

1 PETER 4:3-4

THERE IS A COST

³ For you have spent enough time in the past doing what pagans choose to do—living in debauchery, lust, drunkenness, orgies, carousing and detestable idolatry. ⁴ They think it strange that you do not plunge with them into the same flood of dissipation, and they heap abuse on you.

I was not raised in a democracy. In our family, the majority only ruled under 2 conditions. The first was when the family authority requested such input. The second was when a vote was taken and the family authority had one more vote than the rest of the family combined. This polity extended beyond our walls to the school and playground. Suffice it to say that the excuse “but everybody...” didn’t cut muster. The dreaded question was always, “Did anyone get an A?” or, “Did anyone not misbehave?” Of course, there always was some goodie-two-shoes who broke the curve. How I despised her.

On the other side of the coin – I was also raised with a good dose of guilt. I was told, and it was confirmed by experience, that if I misbehaved, I would get caught. On more than one occasion that guilt served me well and saved me a lot of grief. However, when I didn’t go along with the crowd, it also cost me dearly in popularity and friends. No one likes even a potential curve breaker, even fun-lovin’ ol’ me.

There is a cost to bucking the crowd. Dietrich Bonhoeffer addressed this in his classic book, *The Cost of Discipleship*. He not only wrote about it, he lived and died what he wrote. As a German theologian during World War II, he stood against Hitler and the Nazis and paid with his life.

The Kingdom of God is a kingdom, and not a democracy. The King is the absolutely sovereign God. He calls us to be moral and spiritual curve breakers. He calls us to live life his way. The world we live in is experienced more as an unsupervised playground than an ordered classroom. When we buck the crowd, we most certainly will experience consequences. After all, because of you, deep inside people know that when the judgment comes, they won’t be able to use the excuse, “But everybody...”

Give me strength, O Lord, to live in obedience to your will. Protect me from the temptation to give in to the crowd so that I might remain popular and the life of the party. Help me to live my life to an audience of One and not be distracted by the siren voices of the culture. Keep me faithful in spite of the cost. Amen.