan and Hannah Morris!
- ☒ - Please park on the grass as able starting next Sunday!
- ☒ - There is a ladies study at RYC in Russellville on Sat. January 25.
- ☒ - Our new quarter starts today!

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Overcoming Peer Pressure

By Robert W. Goodman



Thoughts to Ponder
Do not be deceived: "Evil company corrupts good habits." (1 Corinthians 15:33)

Often old problems are given new names. Peer pressure is a term not in the common versions of the Bible. However the idea is. Peer comes from the Latin par which means "equal." One's peers are one's equals, friends and associates.

This is a timely subject. According to a recent survey of 337 teenagers, 90 percent experienced peer pressure and 80 percent admitted giving in to peer pressure at least weekly, even if it meant doing something they knew was wrong.

Peer pressure is another way of referring to the problem of evil associates. Paul wrote, "Do not be deceived; 'Evil company corrupts good habits...' (1 Cor. 15:33). Such influence was likened to yeast or "leaven" in 1 Corinthians 5:7 - ". Do you not know that a little leaven leavens the whole lump?" (All quotations are from the New King James Version.)

The tempter knows that peer pressure is one of the most effective ways souls can be led to sin. Remember, Adam was led astray through Eve. Peer pressure led Abraham to tell a half-truth on two occasions (Gen. 17:11-20; 20:2-5). Sarah was Abraham's half-sister, but what he said was told to deceive. Isaac spoke in a similar way and with less basis when he sought to deceive for fear of peer pressure (Gen. 26:7).

Peer pressure led Israel into idolatry and associated sins over and over. Because of such a great danger, God wanted his people to be separate in

diet, dress, life and religion. Marriage with unbelieving inhabitants was wisely forbidden by God. Solomon, the wisest man in his time, disregarded this and married many foreign women. In his old age he succumbed to peer pressure (1 Kgs. 11:1-13). So peer pressure is not just a problem of the young.

Peer pressure was involved when Israel came to Samuel and said, "Make for us a king to judge us like all the nations" (1 Sam. 8:5). The prophets had to deal with this problem all during the existence of Israel and Judah.

One of the most sordid examples of peer pressure is told in 2 Samuel 13. David's son Amnon felt such lust for his half-sister Tamar that he became sick. He knew it was improper for him to do anything to her. However, Amnon had a friend and relative named Jonadab. He was sinister and crafty. Jonadab suggested a hypocritical and diabolical plan by which Amnon could take advantage of his half-sister. Amnon followed the suggestion. The result was he was not happy, he disgraced and ruined the life of his half-sister, hatred was generated in the family, and finally Tamar's brother Absalom murdered Amnon. David, as a loving father was deeply hurt. All of this because of peer pressure from an evil associate.

Peer pressure can make a wicked person even more wicked. When Ahab became king in Israel he continued "to walk in the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat." In other words, they continued to have altars

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Elders
Stacy Norman
(334) 663-2382
Walker Davis
(334) 703-0050
Larry Rouse
(334) 734-2133



SCHEDULE OF SERVICES Sunday

Bible Class 9:30 AM
Worship 10:20 AM
Evening Worship 6:00 PM

E-Mail:
larryrouse@aubeacon.com

Larry Rouse
Evangelist and Editor

Find us on the Internet: www.auchurch.com and www.aubeacon.com

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and golden calves at Dan and Bethel. Then he married princess Jezebel and was influenced to introduce Baal worship in Israel (**1 Kgs. 16:30-33**). Peer influence of Jezebel caused him to "provoke the Lord God of Israel to anger" more than all who had been king before him. The Herod to whom John the Baptist preached was a wicked man but he had respect for John, heard him gladly and did many things. He was influenced to have a righteous man murdered because of the influence of his wife, dancing stepdaughter and those who sat with him (**Mk. 6:14-27**).

We may feel we are so strong that we think peer pressure is no danger to us. Beware! Even one who had been with Jesus for three years, who had healed people, cast out evil spirits, and felt he was so strong nothing could ever turn him aside, succumbed to peer pressure and denied Jesus three times and with an oath and cursing. You can read of Peter's fall in Matthew 26. We should learn to take heed lest we fall (**1 Cor. 10:12**).

How to Overcome Peer Pressure

Parents need to teach an individual accountability to the personal, powerful, all-seeing and all-knowing God and Father. We cannot be with our children everywhere and all the time. We must instill the idea that there is One who is always with them who sees and knows (**Psa. 139:112**). It is evident that Joseph had learned this lesson for when he, as a young, unattached man far from home and loved ones, was enticed by a sinful woman and replied, "How then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?" (**Gen. 39:9**) Motorists watch their speed when they know the radar is turned on them. We need to realize that God's radar is on us all the time.

Each person needs to develop a personal commitment to the loving Savior. Paul wrote, "For the love of Christ constrains us" (**2 Cor. 5:14**) and "I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me" (**Gal. 2:20**). When Peter denied the Lord, cursed and swore, the thing that overwhelmed him was not that he had rebelled against the Divine law. That which brought him to tears and penitence was a realization that he had hurt the heart of his Savior; he had trampled on his loving heart!

All must come to realize that sin is more than breaking certain abstract rules. It actually grieves the Holy Spirit (**Eph. 4:30**) who is with and in the child of God. A child will not deliberately choose a course that brings grief to parents that he really loves. The prodigal son was not thinking when he took all and went to

live as he pleased in a far country. Later he thought about home, his loving father and how he had grieved him. Sin had no appeal when he thought of the grief he had caused.

Through Bible stories in early life, courage must be developed - a courage that will lead one to stand alone if need be. No finer examples can be found than those of Daniel and his friends (**Dan. 3,6**).

We must not only root and ground our young people in the fundamentals of faith, we must also see that teaching at home and in Bible classes is directed to the issues they face. They have a lot of peer pressure to smoke, drink, abuse drugs, lie, cheat, dance, fornicate, be immodest, proud and greedy. We live in perilous times. Young people must be led to see men are "lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, unloving, unforgiving, slanderers, without self-control, brutal, despisers of good, traitors, headstrong, haughty, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, having a form of godliness but denying its powers. And from such people turn away!" (**2 Tim. 3:1-5**)

Parents must be aware of the friends of their children. Help them to associate with those who will aid them to live better. Be willing to open your home to the friends of your children. In this way you will have some knowledge of your children's friends and control over their activities.

Newspapers, magazine articles or TV programs can suggest specific things young people must be warned against. The wise man warned his son over and over of dangers which threatened him (**Prov. 1:10,11,15; 2:12,16; 4:14,15; 5:8; 13:20; 20:19; 22:24,25; 23:6,20, etc.**).

Children must learn actively to work for their own spiritual growth and development. Bible study, prayer, regular attendance in class, worship, and meetings are vital. They must learn to seek the kingdom first (Matt. 6:33).

Parents have far more influence over their children than they may realize. It is vital that a good example be set in all areas of life. The home must be a happy and harmonious haven filled with joy and love. Children must be loved, cared for and properly disciplined. Often peer pressure leads them astray for their home life is not according to God's plan.

Peer pressure is great, but it can be overcome. Jesus did. The Apostles did. We have help. "I have written to you, young men, because you are strong, and the word of God abides in you, and you have overcome the wicked one" (**1 Jn. 2:14b**).

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Lights in the Wrong Place

By E. M. G

"What have you there that is so interesting?" asked Mr. Dale of his grandson, earnest, as he noticed his long-continued reading.

"It is a book about ships and ship-wreckers," said the boy, looking up, "and it tells about those horrible wreckers.

"Let me hear something about it," said grandpa.

And Ernest responded promptly, "Just now I was reading about the tricks they used to entice ships on the rocks. One way they did this was to take an old horse or donkey, and ties rope with a lantern fast to it, around his neck. Then they turned him loose to wander up and down on the beach. You know, grandpa, the night would be very dark and stormy, and if a ship came near enough to see the light, the captain would think it was on another vessel, and so would run on the rocks and be wrecked."

What reason would the captain have, for thinking light was on another vessel, and not on the land?" asked grandfather.

"Why, don't you see," cried Ernest, "if the light was on the land it would be stationary, but on a ship it would bob up and down, and move along, which was just what this light seemed to do."

"And yet," remarked his grandfather, "lights are put on rocky coasts on purpose to warn ships out of danger."

"Oh yes," answered Ernest, "when they are up in lighthouses, standing still."

"Did you ever think," said his grandfather' how those two kinds of lights are like two kinds of Christians?"

"Why, no," answered the boy, looking puzzled, "I don't know what you mean, grandpa?"

It is very important how and where a Christian lets his light shine. If his actions are wrong, or he is found in places where no follower of Christ ought to be, his light is shining in a wrong place, and like the deceitful beacon, he will lead others out of the way, and on the rocks

"Suppose you get your Bible and turn to the fifth chapter of Matthew, the sixteenth verse."

Ernest did so, and read, "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your father which is in heaven."

"I don't just see yet," he said when he had finished; "Of course I know Jesus called Christians lights, but I don't see how they can be like the swinging lantern around the donkey's

neck."

"There is one little word in that verse I want you to notice," said his grandfather, "it is the word 'so.'"

It is very important how and where a Christian lets his light shine. If his actions are wrong, or he is found in places where no follower of Christ ought to be, his light is shining in a wrong place, and like the deceitful beacon, he will lead others out of the way, and on the rocks; but if, instead, he is careful of his example, his words, his actions; if he is never seen in any place where Christ's servant should not be, then he is like the light in the lighthouse, shining far out over the 'waves of this troublesome world,' and guiding travelers to the peace and safety of the Father's home."

Ernest read over his verse thoughtfully, then he said :

"Grandpa, it would be a dreadful thing to be a false light, wouldn't it? I hope I never will be."

"May God grant, my dear boy," said grandfather, "that you may be enabled by his grace, to let your light so shine, that by it men may be led to glorify your Father which is in heaven (**Mt 5:16**). And may he keep you front the sin of ever showing your light in the wrong place."—E. M. G., in New York Observer.

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