What if My Parents Don’t Like Whom I am Dating?

* **Kris Swiatocho, Cliff Young**

***EDITOR'S NOTE:***[***He Said-She Said***](http://www.crosswalk.com/family/singles/he-said-she-said/) *is a biweekly advice column for singles featuring a question from a Crosswalk.com reader with responses from a male and female point of view. If you've got a question about anything related to singleness or living the single life, please submit it to* ***hesaid-shesaid@crosswalk.com*** *(selected questions will be posted anonymously).*

**QUESTION:**

*I am a nineteen-year-old girl, finished with high school and I'm busy taking a gap year and exploring culture and growing within myself before I study. Right now I'm in America, but I have a friend whom I have developed stronger feelings for since I've been here. He is back at home in South Africa right now and I know his feelings are mutual. My problem is, that my family really doesn't want me to date him; they think that I deserve better, a better looking person (to me he looks amazing) and someone with a stable future (he is a teacher, and I love his profession and I think that is a stable future). Also my ex-boyfriend is very manipulative and deceiving and he will make up lies about my friend and tells my family. My question is, I am not sure if I am just blinded by my feelings for Neil and that I am missing something that my family sees and I don't? His family and friends, and my friends support us.*

**HE SAID:**

First of all, I admire the courage you’ve displayed in venturing out to experience the world and grow as a young woman. Most people only dream or wish they had done what you are doing so don’t allow the little distractions to impact this incredible opportunity you have.

Traveling and being so far away from friends and family can certainly heighten the longing for things more familiar and in some ways may have stoked the feelings you already had inside for Neil. Oftentimes, people seem a little “better” when we step back and see them from a different perspective or from a distance, but whatever the reason for your growing attraction, continue to pursue it from afar.

Your family’s disapproval of Neil at this point doesn’t need to affect your existing relationship with him since you’re not able to actually date, and you’re currently not living in their household. Instead, focus on growing closer by utilizing the distance to better communicate with one another, which will only benefit you on your return.  Technology (i.e. iChat, Skype, messaging, etc.) has become a lifeline for cultivating and maintaining long distance relationships.

**SEE ALSO:** [**Should I Listen to My Parents' Dating Advice?**](http://www.crosswalk.com/family/singles/he-said-she-said/should-i-listen-to-my-parents-dating-advice.html)

As for your ex-boyfriend, you have no control over him or what he does. Over time most tend to see through those who manipulate and deceive others for their personal gain, as you have seen. Eventually his agenda will be revealed.

Until you return to South Africa, all of the drama you speak of doesn’t necessarily have to be dealt with. You can go about communicating with Neil, encouraging each other in your walk with the Lord, and working on your own self-discovery.

If Neil is the one God has for you, your relationship will withstand the attacks by your ex-boyfriend and disapproval from your parents. In the meantime, enjoy your travels around the United States and beyond, and discover how God wants to use you in the future.

**SHE SAID:**

My first thoughts are that you are very young and although people do fall in love at 19 and even get married, you still have a lot of growing to do. Having our family support us, especially when it comes to someone we want to date and eventually marry is very important. God teaches us to seek wisdom from those that are following him consistently. *This is what we speak, not in words taught us by human wisdom but in words taught by the Spirit, explaining spiritual realities with Spirit-taught words* ([**1 Corinthians 2:13**](http://www.biblestudytools.com/search/?t=niv&q=1co+2:13-13)). God also reminds us to respect and honor our parents, so I think it's great that you want to do what God wants and what your parents want.

**SEE ALSO:** [**How Does One Date Like a Christian?**](http://www.crosswalk.com/family/singles/he-said-she-said/how-does-one-date-like-a-christian.html)

However, it concerns me that your parents think his looks are so important and that a job as a teacher would not be stable. Their focus seems to be more on the superficial versus his walk with the Lord. But the Lord said to Samuel, “*Do not consider his appearance or his height, for I have rejected him. The Lord does not look at the things people look at. People look at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart*” ([**1 Samuel 16:7**](http://www.biblestudytools.com/search/?t=niv&q=1sa+16:7-7)). The [**Bible**](http://www.biblestudytools.com/) says that God looks at a man’s heart. Our outside can quickly change, so it’s the inside that matters most. Their advice and direction is not lining up with what the Bible teaches. So in this case, you may have to choose to follow God over following your parents.

What should you do? I would continue your friendship with this young man, allowing God to grow it. Pray against the enemy and those that would want to destroy your relationship. When you get back to South Africa, continue to pray for the Lord's direction. Always take what you hear and compare it to the Word, to see the truth in it. Pray for God's peace for your future; you can take as much time as you want to date. Allow the Lord to grow you both in him and with each other. Let your family get to know him too. They need to see his walk with the Lord and what really matters. Then in time, as you both trust the Lord you will know what to do.

“*In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven*” ([**Matthew 5:16**](http://www.biblestudytools.com/search/?t=niv&q=mt+5:16-16)).

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**SEE ALSO:** [**What are Helpful Resources for a Long Distance Relationship?**](http://www.crosswalk.com/family/singles/he-said-she-said/what-are-helpful-resources-for-a-long-distance-relationship.html)

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***DISCLAIMER****: We are not trained psychologists or licensed professionals. We're just average folk who understand what it's like to live the solo life in the twenty-first century. We believe that the* [***Bible***](http://www.biblestudytools.com/) *is our go-to guide for answers to all of life's questions, and it's where we'll go for guidance when responding to your questions. Also, it's important to note that we write our answers separately.*

***GOT A QUESTION?*** *If you've got a question about anything related to singleness or living the single life, please submit it to hesaid-shesaid@crosswalk.com (selected questions will be posted anonymously). While we are unable to answer every inquiry, we do hope that this column will be an encouragement to you. Click here to visit the He Said-She Said* [***archives***](http://www.crosswalk.com/family/singles/he-said-she-said/)*.*