

If Sinners Entice You



Discovering God's Word
Bible Study Series

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If Sinners Entice You

Introduction

A. Ever since people and sin started multiplying on this earth, it has been a struggle for God's people to resist the enticements of those who are not God's people.

B. "Peer pressure" (as it is often called) is one of the most notable ways Satan tries to pull people away from serving God. For, there seems to be something in us that desires to be accepted by others and that is often afraid of not fitting in with others.

C. The book of Proverbs addresses this situation in Proverbs 1:8-19. Peer pressure is a threat to people living with the wisdom that comes from God.

D. Proverbs helps people apply knowledge from God to various circumstances in life so we can please Him. Particularly, Proverbs is primarily written from the perspective of a father teaching his son. And, certainly, a major part of this father's training in wisdom for his son is to teach how to respond to sinners who entice him to do evil.

E. Purpose: To learn how sinners will try to entice you and how you must respond so that you please God.

1. Sinners Will Try To Entice You

A. The world is full of sinners

1. The implication in Proverbs 1:10 is that there are sinners in this world who will try to entice you to do what is wrong.

2. To fully appreciate the nature of this threat, though, you must soberly consider the great number of sinners who are in the world. Consider the points made by the following passages.

- Exodus 23:2. The implication in this passage is that a crowd full of people may be guilty of wrongdoing. This is the case more often than not.
- Matthew 7:13-14. Most people will live in a way that displeases God so as to be eternally lost in Hell.
- Matthew 7:21-23. Many people who profess faith in Jesus and do some good things in His name are still involved in wickedness. So, you cannot let your guard down just because you may be around people who believe in Jesus and say they are "Christians."

- 1 John 5:19. Because the whole world is under the sway (influence) of Satan, we must constantly be on guard against the influences of Satan.

3. Take some time to make the concept of “if sinners entice you” personal and relevant to your unique situation (i.e. your spouse, your boyfriend/girlfriend, your children, your parents, your neighbors, your coworkers, your classmates, the people you worship with, the people on social media, the people on television, strangers, etc.).

4. As you identify where the enticements may come from, it is not that these enticements can only come in one particular form. Consider the different kinds of sin in this world sinners will potentially try to entice you to participate in.

- Proverbs 1:10-19. This passage particularly addresses acts of violence and theft. But, the enticements from sinners are certainly not limited to this.
- Galatians 5:19-21. Although this is not an exhaustive list, there are many “works of the flesh” sinners can entice you to get involved in.

B. You are a recovering sinner

1. We all reach a point when we all sin against God (Romans 3:23). Through Jesus, though, we can be forgiven of that sin and again focus on living for Him (Romans 6:23).

2. From this time of receiving God’s forgiveness, you must recognize that you are someone who has struggled against sin in the past and will continue to struggle against sin in the future. So, when sinners entice you, they will not be appealing to someone who has never given in to the fleshly desires; but to one who has chosen the desires of the flesh above the will of God before (and perhaps many times before)!

- 1 Corinthians 6:9-11. Being washed, justified, and sanctified did not guarantee the future success of these Christians against their old temptations and struggles!

C. Satan often works through others

1. Although Satan is not directly mentioned in Proverbs 1, he has his “fingerprints” all over what is pictured!

2. While Satan has many different avenues for temptation, one of his most effective tools is working through others who are under his sway (1 John 5:19)!

- Proverbs 1:10. Notice those who are pictured as doing the enticing are called “sinners.” Satan has already been effective in enticing them and is now using them as pawns in his service to entice others!

3. That Satan uses sinners to entice those who are trying to live for God can be seen throughout the Bible story. Consider just two examples.

- Genesis 3:6, 12. The second person to sin in the history of the world was impacted to do so by the first person to sin on earth! Perhaps Eve repeated the same lies and enticements Satan had previously used to entice her.
- Matthew 16:21-23. Satan can even tempt through people who often express faith and have good intentions – as he did here through Peter. Yet, because Peter was not focused in the right way, Satan exploited that as an opportunity to tempt Jesus.

2. How Sinners Entice You

A. Opportunity to join

1. These enticements can be properly called “peer pressure.” First, the people who are enticing you are your *peers* (people who belong to the same societal group as you - your family, your circle of friends, your coworkers or classmates, your neighbors, etc.). Second, these people apply *pressure* so you act in specific ways.

2. All of this pressure, though, boils down to the invitation to be “with” your peers (Proverbs 1:11, 14).

- If you go along with whatever the person/group is enticing you to do, you can be “with” them. You will be accepted by them. You will be likeable to them. You will have an identity as being part of that group.
- If you do not go along with whatever the person/group is enticing you to do, you will not be “with” them. So, you may not be accepted by them. You may not be liked by them. You will have to find your identity in some other way. You may experience

consequences for not being with them. You may be the only one among your peers who are not with them and, therefore, stand alone.

3. Oftentimes, this pressure takes precedence over what is actually done. For example, Proverbs 1 pictures the opportunity to be with them as overwhelming any conscience concerning hurting/murdering others or taking what does not rightfully belong to you!

- Most times, those who throw in their lot with these sinners find themselves going further than they wanted or intended to go. Yet, once you throw in your lot with them, it is difficult to separate yourself from them!

B. Treasures and/or pleasures promised

1. The pressure sinners provide is also often rooted in the promises of experiencing earthly pleasures or gaining worldly treasures that appeal to your fleshly desires. This is part of what makes their offer *enticing*.

2. Look at the various promises made by those in Proverbs 1.

- Fun (v. 11). If you join us, you will have a good time in what we are going to do. If you don't join us, you're really going to miss out on a lot of fun.
- Valuable possessions (v. 13-14). If you join us, you're going to get things you've always wanted. If you don't join us, you won't get these things.
- Make profit (v. 19). If you join us, you're going to prosper financially. If you don't join us, you're not going to make as much money as the rest of us.

3. Carefully evaluate how sinners entice you using the promises of treasures and/or pleasures. Without this component of the pressure, it may be easier to resist them. But, with the promise of treasures and/or pleasures that you would actually like to have or experience, it becomes much more desirable to conform.

C. No mention of the consequences

1. Sin never fairly represents itself. For, Satan wants you to look at all the "positive" things about the pressure he is applying through your peers (as seen in Proverbs 1).

- Who doesn't want to be "with" another person/group of people and to enjoy the pleasures and/or treasures of this life?

2. What Satan does not want you (as well as those who are enticing you) to realize are the consequences you will experience if you go along with the enticements!

- Consider Proverbs 1:10-19 carefully. Notice two voices in the text. One is the voice of wisdom (like a father speaking to a son). One is the voice of the sinners who are doing the enticing.
- The voice of the sinners only speaks of the things we've already identified. They say nothing about the negative things that can happen if you join them!
- Only the voice of wisdom speaks about the consequences of listening to these sinners (vv. 17-19).

3. If sinners entice you, they will not mention the negative things that will happen to you and others because you listen to them. And, by not mentioning these things, it can make it seem as if the enticement only has the potential for a "positive" impact on your life.

3. How To Make The Right Choice

A. Recognize you have a choice

1. Satan wants to use others to entice you and make it feel as if you have no choice but to conform to the way he wants you to live.

2. It is crucial that you recognize your ability to choose which path you will travel down. Notice the indications of a choice in Proverbs 1.

- Don't consent (be persuaded, v. 10). Although they can entice you, they cannot force you to give your consent to join them.
- Throw your lot in (v. 14). Although they pressure you to throw your lot in to share with them, they cannot make you do so.
- Don't set your foot on that road (v. 15). Although they walk on that road, they cannot make you put your foot on the road.

B. Listen to wisdom

1. Wisdom is speaking (as a father to a son) about the reality of peer pressure in Proverbs 1:10-19. And, wisdom will help you make the right decisions as you face peer pressure so that you will experience favorable results as opposed to the consequences of foolish living (Proverbs 1:8-9).

2. The key to using wisdom to help you avoid the enticement of sinners, though, is for you to listen to wisdom *before* you are enticed and make the wrong decisions!

- Notice that this section is a warning about what could happen. This warning needed to be heard prior to the actual enticement to know how to respond properly!
- Many people go along with the enticements in the moment because it appeals to them and then expects wisdom to bail them out of their trouble after the fact. However, wisdom is calling out for you to know it so that you can avoid getting into trouble. But, you should not expect wisdom to erase the consequences of your actions if you don't listen to it (Proverbs 1:20-33)!

C. Evaluate the nature of the people enticing you

1. Although it is true that lost sinners can do some things that are good and followers of Jesus can do some things that are wicked, it can be helpful to evaluate the source of the enticement.

2. If you recognize the enticement as coming from sinners (Proverbs 1:10), you should have a good indication that what they want you to do may not be something you should be involved in.

- This kind of awareness will help you in many situations from following others naively or foolishly and being caught unprepared!
- 1 Corinthians 15:33 clearly teaches this principle. Although you cannot avoid all the evil people in this world, you can be very careful and wise concerning how much you get involved with them and consider their invitations to participate with them with the proper scrutiny. And, you can be careful about the circumstances you put yourself in with people you know are going to pressure you to go in the wrong directions!

D. Look down the path

1. As mentioned, Satan does not want us to consider the consequences of the sinful actions – and those he uses to entice us will not mention them.

2. Learning wisdom from God will help you recognize that Satan's enticements never stop with just the thing that is being said. Instead, sin will always try to take you further than you wanted to go, keep you longer than you wanted to stay, and cost you more than you were willing to pay!

So, take time to look long and hard down the road they want you to travel.

- Proverbs 1:17-19 demonstrates how you will destroy your own life by following the enticements. In fact, the book of Proverbs often warns about many dangers involved in sinful things.
- Wisdom teaches us there are many physical consequences for sin (including things like guilt, regret, broken relationships, health problems, ruined reputations, jail time, or even death). Then, God teaches that there are spiritual consequences for sin that will result in eternal separation from Him in Hell (Romans 6:23; Revelation 21:8)!

E. Make a firm decision

1. You must make the choice to use the wisdom from God and make a firm (unwavering) decision not to go along with them!

2. Some may *want* to resist the enticement. Others may *initially* resist but can still be convinced. Yet, God shows us that we must firmly resist!

- Don't consent (Proverbs 1:10). Don't let yourself be persuaded to lower your standards and go along with them. Never give your okay to what they are asking you to do.
- Don't travel that road or set your foot on their path (Proverbs 1:15). Although you can change and come back to the Lord if you start down the path, it is *much* easier to simply never take the first step! So, do not flirt with the sin they want you to share in. Rather, learn to just say "No!"

Conclusion

A. Satan uses sinners throughout this world to try and entice you so you will do his will rather than God's will. And, he is crafty in how he works through the people in your life.

B. However, you can and you must not consent to travel down the path Satan wants you to travel. Instead, you can resist him and obey God!

Study Questions

What is the focus of the book of Proverbs? Does it ever address the subject of peer pressure?

1. Sinners Will Try To Entice You

What does the Bible teach about the world being full of sinners? Who are some people who may try to entice you?

Why is it essential to recognize your past struggles against sin?

How does Satan work through other people?

2. How Sinners Entice You

How do sinners entice you by giving you the opportunity to join them?

How do sinners entice you by promising treasures and/or pleasures?

How do sinners entice you by making no mention of the consequences?

3. How To Make The Right Choice

How will recognizing you have a choice help you make the right choice?

How will listening to wisdom help you make the right choice?

How will evaluating the nature of the people enticing you help you make the right choice?

How will looking down the path help you make the right choice?

How will making a firm decision help you make the right choice?

