

Not all peer pressure is bad. The country of India is about 2% Christian. Between Hindus and Muslims, there is a lot of hostility toward followers of Jesus. And north India is more hostile than south India. It's hard for an American to be a missionary in the north because in an Indian world, they stand out and people are suspicious of their agenda. Not even other Indian Christians want to host a white Christian because it would mean trouble for them. So here's how Indian believers are learning to spread the good news about Jesus in northern India. They are raising up Christians in the south and then sending them north to spread the news. They are finding that Indians are the best examples of Jesus for other Indians. Not all peer pressure is bad!

So teens, when it comes to you and your crowd, you are probably a better influencer for the people in your circle than anyone my age. You know the language, the culture and the needs of your generation better than anyone. That's exactly why we are inviting eight of our One80 students to become student leaders. They'll be training for eight weeks this summer in how to lead small groups, shape the vision of One80 and influence their peers and in the fall they will help lead our ministry. If you have been invited to be a student leader for the coming year, will you stand?

I want to direct the first half of this message to every student who wants to be an influencer in your crowd. Let's look at a guy in the Bible who was a great young leader. Timothy was an evangelist and the leader of the church in Ephesus. By Paul's standards he was young and Paul mentored him in leadership through two letters we call 1 and 2 Timothy. In 1 Timothy, chapter four, Paul says this (read this with me ... 1 Timothy 4:12-13) -- *Don't let anyone look down on you because you are young, but set an example for the believers in speech, in conduct, in love,*

in faith and in purity. 13 Until I come, devote yourself to the public reading of Scripture, to preaching and to teaching.

In two verses, Paul gives us the secret for influencing your peers and getting the adults in your life to take you seriously. First, Paul says, be an example of something good. Or be a pattern. Say you're making a birdhouse. Now, there's a hard way to make a birdhouse and an easy way to make a birdhouse. The hard way is to go to Lowe's, buy some wood and nails, bring it home and start cutting. No instructions, no example to go by. You're just going to keep at it and hope that by the time you get tired, you've got something that some bird somewhere might sit in. That's the hard way to do it.

The easy way to do it is to look at a few birdhouses, maybe even ask a few questions about which kind seem to work best, then pick one and trace all the pieces. Then buy your wood with those dimensions in mind and use the pattern to cut your pieces out. When you've got a pattern to go by, you're a lot more likely to end up with something worth making.

So when Paul teaches us to become a pattern, he's not just asking us to decide what we believe. He's asking us to live so that anyone looking at us will want to trace our lives and make that kind of life for themselves. The question is ... is your life a good pattern? Paul gives us five places to look: speech, conduct, love, faith and purity.

Speech ... developing the way you talk. I'm curious ... how many of you have a GPS in your car? What voice do you have on your GPS right now? I've heard a lot of English accents ... because face it ... English accents sound more intelligent. Well, that's sort of what Paul is saying. He's asking us to put a Christian accent on the way we speak. Why? Because it sounds

more intelligent. I'm not talking about Christian-ese. I don't hear any GPS voices talking Christian-ese (although, that would be funny ... "Praise the Lord, and take a right turn right here. And if you don't, we are going to have to re-calculate your life. Pentecostals, let me remind you to keep your hands on the wheel in the car!") That's not the accent we're after.

But listen ... Teens, you should know that mature adults are not impressed by coarse words or by anger. Now, I know there are plenty of adults who use coarse words and anger to get their point across ... but they are not your pattern. Develop the way you speak ... at home, at school, on facebook ... so that when people are choosing a voice to give their lives direction, they choose yours, because it sounds intelligent.

Conduct. Of course, it isn't just about sounding intelligent. You have to back it up with your behavior. Look at the Bible study on the back of your worship flier. Day Four is on Colossians, chapter 3. In that chapter, Paul gives us all kinds of things we *don't* want in our lives and also what we *should* fill our lives with. He tells us to stay away from sexual immorality and impurity but also anger and lying. And then he tells us to clothe ourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. I like the image Paul gives of putting those things on like clothes. You wouldn't leave the house with old, smelly, out-of-style clothes on, and you put on spiritual clothes the same way you put on these clothes. (ZZ Top was right. Everybody's crazy about a sharp-dressed man.) Students, I challenge you to do Day Four this week. Spend ten minutes reading Colossians 3 and be real about what you need to toss out of your spiritual closet.

Love. 1 Peter 1:22 says, "Love deeply, from the heart." Write that down. Love deeply, from the heart. That's different than being nice, different than being in love, different than caring

only about the people who care about you. Anybody can do that. Somebody said this ... that your walk with the Lord should slop over onto others. Does your love for God slop over onto others?

Faith. The kind of faith Paul is talking about in this list is more about loyalty. It's that willingness to stand with Jesus even when it's not popular ... or even fun. That's hard. That's the deep end.

Purity. I want to just mention one thing here, and it has to do with how you use your body. We're talking about patterns, and a pattern is another way of talking about a plan. It is a fact that you won't make great choices if you don't have a plan. You don't want your biggest choices to be made in the heat of the moment. So teens, what are your goals? What decisions do you need to make now, so that the pattern of your life makes something worth having?

The Bible is where you're going to find the best ideas for great goals. In 1 Timothy 4:13, Paul tells Timothy to stay in the Word. If you're looking for one great goal, make a plan to read the Bible.

According to the Los Angeles Times, teenagers are causing a huge problem in South Africa. In this one area of untamed bush, teens are running wild ... wreaking havoc with wild animals ... killing rhinos ... charging cars. They killed a German businessman who was rescuing his toddler who had fallen out of a car window.

These teenagers are orphans ... all males ... and all elephants. They were transplanted from one game park to another, without any adult elephants to mind them. And without any parental

guidance, it's sort of amazing what happened to these guys. For starters, they changed physically. They began coming into sexual maturity years earlier than usual. And without female elephants around, they started going after rhinos. Which killed some of the rhinos. Others went after humans on safari. To solve the problem, they didn't put female elephants into the park. They put adults in the park. Elephants over forty. And as soon as the adults were introduced, all the aggression stopped. The moral of the story is that teens need parents to be involved in their lives. Parents, this part of the teaching is for you.

This is what Moses taught the people of Israel. He said (Deuteronomy 6:4-7) -- *Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one. 5 Love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength.* So first, Moses says, you have to love the Lord yourself before you can teach anyone else to love Him. In other words, you can't give what you don't have. Maybe the best gift you can give your kid is to work on your own salvation. I can't think of a better way to invest in your family. *6 These commandments that I give you today are to be on your hearts. 7 Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up.*

I hear three things in this teaching. First, **find your own faith**. Second, teach it to your children. **Talk the walk**. Richard Catalano is a professor of social development at the University of Washington. He says, "The overwhelming majority of kids say they would rather talk to their parents than their friends. Even kids who are involved in alcohol and other drugs wish they would be having those conversations with their parents." Parents, it is a fact that kids listen to you. Even if they have their earplugs in and the tv on and they're texting, they are listening. And they need our voice.

There is an amazing little verse in 1 Kings, chapter 1. It's in the middle of David's story. David was king and he'd promised his son, Solomon, that he would be the successor to the throne. But he had this other son, Adonijah, who evidently was sort of a rebellious kid. And Adonijah decided he was going to come against his dad. So while Adonijah is getting his horses and chariots ready for this great rebellion, we come across this verse which is a sort of stunning commentary on why David had such problems with this child. This is what 1 Kings 1:6 says about Adonijah: "His father had never rebuked him or asked him, 'Why do you behave as you do?'"

David had never taken time to talk to Adonijah about his life. And of course, that's no excuse for bad behavior, but the guy who wrote this story sure seemed to think it was an important piece of information.

Parents, hear this. Your child needs to hear about Jesus from you. That's why we encourage parents to be part of One80. Because your voice matters. Unless they hear you talk about your walk with Christ, they won't know you care about their questions, their fears, their doubts. Talk the walk. Do you want them to approach dating, driving, jobs, grades, curfews, friends, activities ... from a Christian perspective? It won't happen by osmosis. Talk to them about it.

Talk the walk ... and then, **walk the talk**. Between the ages of 13 and 17, a child is asking one key question: "Who am I?" That's a HUGE question. He is deciding who he will pattern his life after. She is asking if she's worth anything. They need to hear that in Christ Jesus, they are loved and valued and that there is a plan for their lives. Don't leave that lesson for someone else to give. Write notes, send messages on facebook, text them, show that you believe in them.

And show them that you believe in God. Your teens need to see you not just sitting in church but living the life of a follower.

If you haven't started yet, then here's where you can begin. Start in the place of prayer. Pray for your child, with your child and over your child. Dennis Rainey says, "Bring every concern, dream, and desire about your child to God in fervent, persistent prayer." Pray for Christian friends. Pray for God to remove bad influences. And pray blessings over your child. This is where I'd like to end today. I want to invite parents and teens into a time of prayer.