

Real Life Stories The High Cost of Peer Pressure

Can You Afford The Cost?



Every one of us wants to fit in somewhere. We all want to be accepted, loved and have the approval from those around us. Peer pressure is the driving force that makes us do things. This pressure can come from within us or from others. It can come in the work place, home, the classroom, or from our friends. If the pressure to belong or succeed is positive, it will have a positive effect on us. But if the peer pressure isn't good and it causes us to do things we know we shouldn't, it can have a very high cost.

I would like to share with you the ultimate price that peer pressure cost our son, his family, and his friends. Our son, Mark, was a typical teenager. In his need to find his place of belonging Mark used humor as his way of fitting in. From an early age he discovered that if he could make his peers laugh they would accept him better. So to fit in he used humor. He worked hard at being funny.

"I just want to be accepted by my friends. I don't want to hurt anyone. I just want to fit in. Is there anything wrong with that? ..."

In grade school it was easy to make his friends laugh. But when Mark entered high school it wasn't so easy any more. So he worked harder and put a lot of pressure on himself to be the funny guy. Some of his teachers and adults didn't understand his dry humor at first. But he was willing to get into some trouble to stand out and be different and make his peers laugh. Yet it was important to him that adults liked him also. He always hoped they would come to enjoy his weird sense of humor. Some did.

In our home Mark was the youngest of five boys. He wanted to stand out for being himself. He liked to be unusual with his low pants and hat on sideways. He liked to begin a trend with clothes, hair, shoes, and hats; but when others followed he would change his style again. As with most teenagers he just wanted to stand out, be noticed, and be accepted. Some of Mark's feelings of peer pressure were self imposed and some were put on him by others. The need and pressure to belong is very strong.

On July 15, 2000, peer pressure cost him his life. He died in a car accident.

Mark and his friends had left a hip-hop (dance). Mark was alone in his car. Two other cars, with some of his friends in them, left at the same time. Alcohol was one of the factors. They began passing each other and a race began. I know Mark wouldn't want to look like a chicken. He allowed peer pressure to push him to drive much too fast. At a turn in the road, he lost control and he lost his life.

Mark had one year left in high school. That one wrong decision changed his and our lives forever. You may not be tempted to speed or race. But you might be tempted to do things that you know are wrong, just to fit in. Things like taking drugs, getting drunk, driving under the influence, sex outside of marriage, abortion, theft etc. Mark never thought anything bad could happen to him. How wrong he was. He never came home that night, and he won't be coming home ever again.

As I look back I wish I could have helped him to develop a true sense of self worth; based on who God said Mark was and not based on what he did, what he looked like, and what he owned. I wish I could tell him, but I will tell you instead. You don't have to be anything other than who you are. God says, in His Word, that you are fearfully and wonderfully made. Read Psalm 139. It's not important what others say about you. Your friends will come and go. It's only important to believe what God says about you. So be true to yourself and God.

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Before Mark died he told me he was tired of being the funny person at school. He was putting a lot of pressure on himself so he could feel he fit in. I tried to get through to him that he could just be himself. But for some reason I didn't get him to understand. So my hope and prayer is that God will use this message to save the lives of others who may be letting negative peer pressure influence their lives. Giving in to negative peer pressure always has a cost for us, and it could also have an Ultimate Cost for you and those you love.....

Yet, above all else, I am eternally grateful that Mark did make the most important decision of his earthly life. He asked Jesus Christ to come into his life, and because of that one good decision, he is now in heaven for all eternity, and we will see him again.

If you have never asked Jesus Christ to come into your life, you need to do that. The Bible says if you ask Him, He will come in and help you live your life, as you should. He is standing at the door of your heart, knocking. (Revelation 3:20) Will you let Him come in? He loves you more than you know, even enough to die in your place to prove it. (John 3:16 & Matthew 10:30-31).

You are very special to Him, and He has a plan and a purpose for your life. (Jeremiah 29:11). It will be the most important decision you will ever make.

. . . . Gleaned from Western Tract Mission