# What If My Parents Can’t Forgive Me

**Kris Swiatocho, Cliff Young**

***EDITOR'S NOTE:*** *[He Said-She Said](http://www.crosswalk.com/family/singles/he-said-she-said/%22%20%5Ct%20%22_blank)* 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 21 years old and very active in my church. Although I have a serious boyfriend (who also has a heart for the church) we're not yet ready to marry so I am still living with my parents and younger siblings. My parents love God, but they aren't as committed to the Church as I am, and they give me a lot of grief for my active volunteer schedule. I keep getting into arguments with my dad, who wants me to be at home more, like when I was younger. But I really feel God has called me to be active in my church, and my dad keeps hinting (in anger) that I should just move out. The trouble is I know it would break my mom's heart if I left over this issue, and I want to be around for my little siblings as they're growing up.

When I pray about leaving, God gives me peace; I know he is with me wherever I go. My fear is that my parents won't forgive me, will become bitter toward the Church, and will think I don't love them enough to follow their wishes. Do you have any advice?

**HE SAID:**

I understand having parents who don’t quite understand the “calling” and “commitment” bit. Although I wasn’t living at home at the time, my ministry did (and still does) take precedence over regular visits with my family.

If you try to see it from their standpoint, you may begin to understand how “anti-tangible” it may seem to them.

Why would a person put so much time into something they aren’t compensated for?

What are you gaining in exchange from being away from home so much?

When will all of your work pay off?

Why sacrifice your [*family*](http://www.crosswalk.com/family/) for all of this?

From a very young age, we are groomed to predominantly think about ourselves, and what you are doing is contrary to how most of the world operates.

Your calling and commitment is interfering with what your father wants, expects and is accustomed to and there is only one way to settle this.

It’s time for a family meeting!

The most effective way you’re going to get a clear message of how your parents truly feel and for them to appreciate your beliefs (or at least hear you out) is to sit them both down and discuss it.

Depending how boisterously your family communicates, it may even be prudent to take them out to dinner where no one can walk away, let their emotions go wild and where everyone has to speak in a civilized manner.

Share your heart with them for your ministry minus a lot of the Christian vocabulary. Sometimes our “Christian-ese” tends to lose our audience. Find out what your father desires from you and try to work it into your schedule. Maybe he just wants a family dinner each week, a family outing every month or just a time to be together.

Whatever it may be, try not to allow this to come between you and your parents. Remember we are all living out our [faith](http://www.crosswalk.com/faith/) in front of those around us, even those who know the Lord.

**SHE SAID:**

Life is full of crossroads, and you are at one of them. I know it's tough, but with God you can get through it. Let me try and sort out some of the things I am hearing you say and give you my honest opinion of what to do.

First, while 21 is very young, you are also legally an adult. I can hear from your letter that you are already making decisions as an adult. However, by living at home I believe you have taken on the responsibility of  listening to your parents (unless you are living there as a tenant). If you are not paying your full share of the expenses to live there, you are in fact, still living like a child. A child that needs to respect her parents.

OK, so what does that mean? What I am hearing your dad say is not so much his disagreement with church or how much time you spend there but how little time you are at home. Because you are living there (and you said, watching/helping with your younger siblings), your father is still treating you as one of the kids and as a result, wants you to be home more. The only way to change this is to move out and be on your own. This doesn't mean you can't come over a couple times a week and help with your siblings. This just means you are not their responsibility anymore.

Please know I want to honor you in your desire to spend time in church but know also that our serving at church comes out of our relationship with God. Our relationship with God will tell us where to spend our time, money and talents. We have to find a balance. Spending time with family and friends is also very important to our overall Christian growth. It's not always being at church every time the doors open. Maybe you could bring church (Christ) to your family by being submissive to your dad, by respecting him, or by not arguing. Let them see how Christ, how going to church, how reading your Bible, how praying, how being around other Christians, how serving God, has changed your life.

Remember, church starts with us...where we are. What an opportunity to have a Bible study at home with your family, go and serve at a local mission, put together packages for the military or shoeboxes at Christmas, sing Christian songs, play Christian games, etc. What an opportunity to grow closer as a family through Christ first. I am not saying put a steeple on the top of your house and light candles everywhere. I am simply saying, let them see how Christ has changed you by how you treat them. In time, they will be drawn to Christ like you with just as much zeal.

Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways submit to him, and he will make your paths straight ([Proverbs 3:5-6](http://www.biblestudytools.com/search/?t=niv&q=pr+3:5-6)).

I know, my God, that you test the heart and are pleased with integrity. All these things I have given willingly and with honest intent. And now I have seen with joy how willingly your people who are here have given to you ([1 Chronicles 29:17](http://www.biblestudytools.com/search/?t=niv&q=1ch+29:17-17)).

***HE is …*** *[Cliff Young](http://www.crosswalk.com/family/singles/are-you-more-concerned-about-what-you-reap.html%22%20%5Ct%20%22_blank)*, 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.

***SHE is …*** *[Kris Swiatocho](http://www.crosswalk.com/family/singles/four-battles-of-the-single-christian.html%22%20%5Ct%20%22_blank)*, the President and Director of *[TheSinglesNetwork.org Ministries](http://www.thesinglesnetwork.org/%22%20%5Ct%20%22_blank)* and *[FromHisHands.com Ministries](http://www.fromhishands.com/%22%20%5Ct%20%22_blank)*. Kris has served in ministry in various capacities for the last 25 years. An accomplished trainer and mentor, Kris has a heart to reach and grow leaders so they will in turn reach and grow others. She is also the author of *[three books.](http://www.thesinglesnetwork.org/bookspdfs.html%22%20%5Ct%20%22_blank)*

***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 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/%22%20%5Ct%20%22_blank)*.