



THE LORD'S FLOCK GROWTH DIGEST

PASTORAL GROWTH SERIES

PRESSURE TANK

Pressure Series, Part 5

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A pressure tank is an enclosed vessel in which a liquid or gas is stored under pressure that is higher than atmospheric pressure. Similarly, we may experience pressures from within or from our surroundings. It may be due to stressful situations at crossroads in life, when a decision could change things for good or bad. We may also be worrying too much about what people think, which influences our thoughts and actions. Amidst all the pressure and anxiety caused by other people, let us always be concerned about what God says, put our trust in Him, and we will be safe.

Pressure from peers, or the "pull of the crowd", may be positive or negative. Positive peer pressure is when someone influences us to do something helpful for growth building. It often involves encouragement and support than actual pressure or persuasion. Negative pressure, however, may be caused by someone who influences us to do something wrong.

Keeping bad company could corrupt good Christian character (1 Cor. 15: 33). In Prov. 29:25, we learn that the "fear of man becomes a snare." Many good people live in bondage due to the fear of man.

1. **Fear of man** caused Pilate's name to become infamous in the history of the world and of the Church of God.

1.1 Pilate was unqualified for the job. He was not wealthy and He only became Governor of Judea because of his marriage to Claudia Procula, who was the granddaughter of Augustus Caesar. The Jewish leaders brought Jesus to Pilate (Mark 15: 1) because the Jews had no right to inflict capital punishment; so, in order for Jesus to be condemned to death, He had to be sentenced by a Roman leader. Pilate perceived the motives of the Jewish leaders, but he still failed to stand firm on what is right.

1.2 The signs of pressure were all around Pilate. The Sanhedrin managed to stir up a crowd of ordinary Jews to demand the death of Jesus. Pilate yielded to the crowd's demands. In life, if our primary goal is to satisfy the "crowd", then, the "crowd" has become our god. This is what happened to Pilate. Though he found no fault in Jesus, he succumbed to the crowd's demand to release Barabbas instead of Jesus.

1.3 Pilate knew that his sentence was wrong and that he sacrificed an innocent man to appease the crowd.

2. People tend to be pressured into doing something because we want **to feel accepted and valued by society**. Our decisions are sometimes shaped by what others will say or think. The pressure to conform can be powerful and hard to resist. In Phil. 1: 28, St. Paul encourages us to stand firm in one spirit and to not be intimidated in any way by our opponents.
3. Many faithful people who uphold what is right are being shunned and beaten down in today's generation. Some righteous people could not muster up the courage to speak up for the truth. The pressure that Pilate experienced still exists today. The masses have fallen prey to the deals of the devil: it doesn't matter if it's wrong, as long as it is **exciting or popular**.

CONCLUSION: Although we are surrounded by the influences of this "world", we need to follow what is right, what is true, and what God says. We must never compromise our values. We should not be swayed by the "world", which is "sin-sick".

REFLECTION: Have you been intimidated by those in authority to do something that is wrong? Did you compromise? Do you succumb to the pressure of the "crowd"?

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