

WISDOM UNIVERSITY

PROVERBS 1:8-19

# PEERS V PARENTS



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**FIRST BYRON CHRISTIAN REFORMED CHURCH**

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# INTRODUCTION

## Problem

30% of college students drop out after their first year at school. While the drop-out rate slows after the first year, an ongoing trickle means that the total drop-out rate is somewhere in the 40-50% range. There are many reasons for this:

- **Lack of discipline**
- **Lack of money**
- **Lack of friends**
- **Chose wrong major**

The number one reason for people dropping out of Wisdom University (see last week's sermon) is peer pressure—the influence of others in the same social or age group. This is not limited to the young, but it is especially influential when we're young.

## Effects

Peer pressure has many negative effects which often accumulate to cause students to drop out of Wisdom University:

- **Bad decisions** that lead to sin and harm to ourselves and others.
- **Conflict** (inner, outer, spiritual)
- **Stress**: anxiety, depression (20-30% of teens report symptoms of depression due to peer pressure)

## Solution?

Peer pressure causes many to drop out of Wisdom University. But there is a way to stay enrolled and to graduate with honors, as Proverbs 1:8-19 demonstrates.

# CONTEXT

## Proverbs Structure

- **Preparation for Wisdom** (1:1-7)
- **Principles of Wisdom** (1:8-9:18)
- **Practice of Wisdom** (10:1-31:31)

## Chapter One

In the last sermon on 1:1-7, we began to look at Wisdom University—what is taught there and how to enroll. Today, in 1:8-19, we want to look at the temptation to drop out of Wisdom University, so that we are equipped to persevere and succeed in our studies.

IT'S BETTER TO WALK ALONE  
THAN WITH THE CROWD IN THE  
WRONG DIRECTION.



How can we stay enrolled in Wisdom University?  
Here are two insights to help you.



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# 1. PARENTAL INSTRUCTION WILL PROSPER YOU (8-10, 15)

## Your parents love you

***(8) My son, hear the instruction of your father, and do not forsake the law of your mother...(10) My son, if sinners entice you, do not consent...(15) My son, do not walk in the way with them, keep your foot from their path;***

Notice the repeated address of "son." This reminds this boy of his relationship to his parents. The person speaking to him is someone who brought him into the world, has cared for him over many years, who loves him, and who has sacrificed much for him. Solomon is saying, "Consider the loving parental relationship between you and your teacher."

Some teachers might address you as, "Hey you!" or "Student!" or by your surname "Murray!" or at best by your first name, "David." But what a difference when someone can say "My son" or "My daughter." That loving connection should get our attention, especially when compared with peers.

## Your parents teach you wisdom

***(8) My son, hear the instruction of your father, and do not forsake the law of your mother.***

In Deuteronomy 6:6-9, God gave the parents the responsibility to teach their children God's Words. This is being lived out here and in the rest of Proverbs. "Son" appears sixty times in Proverbs and "my son" twenty-three times. God is saying that the main teacher in the life of children and the main influence is to be their parents and not anyone else. God gives parents the responsibility to teach their kids as an act of love.

Notice that it is both parents who are given the responsibility. Both are involved and both are to be respected. "Instruction of your father" is education through correction. "Law of your mother" is from a word meaning to direct or point you in the right direction. The parents are taking time to describe the realities their children will face in life so that they are prepared for this evil world and won't even take one step down a dangerous path.

## Your parents want you to succeed

***(9) For they will be a graceful ornament on your head, and chains about your neck.***

Why do your parents take such time and pains to teach you wisdom? Look at the benefits of it. "Graceful ornament" is often used for crowning a victor. The "chains" were a mark of prestige. Your parents, says Solomon, are not out to ruin your life but to help you truly succeed. Wisdom is the way to win. Wisdom is the way to honor. Wisdom enhances and beautifies both in this life and the next (Prov. 3:22; 4:9; Titus 2:10, 1 Peter 3:3-4). A new report on teens by the US CDC found:

- Students who are not sexually active rate significantly and consistently better in nearly all health-related behaviors and measures than their sexually active peers.
- Teens who have sexual contact with the same or both sexes have remarkably lower percentages of healthy behaviors overall than their heterosexually active peers.

What a contrast! Triumphant victory and prestigious honors by following godly parents rather than ugly defeat and deterioration in every area of life if we close our ears and hearts to them.

## APPLICATION

♥ Parents, this is your number one responsibility in life. Nothing matters more than this. The godly instruction of your children is far more important than going to college, getting a good career, succeeding in sports. If you really love them you will prioritize teaching them wisdom AND correcting them (Eph. 6:4) so that they can prosper by God's definition of prosperity. The greatest wisdom and riches you can give your kids is to point them to the Wisdom of God, Jesus Christ (Col. 2:3).

♥ Perhaps you are single or you have no children. What about looking out for kids who have no parent or only one struggling parent? Can you perhaps find a young person to mentor? Can you not become a spiritual mother or father to a child? Or maybe you can even consider adoption as one way of introducing another child to Wisdom University.

♥ If you are rebelling against your parents instruction and correction, ask yourself "What's their motive?" Is it hatred or love? Is it your prosperity or your poverty? Is this really just "their opinion" or are they basing their instruction and correction on the tried and tested Word of God. Remember their love for you, as you are their son or daughter.

♥ If you have such a mother or father, thank God and remember, "to whom much is given, much is required (Luke 12:48). You have a privilege that only a very small percentage of this world's kids have been given.

♥ It is God who is parenting you through your parents. It's God that is showing his love through them, his wisdom through them, his desire for your welfare through them. It is God who gave his Son to death to save many other sons and daughters from death (Heb. 2:10)

### Theology for the Teen Years

Theology for the teen years should mean addressing these questions about life, love, God, and meaning according to Scripture. My generation is trying to figure out our place in this world, and we need a community who will teach us about the Solid Rock on which to build a foundation of faith.

- A community who won't just skip the hard parts of the Bible but who will teach them with humility.
- A community who will talk about suffering, pain, and death and answer our questions about God's goodness and power.

- A community who will talk about science and how God's character and creation are not in opposition to it.
- A community who will talk about sexuality and gender and sensitively show us God's design for men and women.
- A community who won't dumb things down for us but who will raise their expectations of us.
- A community who will teach us about why God made us and help us understand our purpose and identity.
- A community who will model a passion for God and his Word over and above games and pizza.

**Jaquelle Crowe**

YOUR PARENTS AREN'T TRYING TO  
IMPRISON YOU,  
THEY'RE TRYING TO GET YOU READY  
FOR FREEDOM.



**Maybe you doubt all this. Perhaps your peers are pressurizing you.  
Is it so bad to give in and give it a try?**



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## 2. PEER PRESSURE WILL DESTROY YOU (10-14, 16-19)

### Your peers are sinners

***(10) My son, if sinners entice you, do not consent. (11) If they say, "Come with us, let us lie in wait to shed blood; let us lurk secretly for the innocent without cause; (12) Let us swallow them alive like Sheol, and whole, like those who go down to the pit...(16) For their feet run to evil, and they make haste to shed blood.***

Sinners are never content to sin themselves; they want to draw others in too, partly to ease their own conscience. They seem to especially target the moral and the children of good parents.

"Entice" means to allure, persuade, seduce. The parents anticipate this temptation here, and say "Don't even open the door." That's what "consent" means, opening the door. It envisages sinners on the outside trying to get our kids to open the door and follow them. The parents say, "Don't even put your hand on the handle."

What are they tempting them to do? To join their murderous violent gang in order to kill others and get their money. "Well, that's not likely to happen in West Michigan is it?" Of course it can, and it does. But just because our kids are not in a street gang doesn't mean they're not in league with violent sinners as Jesus defines them (Matt. 5:21-23). There's verbal destruction (gossip), physical bullying, cyber-bullying, secret stealing, and so on.

But these verses are just a sample temptation. It could be any number of sins. The focus is not the sin, but the sinners who are doing the tempting. Solomon is inviting the tempted to compare and contrast the character and aims of their "friends" with their parents.

### Your peers tell you lies

***(13) We shall find all kinds of precious possessions, we shall fill our houses with spoil; (14) cast in your lot among us, let us all have one purse.***

The tempter promises prosperity, security, and identity. We'll all be one big, rich, happy family. It's going to be so easy and so rewarding. Notice the emphasis on "we...we...our...us...us...one purse." You'll be one of us, no longer on the outside. You'll be popular with the popular. But what gang of sinners ever remained friends for long?

And remember who is behind the lies and the false promises. It's the devil, the Father of lies, and who was a murderer from the beginning (John 8:44-45). The Bible changes our view of our tempters, "You are of your Father the devil." Remember that the next time they come with their enticements.

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## Your peers are doomed

*(17) Surely, in vain the net is spread in the sight of any bird; (18) but they lie in wait for their own blood, they lurk secretly for their own lives. (19) So are the ways of everyone who is greedy for gain; It takes away the life of its owners.*

If birds see a hunter setting a trap, they instinctively know to avoid it. Partly it's because they've seen other birds caught. Mainly, it's because they know the hunter's character and aim.

And yet, although God warns about the trap, shows where it is, how it works, and the character and aim of who is setting it, some still jump straight into it.

And it's not just the hunted that get trapped; the hunters themselves fall into their own trap (18-19). What they were doing to others is done to them. Their punishment is tailored to their sins. They set out to ambush others but they ambush themselves. Sin has short-term benefits but long-term costs. It is attractive but deadly.

### APPLICATION

♥ Your friends would never pressure you to gang up on someone to kill and rob them, would they? Maybe not. But what about pressurizing you to watch R-Rated movies that glorify and glamorize violence? What about the sharing of pornography that is basically the PR face of sex-trafficking and has the same violent end-result as street gangs?

♥ Remember who is behind your "friends." It's the Father of lies, a murderer who wants to murder your soul. And remember what is in front of your friends--certain destruction, with the punishment designed to match the crime. The net has been spread in front of you. Don't jump in like the rest. Bullies may have big mouths and big muscles but they have bird-brains. Indeed, that's an insult to birds!

♥ Parents, there is nothing more influential in your kids' lives than their friends. As [Greg Trimble](#) said, it is "the most dangerous temptation facing our youth." Listen to some other quotes from his article:

- Almost every single not-so-holy thing that I was exposed to in my youth came by way of my friends.
- The truth is that we generally go in the direction that our closest friends go.
- Almost as a universal rule, we're the sum total of the five people we hang around the most.
- The friends you choose are the catalyst to your own happiness or destruction.

How much prayer and courage we need in guiding our kids in their choice of friends.

PARENTS PRESSURE YOU  
TO THE PODIUM.  
BUT PEERS PRESSURE YOU  
TO PERDITION.



Do you still think you should give in to peer pressure?  
Compare the aim and end of parent pressure compared to peer pressure?



# CONCLUSION



## FURTHER STUDY

### Online Articles

- [Theology for the Teen Years](#) by Jaquelle Crowe
- [CDC Study Says Teen Virgins Are Healthier](#) by Glenn Stanton
- [How You Can Help Teenage Girls Grow in Godliness](#) by Lindsay Carlson
- [How to Teach your Teen to Study the Bible](#) by Jen Wilkin

### Books

- [The Disciple-Making Parent: A Comprehensive Guidebook for Raising Your Children to Love and Follow Jesus Christ](#) by Chap Bettis
- [Parenting: 14 Gospel Principles That Can Radically Change your Family](#) by Paul Tripp
- [This Changes Everything: How the Gospel Transforms the Teen Years](#) by Jaquelle Crowe

### Discussion Questions

- Should you force your teens to go to church? Read [this article](#).
- Who are the biggest influences in your teen's life?
- How can you increase your influence in your teen's life?
- If you are single or your own children are grown up, how can you be a "parent" to other kids?
- How can the church help teens caught between their parents and their peers?
- Read [The Most Dangerous Temptation That Faces our Youth](#). How can you help your kids choose better friends?

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# PEERS V PARENTS



## Peer pressure > WU Dropout

- Bad decisions
- Conflict
- Stress

### Biblical answer?



## Parental instruction will prosper you

- Your parents love you
- Your parents teach you wisdom
- Your parents want you to succeed

YOUR PARENTS AREN'T TRYING TO IMPRISON YOU, THEY'RE TRYING TO GET YOU READY FOR FREEDOM.

### Are my peers really so bad?



ALMOST EVERY SINGLE NOT-SO-HOLY THING THAT I WAS EXPOSED TO IN MY YOUTH CAME BY WAY OF MY FRIENDS.

GREG TRIMBLE

ALMOST AS A UNIVERSAL RULE, WE'RE THE SUM TOTAL OF THE FIVE PEOPLE WE HANG AROUND THE MOST.

GREG TRIMBLE



Resist peer pressure but listen to your parents to stay enrolled in Wisdom University if you want to prosper in life and forever.

PARENTS PRESSURE YOU TO THE PODIUM, BUT PEERS PRESSURE YOU TO PERDITION.



## Peer pressure will destroy you

- Your peers are sinners
- Your peers tell you lies
- Your peers are doomed

PARENTS PRESSURE YOU TO THE PODIUM, BUT PEERS PRESSURE YOU TO PERDITION.

### Action?