



## [Romans 12:2](#)

(2) And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what *is* that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.

*New King James Version*

We all understand that sheep have a strong inclination to follow, to go along with what other sheep in the flock are doing. I once read that, if a shepherd is herding his flock into a pen, and he places a bar a foot or so off the ground across the gate so that the first sheep has to jump over it to get in, then he removes the bar, the following sheep will continue jumping as they pass through the gate based on what the leading sheep did!

Years ago, my wife and I owned a small flock of lambs in partnership with our neighbor. They escaped from our pasture one [Sabbath](#) morning by "worrying" a fence until they were able to push out through the hole. Once one lamb went through, the others followed. We did not know they were gone until a neighbor about a half-mile away called to let us know our sheep were on her property. They had followed a railroad track cut into the side of a steep embankment until the land leveled off in a wooded area. They were scattered in the wooded area.

As I approached, I began to speak to them. They turned and began walking toward our pasture. Soon, they had regrouped and begun following me. Although I was certainly concerned that a train might come along, my major worry was how I was going to get them up that steep ten-foot-high embankment, back through that narrow opening, and into the pasture.

When I arrived at that point, they were too timid to follow my voice and me up the embankment. The only thing I could do was wrestle and drag the sheep up and shove them through the opening. I thought I was going to have to repeat that same procedure with all of them, but to my delighted surprise, once I shoved the first one through the hole and into the pasture, the rest came on their own! What I feared actually turned out

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to be easy because of this strong instinct to follow.

Human beings tend to share this proclivity. We even call it the "sheep instinct" or "running with the herd." This influence moves people to buy and wear the same clothing because "everybody" is wearing whatever happens to be popular. It also motivates "keeping up with the Joneses." We are nervous about standing out from the crowd and perhaps becoming the objects of scorn and derision.

However, this proclivity works against us as Christians because it can easily influence us into going the way of [this world](#). In this case, it takes a strong willingness not to conform to what everybody around us is thinking, doing, and perhaps even wearing. Such a circumstance will reveal who we really fear.

— John W. Ritenbaugh

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**[The Elements of Motivation \(Part One\): Fear](#)**

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