

NOTE:

This article focuses on issues such as peer-pressure, which is especially prevalent among younger people.

Admittedly, there are situations (especially among adults) in which people do not *openly* oppose others, because it is "politically correct" to respond with a relativistic attitude of "toleration." The idea is that we will all "tolerate" each other and NOT attempt to "superimpose values and preferences" on each other. There *is* a legitimate form of toleration, but the modern concept of "toleration" normally goes far beyond what is legitimate: to the point of rejecting the very authority of the Bible over a person's moral conduct. It is a reflection of the relativistic attitude of this age - an attitude that is illustrated in Psalm 2:1-3. (Those who have this view tend to eventually become hostile to those who accept the Bible, because the two perspectives cannot peacefully coexist.)

God, of course, sees things differently.

ARE YOU "NORMAL"?

Too bad. The world doesn't want you. It wants "super people" - people who have the appearance of perfection or accomplishment. It doesn't care about the normal or average person - and even hates those who are "less-than-normal." If you aren't a "sports idol," if you aren't tops in something, if you don't wear the most expensive clothes . . . forget it!

The world treats you like something inferior. It wants pressure to you, to try to be better than everyone else, in one way or another. If you can't succeed (and few of us will), it wants you to pretend you are superior. (This is hypocrisy.) Or it wants you to imitate someone else who is "somebody" - to dress like that person, to act like that person, to buy what that person endorses on TV.

Worse yet, the world wants you to treat other people the same way it treats you. It wants you to make yourself look good, by making others look bad. Just think . . . How often are you tempted to point-out someone else's defects or weak points - sometimes even the same ones that you yourself have (but don't want to admit)?

God is not that way. We don't need to be "super heroes" to impress him. We don't need to act perfect or special. We can come as we are - even if our clothes are "second hand," even if people don't think we are "cool," or even if we have zits. In fact, to try to impress God with our "goodness" would be the ultimate hypocrisy - even arrogance. Let's face it: We are sinners! And he knows our imperfections better than we do! Yet he still accepts us, "as is."

We can rest in him, not only resting in the assurance of our future in eternity, but also resting from all the weariness of trying to please the world. Why chase after the wind, when you can never get it? The world's fads and everything it offers are temporary; they are passing away. Don't strive for those things, when you can strive for something that will be yours forever!

It's true, that God wants something better for us, than we already have. But he wants us to get it by his power, not through our own feeble efforts. And because he works in our hearts, we don't have to wait for eternity . . . we can start becoming more like Christ now!

And one of the things we can do is treat other "imperfect" people the same way Jesus treats us: We can accept them as friends.

Psalm 131

LORD, my heart is not filled with proud ambitions;
my eyes are not lifted up in arrogance:
I do not preoccupy myself with heroic exploits
and mighty accomplishments.
But I have calmed and quieted my restless soul,
content like a child resting in its mother's arms.
My soul is like a contented, resting child.
O Israel, be content to put your hope in the LORD,
both now and forevermore.