Do Adults Really Have to Honor and Obey Their Parents?

***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**: When it comes to getting married, how important is the blessing and support of my parents? My boyfriend and I are well into adulthood (mid-twenties) and making God-honoring choices in our relationship - but not everything is being done exactly the way my parents want it (dating/courtship rituals, etc). Is it fair for them to withhold blessing simply because I am making my own choices? Should I wait for them to "come around" before tying the knot?

**HE SAID:**

*For God said, ‘Honor your father and mother’* ([**Matthew 15:4**](http://www.biblestudytools.com/matthew/15-4.html)).

In many cultures, this command is upheld and demanded well past adolescence and deep into adulthood. At times, we find a clash between culture and Christianity, where the traditions of parents conflict with the desires of their Christ-following offspring.

Culture, traditions, values, and rituals are all important in every society, but when they become *more* important than following and loving our one true God, it usually starts conflicts within family generations. Whatever it is - money, fame, power, work or tradition - when *it* becomes the god and utmost love in our lives, it is wrong.

Timothy tells us, “For the ***love of*** money (not the item itself) is a root of all kinds of evil” ([**1 Timothy 6:3**](http://www.biblestudytools.com/1-timothy/6-3.html)).

Don’t get me wrong, it’s important to honor your parents by listening to what they ask of you, but as adults, you have the right to make, live out, and be responsible for your own choices.

*“For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife”* ([**Mark 10:7**](http://www.biblestudytools.com/mark/10-7.html)).

For a [**marriage**](http://www.crosswalk.com/family/marriage/) to have a fighting chance to be successful these days, a man needs to be the man, which means he needs to cut the apron strings from his parents and lead his family in the way Christ led the church. If this means not receiving “the blessing” from your earthly parents in order to lead a life which is pleasing to the Lord, then so be it.

In 1990, Gary Smalley and John Trent wrote a life-altering book called [***The Blessing.***](http://www.christianbookstore.net/blessing-by-smalley-trent/catalog-1816/)

It speaks to our innate need to be acknowledged and “blessed” by our parents. For many of us, we never receive it and go through life with an emptiness we carry into our relationships. This is something you and your boyfriend may want to go through together before approaching and getting into any further confrontations with your parents.

**SHE SAID:**

On the one hand, you are adults, making good choices, showing your parents you are maturing Christians. On the other hand, they are still your parents, you are young, and they have a right to speak truth into your lives. So what do you do?

I think you need to sit down with your parents, both individually and as a couple, and discuss what you are feeling, expecting, and planning. Explain to them how important their input, wisdom, and guidance is to you both. Explain that you are willing to listen, ponder, pray and act as you feel the Holy Spirit leading you. Communicate that what may appear right to them, may not be right to you, because you are not them. That you want to honor and respect their direction, but want to honor God our Father more.

There may be times when those two conflict, based on what God is telling you. As adults, you and your boyfriend are going to have to make decisions based solely on what God is telling you, sometimes without the advice of your parents, friends, and pastors. Let them know you love them and value everything they say to you, but ultimately, they have to trust that they raised you right. They brought you up to seek God for direction first!

If they still will not budge, and feel you should listen to them over what you feel God is telling you personally, then you will have to make a hard choice. A choice that may affect your relationships. If your parents truly love you, as it seems they do, they will have to find a place of common ground. After all, it is not their lives, but yours. They will have to trust you, pray for you, and make suggestions, but ultimately sit back and allow you to live your life. I pray for you both as you seek God in all parts of your relationship.

Is there value in friendship, courtship, marriage, and all the steps in between? Yes. But God can work in all our relationships, no matter the exact process, as long as we honor him.

*Whoever serves me must follow me; and where I am, my servant also will be. My Father will honor the one who serves me* ([**John 12:26**](http://www.biblestudytools.com/john/12-26.html)).

***HE is …******Cliff Young****, a Crosswalk.com contributing writer and a veteran single of many decades. He has traveled the world in search of fresh experiences, serving opportunities, and the perfect woman (for him) and has found that his investments in God, career and youth ministry have paid off in priceless dividends.*

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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/)*.*