

**Shayla:** I'm a high school student and a recent convert. My Catholic parents don't want me to go to church or even read the Bible. Does the Bible teach that I should obey my parents in this?

**Respona:**

I empathize with your predicament. I used to live in a country where claiming to be a disciple of Christ could result in one's death or disfigurement at the hands of Muslims or animists. Even when we moved to Quebec, the persecution from the Catholic Church was terrible. We had young people whose families declared them dead and disowned them.

This should not come as a surprise since the Master specifically warned us,

- Matthew 10:32-38 HCSB **“Therefore, everyone who will acknowledge Me before men, I will also acknowledge him before My Father in heaven. But whoever denies Me before men, I will also deny him before My Father in heaven. Don't assume that I came to bring peace on the earth. I did not come to bring peace, but a sword. For I came to turn a man against his father, a daughter against her mother, a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law; and a man's enemies will be the members of his household. The person who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me; the person who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me. And whoever doesn't take up his cross and follow Me is not worthy of Me.”**

The Bible teaches that we should obey our parents “in the Lord”.<sup>1</sup> It also commands us to honor our father and mother so that we may have a long life.<sup>2</sup> However, I find it noteworthy that obedience was limited to “in the Lord” meaning that we obey them as long as it does not entail disobeying the Lord God.<sup>3</sup> Honor has no such limitations. So the principle should be “obedience limited by conscience but honor in all things.”

Be respectful of your parents. Obey them scrupulously in every matter that you can.<sup>4</sup> Make sure your obedience is accompanied by a cheerful disposition. Who knows? Maybe in this way you may be a means of grace to them.<sup>5</sup> However, if you must choose between Christ and your parents, the choice is hopefully clear to you. It's not like the Master is asking you to do something He was not willing to do Himself.<sup>6</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> Ephesians 6:1

<sup>2</sup> Exodus 20:12

<sup>3</sup> Acts 5:29

<sup>4</sup> Colossians 3:20; Luke 2:51

<sup>5</sup> 1 Corinthians 7:14 cp Luke 2:52

<sup>6</sup> Matthew 12:47-50