



Family Lesson 68

Principle: Giving into peer pressure can be sin.

Bible Character(s): Jesus and Pilate

Scripture Reference: Matthew 27:15-26

1. Worship - Choose your favorite songs from the [Spotify playlist](#) found on the curriculum resource page. Have fun, sing loudly, and follow along with the motions!

2. Bible Lesson - Read through the lesson with your family. The bold font is meant to be read aloud along with the Scripture references.

Bible Lesson

Today, we will look at Pilate's response to the peer pressure of people. We will see that we also make decisions based on our fears of what others will think rather than looking to God for direction and wisdom.

What is peer pressure? (Allow responses.) **We are going to talk about that today. Peers are your friends and the people around you who are your age. Peer pressure is the tension that we feel when our friends tell us one thing, and we know something else is right and good. We are going to see how a man named Pilate let peer pressure influence him about Jesus, but first let's review what we learned last week.**

What did we see Jesus do last week? (We saw him choose to submit and obey God's will for his life.) **What happened to Jesus?** (He was in the garden praying before being arrested.) **How did he feel?** (He knew exactly what kind of suffering he was going to experience in order for God's plan to prevail.) **Why did Jesus choose to submit and obey God's will?** (He could have defeated the soldiers who came to arrest him, but he chose to follow God's will and allow them to arrest him. He submitted to what God wanted because he knew

God's plan would bring much more blessing than disobeying God.)

Today, we are going to continue in the book of Matthew to see what happens when Jesus is in prison. The Israelites are still celebrating Passover at this time.

Let's begin reading the Bible in Matthew 27 [NLT].

Matthew 27:15-18

¹⁵ Now it was the governor's custom each year during the Passover celebration to release one prisoner to the crowd—anyone they wanted.

¹⁶ This year there was a notorious prisoner, a man named Barabbas. ¹⁷ As the crowds gathered before Pilate's house that morning, he asked them, "Which one do you want me to release to you—Barabbas, or Jesus who is called the Messiah?" ¹⁸ (He knew very well that the religious leaders had arrested Jesus out of envy.)

Barrabas is guilty. He deserves to be in prison. Jesus is not guilty; he never sinned. Pilate is the Roman governor over the Jews who determines if someone will receive the punishment of death. He also decides which prisoner will be released. He knows that the Jewish leaders do not like Jesus, and he knows that Jesus is innocent.

Let's read the Bible to see what happens next.

Matthew 27:19-21a

¹⁹ Just then, as Pilate was sitting on the judgment seat, his wife sent him this message: "Leave that innocent man alone. I suffered through a terrible nightmare about him last night."

²⁰ Meanwhile, the leading priests and the elders persuaded the crowd to ask for Barabbas to

be released and for Jesus to be put to death.
²¹ *So the governor asked again, "Which of these two do you want me to release to you?"*

Pilate knows Jesus is innocent. He knows Jesus does not deserve to die. His own wife tells him Jesus is not guilty. Why do you think Pilate considers killing Jesus if he knows Jesus is not guilty? (Allow responses.) Pilate could release Jesus. He can choose to lead well and make a decision to do what is right, or he can choose to do what the people around him want him to do, even though it is wrong.

Remember, Pilate has just asked the crowd which of the two prisoners they want to be released. Do you think Pilate will give them what they want? (Allow responses.) Pilate is worried that the people will not like him if he releases Jesus. Let's continue reading the Bible to see what happens.

Matthew 27:21b-26

²¹ *The crowd shouted back, "Barabbas!"*
²² *Pilate responded, "Then what should I do with Jesus who is called the Messiah?"*
They shouted back, "Crucify him!"
²³ *"Why?" Pilate demanded. "What crime has he committed?"*
But the mob roared even louder, "Crucify him!"
²⁴ *When Pilate saw that he was getting nowhere, but that instead an uproar was starting, he took water and washed his hands in front of the crowd. "I am innocent of this man's blood," he said. "It is your responsibility!"*
²⁵ *All the people answered, "His blood is on us and on our children!"* ²⁶ *Then he released Barabbas to them. But he had Jesus flogged, and handed him over to be crucified.*

The people listen to the chief priests and the elders, and then they pressure Pilate to crucify Jesus. What does Pilate do? (Allow responses.) Pilate gives in to the pressure of the people. He claims that he is not responsible and the people have made their choice. The Bible shows us that Pilate is responsible. He could release Jesus and

do what is right, but he sins by listening to the people. Pilate gives into peer pressure instead of doing what is right, and this decision causes him to sin.

How should Pilate have made his decision? How should we make a decision when we are faced with peer pressure? (Pilate should have done what was right; we should do what is right, and that is to honor God.)

Ask your child the following questions and discuss how easy it is to place more value on a friend's opinion rather than on obeying God and following him.

- Who do you listen to?
- Who are some people in your life that have influenced decisions you have made?
- Do these people encourage you to do good things or bad things?

It is difficult to stand up to peer pressure. We might get called names, or a person might not like us anymore if we do not listen to them. However, we know that God's way is the best way to live. When we choose to listen to others and disobey God, we are missing out on the blessings God has for us. It is tough to go against the crowd, but it is much harder to live outside of God's plan.

Let's explore what Scripture says about fear of the Lord versus the fear of man.

Proverbs 1:7

"Fear of the LORD is the foundation of true knowledge, but fools despise wisdom and discipline."

Proverbs 29:25

"Fearing people is a dangerous trap, but trusting the LORD means safety."

James 1:5

"If you need wisdom, ask our generous God, and he will give it to you. He will not rebuke you for asking."

Pilate was afraid of the people. When he made his decision, he made it based on fear of man

instead of fear of the Lord. Pilate did not lead; he became a follower as he allowed the crowd to make the decision. He cared more about having the people’s approval than making the right decision. Do you ever fear that people won’t like you because of a choice you make? (Allow responses.) These verses show us that we should not fear other people, but we should trust in the Lord. Sometimes we are tempted to do things because we are afraid others will not like us. We need to value what God thinks about our actions rather than what others think.

Prayer

Spend a few minutes in prayer to close your family time. Thank God for loving us enough that Jesus died on the cross for our sin. Ask God to help us live with courage and bravery to obey God, rather than giving in to the peer pressure to sin.

Activity

“Different From the World” Instruction Sheet- (found on [GCK Resource Page](#))

The purpose of this activity is to see how we are to be different and set apart from the world rather than giving in to the peer pressure to sin.

Supplies:

- Clear disposable food storage container with oil
- Jug of water
- Stirrer/spoon
- Bottle of food coloring
- Paper towels
- Jar to mix water and oil

Lead your child through the following illustration and help them see that God desires us to be different and set apart from the world rather than giving in to peer pressure to sin. See the Instruction Sheet for a visual reference.

1. Show your child the container with oil. **The oil represents Christ followers—those who have believed and trusted in Jesus as their Savior.**

2. Pour water into the jar (equal parts water and oil; be careful not to overflow). **The water represents the world (or things that are not of the Lord).**
3. Watch the liquids separate.
4. Add a few drops of food coloring. **The food coloring represents sin.**
5. Make sure the lid is secure and shake the container. Watch as the oil (Christ followers) repels the food coloring but the water “accepts” it.

God’s word tells us in Romans 12:2 “Don’t copy the behavior and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think.” We are to be separate from the world—different—not copying the sins of the world (giving in to peer pressure), but rather allowing God to transform and change us.

6. Use the stirrer/spoon to stir the liquids. **Sometimes we mess up and give in to the peer pressure to sin. When we do, we need to repent, to turn away from sin and ask Jesus to change our hearts. God’s word tells us in 1 John 1:9, “If we confess our sins to him, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all wickedness.”**
7. Watch as everything starts to separate again!

In this activity, we see a great illustration of how God desires us to live for him rather than giving in to the peer pressure to sin. Our God is powerful, glorious, and forgiving. He is worthy of our worship! Because of this, we should desire to be different from the world and please God by doing what is right. This means we will need to focus on pleasing God and not giving in to peer pressure to sin. God promises us in 1 Corinthians 10:13, “The temptations in your life are no different from what others experience. And God is faithful. He will not allow the temptation to be more than you can stand. When you are tempted, he will show you a way out so that you can endure.”

