

# YOUNG



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PRECIOUS SEED

Edited by  
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**YOUNG PRECIOUS SEED** is a supplement of *Precious Seed International* designed for those young in faith. Its purpose is to restate timeless truths from the word of God for a new generation of Christians and to kindle a biblical approach to current issues in the world in which we live. YPS is published by *Precious Seed International*, Pitcot Farm, Pitcot Lane, Stratton-on-the-Fosse, Radstock BA3 4SX, UK, and is also available separately from the main magazine.

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## Editor's Introduction

Another issue is now ready for your enjoyment. Hopefully you will find it helps some aspects of your spiritual journey through life.

This issue sees a number of articles which I found very helpful as I edited them. We get a few insights into varying aspects of Christian life in this issue.

How do you cope with peer pressure? Are you even aware that it exists? I am sure you are. Andrew Barnes recounts a friend's experience and then helps us concentrate on what peer pressure is, how it can be handled and what to do when things go wrong, as they will do. It's worth a read!

Steve Buckeridge challenges us about worship. This is really important stuff, not just for Sunday mornings but as a guide to how you see life as a believer. Worship is not just about good music and songs (though they help); it's a mindset, and one we really need to cultivate.

I have asked Jeremy Singer to write again. I find his approach very refreshing and helpful. He gives a biographical look at the life and mindset of the apostle Paul. This is a really easy read, but packed with pointers that can apply to our lives as well. Good stuff!

The remaining article is about another young man in the Bible. Well, to be honest, he is young when the story starts and quite old at the end. Daniel is an amazing character, and Paul McCauley extracts some really good lessons for us from the early stages of his life. This is not about easy living, but living for God when things get tough. I hope you find it helpful.

Happy reading!

**Stephen**



## CHARACTER STUDY

## The Life of Paul

By **JEREMY SINGER** Bridge of Weir, Scotland

Paul the apostle was a man of many talents. He reminds me of the Action Man figures from my youth. A plastic hunk could be transformed in a moment from a soldier to a chauffeur, with a quick change from khaki combats to a blue suit and peaked cap. More seriously, Paul effectively performed many different roles throughout his Christian service. In this article we will explore some of these roles, discuss why Paul adopted them, and find a personal challenge for us today.

**Paul's Different Roles****Paul the Scholar**

Tarsus, Paul's home town, was a well-known centre of learning. However, Paul left Tarsus to attend Gamaliel's finishing school in Jerusalem, Acts 22. 3. Paul's specialist subject was Jewish religious law, but he was equally at home quoting Greek poetry, Acts 17, debating philosophy, Col. 2, and recounting history, Acts 13. Paul was a first-class student, no doubt. But what were his studies for? Getting high up the career ladder? No – he used his education for something much more worthwhile.

**Paul the International Traveller**

Paul was a Roman citizen, Acts 22. 27. He called Tarsus home. He was proudly Hebrew, Phil. 3. 5, so Jerusalem would be a spiritual home to him. However as a friendly, outgoing traveller, he seemed to acquire a good network of contacts in major cities around the Roman Empire. He would have been fluent in Latin, Greek, Aramaic and Hebrew. What did his globe-trotting experience help him

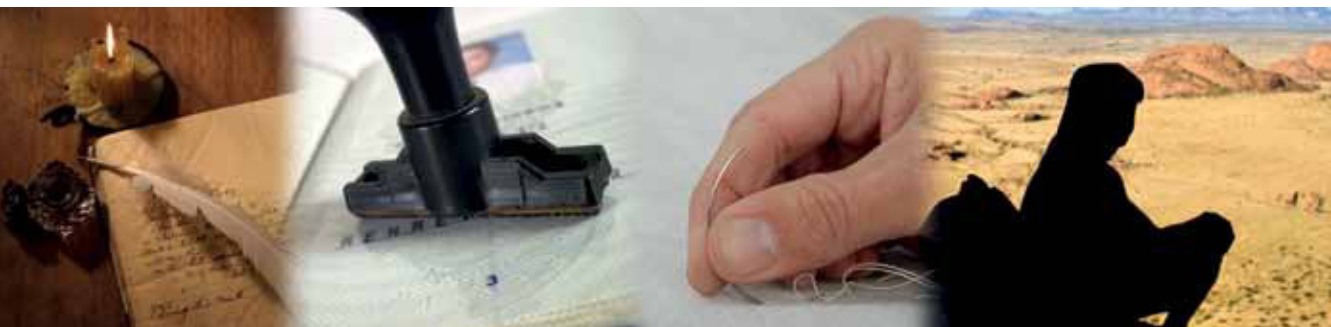
with? A wide choice of holiday destinations? No – he used his travels to accomplish something much more worthwhile.

**Paul the Worker**

Paul was not afraid of hard work. Like all Jewish boys, he learned a trade. Paul was a tentmaker, Acts 18. 3. This may have meant he was a leather worker, or a weaver of his native Cilician goat hair. Paul relied on this tent-making craft to support himself financially when visiting new places, such as Thessalonica. He worked long hours, 'labouring night and day', 1 Thess. 2. 9, sounds more intense than our usual 9:00 to 5:00. What did he do with the profits from his business? Boost his bank balance? No – he used his money to invest in something much more worthwhile.

**Paul the Adventurer**

Paul's escapades have a distinct Hollywood feel to them, 2 Cor. 11. 23-27. In and out of prison, chased away by hostile audiences, regularly shipwrecked,





fighting wild animals, bitten by a poisonous snake, appearing before Caesar. Was Paul an adrenaline junkie? Far from it – his adventures were the by-products of a much greater quest.

### Paul's Motivation

Why did Paul spend his life so gladly for Christ? We will identify two reasons from his letters. First, an evangelistic reason: Paul wanted 'by all means [to] save some', 1 Cor. 9. 22. He wasn't worried about the cost to himself personally; he would go anywhere, do anything, and be anything for God in order to bring the gospel message to others. This first reason reveals *Paul's love for the lost*.

The second reason is devotional. Paul's over-riding ambition in life was 'to be well-pleasing unto Him', 2 Cor. 5. 9 RV. Paul wanted to bring joy and pleasure to His Master, the Lord Jesus Christ. This second reason reveals *Paul's love for the Lord*.

### Challenge to us

After considering Paul's lifestyle and motivation,

now we turn to think about ourselves. Are we cosy and complacent? Have we settled down to a self-contented lifestyle, without thinking about the work God may have for us to do? Let's try to recapture a love for the lost, and a love for the Lord, following Paul's enthusiastic example.

Thinking practically, what can we actually do? First, I suggest reading more about Paul's clear direction in his Christian service. Perhaps read a chapter where Paul gives an account of his motivation, e.g., 2 Cor. 5, Phil. 3. Then I suggest prayerfully asking the same question that Paul did, at the start of his Christian experience, 'What shall I do, Lord?', Acts 22. 10. God always has work for His servants to accomplish.

Jesus, Master, will You use  
One who owes You more than all?  
As you will, I would not choose;  
Only let me hear your call.  
Jesus! Let me always be  
In Your service glad and free.

# What can I do for God?

## WORSHIP HIM

By **STEVEN BUCKERIDGE** London, England

Worship of our Creator and Saviour is one of the highest privileges we can ever have. It is definitely something that all of us should be doing! 'It is a good thing to give thanks unto the Lord, and to sing praises unto thy name, O most High', Ps. 92. 1.

### What is worship?

- Worth-ship - what I say and give to God, and my attitude, because of the worth I appreciate in His character and actions
- 'Obeisance and obedience' – to bow down and serve
- Giving praise, honour and adoration to God
- Giving of our whole lives, Rom. 12. 1

### Why do it?

- God is looking for worship, John 4. 23
- It is very precious, Mark 14. 3
- Every Christian is a priest so has it as a responsibility, 1 Pet. 2. 5
- It is the inevitable consequence of appreciating how great the Lord Jesus is, and being amazed by what he has done, Ps. 107. 8
- Not to worship genuinely and sincerely is to show contempt toward God, Mal. 1. 12-14
- 'None shall appear before me empty', Exod. 23. 15
- 'Give unto the Lord the glory due unto his name', Ps. 96. 8

### How to do it?

- There are principles as to our worship, but few details so that it does not become stale and routine.
- Worship has been defined as giving back what I have been given

from Christ. So we will need to quietly read the word of God and think about how great He is, and the wonderful things that He has done. 'When they saw . . . [they] worshipped him', Matt. 2. 11

- Cheerfully, with genuine warmth and love, Mark 7. 6
- Reverently, Ps. 89. 7
- With holiness, Ps. 96. 9; 1 Cor. 11. 28; 1 Pet. 2. 5
- In truth, being guided by the Spirit, John 4. 24

### How to do it: practical advice?

- Worship takes effort, sacrifice and time, 'Will I offer that which cost me nothing?' 2 Sam. 24. 2.
- Our appreciation for people should go beyond what they do, to include what they are as persons. So, our worship of God should go beyond what He has done, to include His character
- It may bring criticism, John 12. 5
- More mature believers should be able to worship more deeply – God expects our appreciation of Him to continually develop
- 'Think and thank': consider a characteristic or action of God, then praise Him for it

*Every believer will worship during eternity. Are you worshipping today?*



# Resisting Peer Pressure

By **ANDREW BARNES** Heswall, England

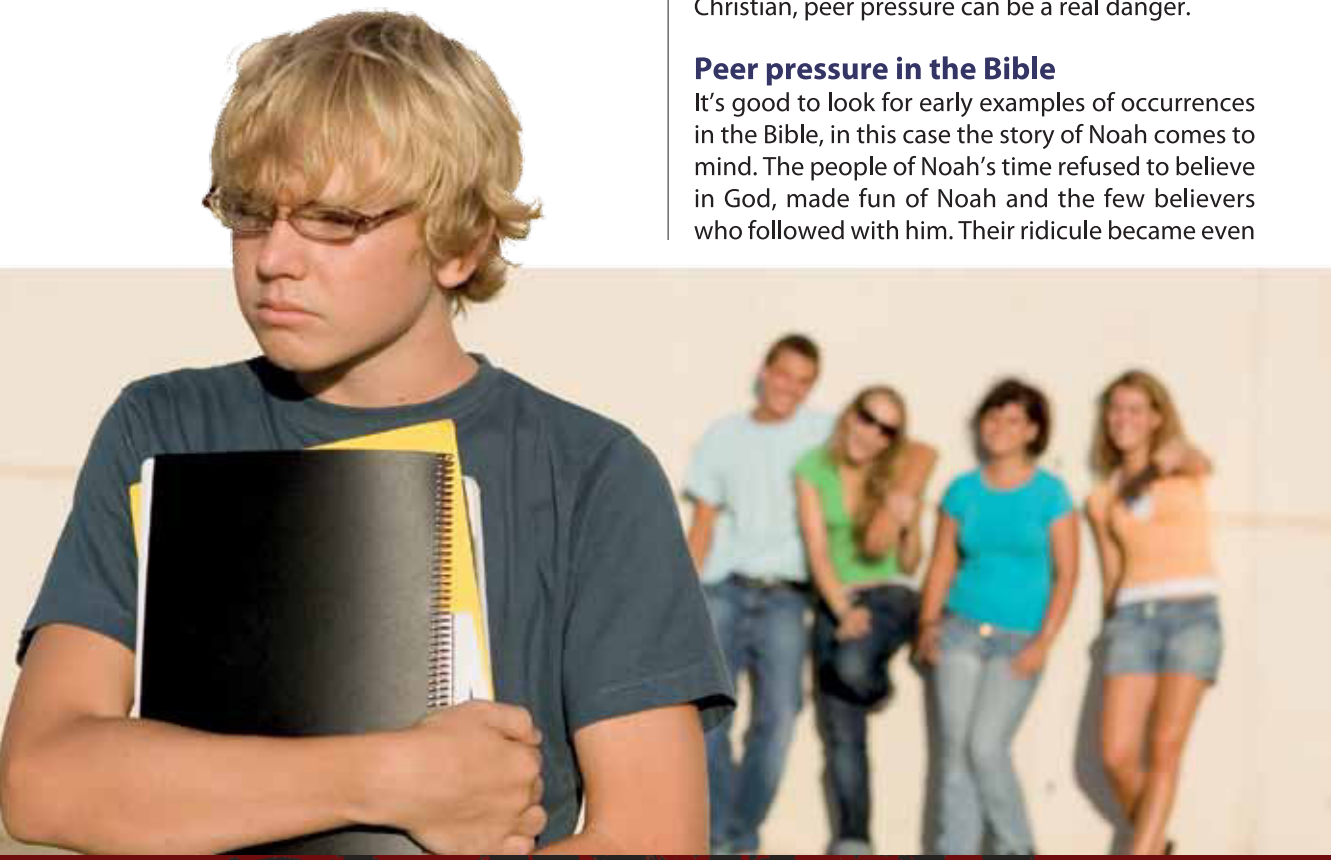
When I was at school a friend of mine achieved top grades and mixed with a decent group of friends for the first couple of years. He was popular, good company and appeared to be content. At about the age of 14 he began to mix with another social group outside school and very quickly the change was immense. His grades suffered, he changed his image, he looked unhappy and he even spoke with an entirely different accent – just to be accepted by his new group of friends. Sadly, the episode culminated with him being expelled from school. He was a victim of negative peer pressure.

## What is peer pressure?

Peer pressure is when a peer group (usually our friends) influences us to behave in certain ways, say certain things and do things that are typical of others in the group. It could be the clothes we wear, the language we use, or the way we behave. In our teenage years peer pressure is a huge issue, these are the years when we form our own values and standards, and these are easily influenced by those around us. Everybody wants to be accepted and liked by their friends, but this desire can easily steer us in the wrong direction. Of course, for a young Christian, peer pressure can be a real danger.

## Peer pressure in the Bible

It's good to look for early examples of occurrences in the Bible, in this case the story of Noah comes to mind. The people of Noah's time refused to believe in God, made fun of Noah and the few believers who followed with him. Their ridicule became even





worse when he started building a huge boat in the middle of nowhere, preparing for a great flood. People were actually laughing at him for believing God. I'm sure this sounds familiar, many times in life we can feel like we're building a boat in the middle of nowhere. But of course the lesson is that Noah persevered for the cause of God, He didn't succumb to peer pressure.

Of course there are cases in the Bible where the Lord's people have given in to peer pressure. Perhaps the worst case is that of the apostle Peter. Peter in many ways was a brave man. He wielded a sword to the hostile crowd when Jesus was arrested, but later on he mixed with the wrong company and denied the Lord – peer pressure at its worst. Maybe we can relate to this event.

### Dealing with peer pressure

The best advice in dealing with peer pressure must be to choose our peers (our friends) carefully. Proverbs chapter 13 verse 20 ESV illustrates the good and bad of peer pressure, 'Whoever walks with the wise becomes wise, but the companion of fools will suffer harm'. Of course, peer pressure can be a positive influence; if we mix with the 'wise' then we're more likely to become wise ourselves. For young Christians this means seeking the company of other like-minded believers, wherever possible. But of course the strongest form of peer pressure is negative – if we mix with 'fools', then we'll suffer harm – as was the case with my schoolfriend.

For young people today, choosing friends can be a real problem. Often at school, college, university and work there are no fellow Christians around, but of course we don't want to be alone. The most important thing to remember is that a good companion should never stop or hinder you from serving God. I can think of friends and colleagues who are not believers, but they appreciate my faith and wouldn't hinder my spiritual life. Even so, there have been times where I have had to draw the line and remove myself from them, avoiding going to certain places and getting involved in unprofitable conversations.

### Be prepared

One of the best ways to resist peer pressure is to prepare for it; plan how you might deal with certain events. Look out for early signs: situations which may appear entirely innocent can rapidly change into real temptation. Most of all pray for help, strength and wisdom from God. James chapter 1 verse 5 NKJV says, 'If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him'.

Finally, if we have succumbed to peer pressure think again of the example of Peter. He denied the Lord, but Jesus gave him a second chance. After the resurrection He asked Peter if he loved Him, and Peter replied, 'Lord, You know all things; You know that I love You', John 21. 17 NKJV. The Lord is always willing to forgive.

## DANIEL 1

# Surviving in enemy territory

By **PAUL McCAULEY** Belfast, N. Ireland

He was far from home and routine, free from restraint and supervision, subject to intense pressure from authorities and peers, exposed to immense opportunities to leave behind all he'd known, and move ahead in a new culture. But as we read the story of this young man, Daniel, we discover that rather than society making an impact on him, he made an impact on society for the glory of God.

It's not too farfetched to say that the temptations Daniel faced are similar in many ways to the temptations you may face today in school, work or university life. And it is also not too farfetched to say that it is possible for you to come through these temptations as Daniel did, with your testimony intact, and your life bringing glory to God and blessing to others.

In this first chapter of Daniel we are introduced to a clash of purposes. There is first of all Nebuchadnezzar's purpose, vv. 4-7, and there is Daniel's purpose, v. 8 (note, the word 'gave' is the same Hebrew word as 'purposed', v. 8).

Nebuchadnezzar wanted to take the best young people from Judah, those who would have advanced the Name and fame of Jehovah, and he wanted to use them for the advance of his kingdom. There is a mighty ruler today, 'the god of this world', who has the same purpose – he wants to ensnare young believers, whose lives could bring so much glory to God and blessing to others, and get them to invest their resources and waste their lives for this present, passing world.

Note how Nebuchadnezzar went about fulfilling his

purpose. He sought to change four things:

- 1 Their thinking (v. 4 – the learning . . . of the Chaldeans)
- 2 Their language (v. 4 – the tongue of the Chaldeans)
- 3 Their diet (v. 5 – the king appointed them a daily provision of the king's meat)
- 4 Their names (v. 7 – Unto whom the prince of the eunuchs gave names)

These four areas have applications to us. The world seeks to change our thinking – for example, from early days through media, entertainment, and possibly even in schools, children are taught a redefined version of 'tolerance', which doesn't mean what tolerance classically and properly means (i.e., you graciously put up with, and value people with whom you disagree), but 'tolerance' today is said to mean that you approve and affirm everyone's point of view. You can find this worked out in people being afraid to express their convictions about moral and religious issues, for fear of being labelled intolerant or judgemental. There are many other areas in which the world's attitude and thinking is totally out of line with a biblical worldview. How important to make sure we are not conformed to this world but transformed by the renewing of our minds, Rom. 12. 1-2.

There is pressure on us to change our *language*: words like sin, repentance, hell and judgement are seen by many as being 'Victorian' and 'out-of-date'. The reality is, they are far older than Victorian, but are bang up-to-date, and should be graciously and lovingly maintained in our vocabulary!



The devil seeks to alter our *diet*, and get us feeding on his junk food, rather than on the ‘wholesome words’ of scripture. There is something in the strange saying, ‘You are what you eat’ at least in terms of what you allow your mind to feed on! What you take into your mind shapes your character and is worked out in your life. Watch what you eat!

In what way would the devil seek to change our *names*? Well, those names that the Hebrews had were Jewish names that contained the names of God in them, so their names linked them with the Lord and with the Land. Those names were a continual reminder that they didn’t belong to Babylon, but they belonged to another land and another Lord. We belong to the Lord, 1 Cor. 6. 19-20, and we belong to another land, Phil. 3. 20, and the devil would love to make us forget that!

Then we have Daniel’s purpose, v. 8, ‘But Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the portion of the king’s meat’.

- *But* – It is astounding to see this word here! Nebuchadnezzar was the most powerful man alive – when he wanted something there was never a ‘but’ about it! And here we see an insignificant Jewish captive prepared to stand for God – one man and God is a majority!
- *Daniel* – Remember that the book of Daniel was written by Daniel, and so, although Nebuchadnezzar had given him another name, Daniel still called himself Daniel! He would not forget his true identity; he would remember whose he was, and whom he served, Acts 27. 23. Daniel’s name means ‘God is my Judge’, and remembering that enabled and inspired him to be true to God, and it will do the same for us – ‘For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ’, 2 Cor. 5. 10. Daniel had friends who shared his purpose, but the point in verse 8 is that even if no one else shared his convictions and took a stand, Daniel was going to do it. ‘Dare to be a Daniel, dare to stand alone’.
- *Purposed in his heart* – This was a matter of deliberate determination. I can tell you from the Bible, but also from bitter experience, if you do not deliberately set boundaries in your life, and determine before God not to cross those

boundaries, then when the temptation comes, or the pressure is applied, you will cave in and collapse. If you merely *hope* the temptation won’t come, or that you’ll do the right thing, then you will crumble and take the path of least resistance. Get to your knees and vow before God that, come what may, no matter what, you will not do this, or go there. If you drift through the Christian life you will drift away, that’s the direction the current will take you. Also, without being too technical, the verb is in the imperfect tense, which indicates that this wasn’t a once-for-all thing, Daniel continually purposed this – he would renew his vows daily. Can I encourage you to do the same – the fires of devotion need continual attention.

- *He would not defile himself* – Many might have said to Daniel, ‘We’re miles from Jerusalem, and centuries from the giving of the law, what would it hurt just to take the meat? But Daniel saw it for what it was – defiling! How easily we can justify our actions and excuse our sin, but when we are honest with ourselves, and when we come before God, we have to acknowledge that our sin is defiling.
- *Therefore he requested* – Daniel still had to do something – God didn’t remove the problem, and very often we would like God to remove the temptation, but God doesn’t promise to do that, however, He does promise to give us the strength to stand under it and escape from it, 1 Cor. 10. 12-13. Notice as well it doesn’t say, ‘Therefore he demanded’! Daniel wasn’t rude, brash, self-righteous or pompous – he was courteous and respectful to those in authority over him. How important for us to learn that lesson! When the office party comes around, or when the boss asks you to do something dishonest, don’t be condescending or aggressive, be firm but courteous and gracious.

The chapter ends with these words, ‘And Daniel continued . . .’. The vast majority of the Jewish captives drifted along in the current of Babylonian culture, and perhaps had an easy and enjoyable time – but they made no impact for God, and we know nothing about them. In stark contrast, the life of Daniel was a life that brought lasting blessing and was of eternal worth – aim for that in your life, ‘The world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever’, 1 John 2. 17.