

CHAPTER 3

How Do I Stand in Relationship to the Crowd?

In Exodus 23:2 we find this command from God: "Thou shalt not _____ a multitude to do _____." In other words, *do not follow the crowd in doing wrong* (see Proverbs 1:10-19). Often the crowd does what is evil and what is wrong. The fact that "everyone else is doing it" does not make it right. God is the One who decides what is right and what is wrong, not the crowd. The key question is not "What do my friends do?" but "What does God's Word say?" or "What has God told me to do?" The "majority" may vote wrongly, and the "minority" who are defeated in the vote may prove to be right in the end. We must always follow the Lord in doing right, even though doing right is not usually the popular thing to do.

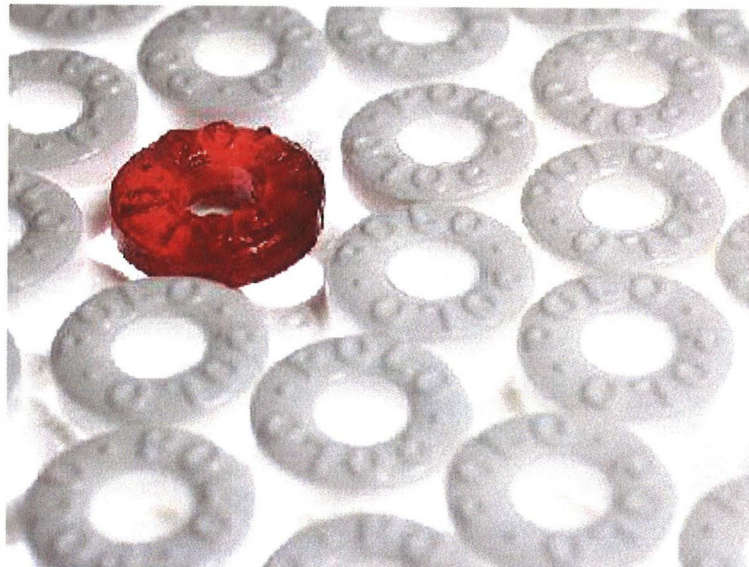


The Crowd is Often Wrong

Examples:

1. In the days of Noah, **the crowd** perished and only eight survived (Genesis 7:13,21-23; 1 Peter 3:20).
2. After the flood, **the crowd** wanted to build a city and a tower, and they did not want to fill the whole earth even though God told them to do this (Genesis 11:1-9; compare 9:1,7).
3. In the days of Abraham, **the crowd** wanted to worship idols, including Abraham's family (Joshua 24:2).
4. In the days of Moses, **the crowd** worshipped the golden calf (Exodus 32).

5. In the days of Joshua and Caleb, **the majority** of the spies were afraid to conquer the land (Numbers 13-14). The majority did not believe God.
6. In the wilderness, **the overwhelming majority** of Israelites dropped dead (Numbers 14:29,30,32; Hebrews 3:17-19; 1 Cor. 10:5).
7. In the days of Samuel, **the majority** of Israelites wanted a king so that they could be like all the other nations (1 Samuel 8:4-7).
8. In the days of King Saul, the entire Israelite army was afraid of giant Goliath (1 Samuel 17:11,24), but one young lad dared to be different (1 Samuel 17:32).
9. In the days of Elijah, there were 450 prophets of Baal and only one prophet of the LORD (1 Kings 18). God was with the one and God was against the 450.
10. In the days of Micaiah, there were 400 false prophets and only one true prophet (1 Kings 22).
11. In the days of Daniel, **the crowd** bowed down to the giant golden statue of King Nebuchadnezzar, and only three men refused to do so (Daniel 3).
12. Jesus said that **the majority** (the crowd) is headed for hell and the minority is headed for heaven (Matthew 7:13-14).
13. It was **the crowd** that yelled "Crucify Him!" (Matthew 27:22-23; see how Pilate followed **the crowd** in Mark 15:15).
14. In the days of the Reformation, the majority of the religious people in Germany did not understand that salvation was by faith rather than by works. Martin Luther stood alone with God. ***God plus one is a majority!***
15. In the days of the man of sin (the Antichrist), **the crowd** will follow the beast (Revelation 13) and will take the mark of the beast. The minority will follow Christ even if it means being killed for their faith.



Dare to be Different!

Counting the Cost

Read Luke 14:27-33. There is a cost involved in following the Lord, and Jesus said that we should count and consider this cost. If you were to build a house, should you not take careful stock of your supplies to see if you have enough bricks to complete the job? It would be embarrassing to end up with half a chimney! If our country were to go to war, should it not first evaluate its manpower and arsenal to see if there is sufficient strength and weaponry to defeat the enemy? If we discover that our army is one-tenth the size of the enemy army, then we may want to find a more peaceful solution to the problem! It costs to build, it costs to go to war, and it costs to follow Christ!

Consider and discuss these questions:

1. If you were to take a strong stand for the Lord, what would be the cost? What might happen to you?
2. Consider again the 15 examples given above. Was there a cost for those men who dared to be different and dared to go against the crowd and vote against the majority?
3. If you really were to take a stand with the worldly crowd, what would be the cost? What might happen to you?
4. What could you say about the person who has one foot on the Word and one foot in the world? This is the person who is riding the fence, and who tries to follow Christ and also tries to follow the crowd. (*Note*: Next time you go to town, find two people who are walking in opposite directions and try to follow them both! Would that work?)

