

**I Love You But  
My Parents Say  
No.**

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## I LOVE YOU BUT MY PARENTS SAY NO

**A** friend of mine once called me from a long distance and we spoke for hours (and I mean that literally). We were on the phone for about two hours. Usually, when people call me from a long distance and for a long time like that, it's usually about a relationship issue. Now, the issue here was this; he was in love with this lady and he wanted to marry her but his parents were against the whole idea so he was confused about what to do. I'm sure many of you can identify with this situation. If it hasn't happened to you, it has happened or is happening to someone you know.

You see, in this part of the world, people believe that marriage is not the joining of two people but the joining of two families (and they do have a point). This means that it goes beyond the consent of the couple, their parents also must consent. Sometimes even uncles and older siblings also have to give their own consent. While in some other cultures parents actually choose a spouse for their child.

It is true that they have a part to play. I believe your parents should be involved in your getting married but concerning this issue, I think there is a thin line between involvement and interference or control. So we're going to look at it from God's word because like I've always said, "That's the final authority". From different

places, there are different cultures and traditions but there's just one standard and that is, God's Word. Any tradition or culture that does not line up with God's Word is invalid.

Having said that, let me lay this foundation before we start. Marriage is not a cultural idea. Before tradition, marriage existed. Marriage is God's idea. It's not a new discovery. It was originated by God and if you are going to be successful at it, then you must follow the creator's manual and that is the Word of God. So now let's move on to the pressing question, **“How involved should parents actually be in your decision of whom to marry?”**

## Chapter One

### ***Can my parents choose a spouse for me?***

**T**hat is the question that seems to be on the minds of a lot of people today.

- *Can my parents choose a spouse for me?*
- *Can they dictate whom I marry?*
- *Are they in a position to determine whom I spend the rest of my life with?*

Before we can answer these questions, let's take a look at an example from the Word of God and possibly even the reason why some people believe that your parents should find a spouse for you. When people make this argument or suggestion, they use Isaac's story as an example. But what you must know is this; it's not everything written in scripture that is a

scriptural principle. Sometimes in scripture, some stories are just a part of the history not necessarily a principle. For instance, Sarah gave Abraham her maid Hagar to sleep with. Just because it was written in the Bible does not mean it is right nor is it a recommended action. Also, in the Bible, we find that Abraham had more than one wife and so did a lot of patriarchs in the Old Testament but that does not mean it was necessarily a principle of God. Jesus even said concerning divorce that those things were allowed due to the hardness of their hearts. So just because Abraham married a wife for Isaac does not make it a scriptural principle for parents to marry for their children.

Let us note that Jacob, Isaac's son chose a wife for himself. If it was a principle, it would not even be debateable; Isaac would have been the one to choose a wife for Jacob. However, let us put aside what people think the Bible implied about choosing a spouse and take a look at what it **does** say about finding a wife:

***He who finds a wife finds a good thing,  
And obtains favour from the LORD.***

***Prov 18:22 NKJV***

***Therefore a man shall leave his father  
and mother and  
Be joined to his wife, and they shall  
become one flesh.***

***Gen 2:24 NKJV***



I think the idea is obvious. If you are mature enough to marry, you should be mature enough to choose whom you marry. Also one of the Hebrew root words used in that scripture for the word **leave** means TO ABANDON. It means you should be able to disconnect from your parents and connect with your spouse. This does not mean that you will no longer respect or relate with them it only means you must be **able** to leave your parents financially, mentally, emotionally and physically. This is a sign of maturity. It means you are responsible.

No wonder Isaac was quick to deny his wife before Abimelech [**Genesis 26**]; unlike Jacob who when he was under threat as a result of

the uncertainty he felt when faced with Esau, the brother he had deceived, he protected his wives by keeping them with him while sending the others ahead [**Genesis 33**].

The lesson here is this; what you cannot earn or find by yourself, you usually cannot keep or maintain. It is easier to hand over what you were given not what you worked hard for as in Jacob's case where he laboured fourteen years to get his wife (Rachel).

## Chapter two

### **Do I have to obey my parents?**

**T**his is a very sensitive issue and while answering this question I must emphasize that there is need for balance in this area. Does the Bible actually say that you should obey your parents in all things?

***Children, obey your parents in all things, for this is well pleasing to the Lord.***

***Col 3:20 NKJV,***

***Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. "Honour your father and mother," which is the first commandment with promise: "that it***

***may be well with you and you may live long on the earth."***

***And you, fathers, do not provoke your children to wrath, but bring them up in the training and admonition of the Lord***

***Eph 6:1-4 NKJV***

It's just like when the Bible says that wives should obey their husbands in all things. Is God saying if your husband asked you to take poison you should obey? Or if he says you should disobey God that you should obey him? Would it be right to obey in those kinds of circumstances? The answer is a capital NO!!!

God is not saying you should be a slave or a dummy. That scripture means that **as long as the instruction is in line with God's word and within safe limits you should obey**. It's just like saying if my father says I should renounce Christ, should I obey? Are you kidding me? That is not even an issue. Of course I will not obey that instruction.

A lot of parents spoil their children, especially in this part of the world. They usually cannot draw the line between pampering a child and spoiling a child. The sad thing is most times, parents never believe that their children have grown. They still see them as little children and as a result they want to use the above scriptures to keep their children under them forever.

Well, the truth is this, whether you like to hear it or not, **parents are not responsible for their grown up children.** You cannot make decisions for your children right up till the time they die. There must be a point where you let them grow so they can make choices for themselves; after all, that is what determines that they are adults. Apostle Paul said,

*When I was a child, I spoke as a child,  
I understood as a child,  
I thought as a child; but when I became  
a man, I put away childish things.*

**1 Cor 13:11 NKJV**

In other words, what Paul is saying is that there are phases in life. When the child is a boy, you

can make decisions for him but if you keep making decisions for him, when he is grown he will never become a man. People that have all their decisions made for them while growing up; end up not being able to make their own decisions even when they are married with children of their own. They always have to call “mummy” before they make any decisions. It is such people that make statements like, *‘Mummy said this’* or *‘Mummy said that’* or worse still, *‘Before we do that shouldn’t we ask mama?’* A married man? With a family of his own talking like that? That is totally unacceptable.

The Bible says,

**Train up a child in the way he should go and when he grows up he will not depart from it.**

**Proverbs 22:6**

So your major job as a parent is actually supposed to be before the child grows. It is at that point that you can pass your (scriptural) values to him. Teach him how to make sound decisions and when he is grown, he will not forget the principles he was taught. If you still have to keep making decisions for your grown child, it is proof that you didn't do your job well at the time you should have (when he was young).



Parenting is like direct mentoring. If after 18 to 20 years I still have to make decisions for my protégé then I have not done a good job and I have wasted my time. Some parents believe that their children MUST obey them in all things. God didn't give us any such rights. The Bible defines witchcraft as the control of another human being. That means that running another person's life; making all their decisions or basically living our lives through them is defined as witchcraft. A lot of what we practice around here as parenting is actually manipulation and witchcraft. God didn't give us the authority to force anyone to obey us or even obey HIM.

Has it ever crossed your mind that God could have forced the whole world to obey him but he gave us the right to choose. As a parent, you can't even force your children to accept Christ or to make heaven. You can only guide them and teach them the truth but they must make the decision for themselves. Accepting Christ is a very important decision that can change your life forever and so is choosing a marriage partner, and they should not be made for anyone.

In developed nations children leave home at the age of 18 and from then on, they start fending for themselves; they start learning how to be responsible. But around here, you see a man of about 35 years old still living with his parents.

Eating and sleeping under his parents' roof. Sometimes they even end up asking them for money. How then can they believe he can make sound decisions? Especially when it is one that can either make or mar him for the rest of his life. Obey your parents in the Lord.

## Chapter three

### Parental consent

**N**ow let's look at this issue a bit more closely. It is very common for couples intending to get married to find out that at least one of the parents is not in support or not ready to give their consent. So this is the issue, is parental consent important or not?

Parental consent is very important but not mandatory. I repeat **VERY, VERY IMPORTANT** but **NOT MANDATORY**. Why do I say this? Follow me closely and let me explain.

The Bible says you should

***"Honor your father and mother..."***

***Eph 6:1 NKJV.***

So I think it is right for you to honour your parents by showing them who you want to marry and it is also very important to seek their blessing and they have the right to advice you. But what I am uncomfortable with is when some people take this a bit over board. They say things like they can never marry someone except their parents agree. I think that's not a very mature thing to say; that sounds like the statement of a child. If your parents don't agree, the question to ask is "WHY?" not necessarily to pack the whole thing up. If they have a legitimate reason, then it makes sense to listen to them or to take their advice but if they are not cogent reasons, like if they say the reason they don't want you to marry that

person is because he's from so and so tribe, or because he's not tall enough or she's too fat, those things are not what determines the true character of a person. There are armed robbers from every tribe or nationality possible. That cannot be the reason why you cannot marry a person. It's not a person's tribe that determines whether a person is good or not. There are failed marriages from every tribe but when it is a strong reason like if the person doesn't know the Lord and is probably fetish or is a man and he doesn't have a job or is known to be involved in fraudulent practices. Then it makes sense to heed their advice. You cannot say your parents must agree because they might not and your parents are not God they can make mistakes.

Their decision could be based on lack of knowledge or selfishness.

I personally know of a case where a father literally sold his daughter because of the suitor's wealth despite knowing that the man was into advance fee fraud (419). There were other suitors but he gave his consent to this one because he felt that he would benefit from the man's wealth. It was a case of consenting to the highest bidder. A few years later the girl was back home. The man had absconded. He was on the run because the law enforcement agents were closing in on him.

Some other times, I find that parents often give their children a hard time just because they can.

You must not forget that God also expects you not to provoke your children to anger (Colossians 3:21). Why does he say that? Because God knows that you can. It is your responsibility as a parent to ensure that you don't make it difficult for your children to obey or honour you. Parents sometimes make unrealistic demands of their children. I've heard of a lot of cases where the parents insist that their son especially if he is the first born son marry from a certain tribe usually from their own. Some others insist that the lady their son brings must first get pregnant to prove to them that she is capable of giving them grandchildren. They make all sorts of ungodly demands of their children. I have seen a lot of broken homes due to parental choice not



personal choice. I don't advice anyone to settle for less due to parental pressure remember that God's word is above all other things so if your parents ask you to disobey God under the guise of parental consent remember that their responsibility to you is to bring you up in the admonition of the Lord.

***And you, fathers, do not provoke your children to wrath, but bring them up in the training and admonition of the Lord.***

***Eph 6:4NKJV***

Also take note that the bible says you are to obey your parents in the Lord

***Children, obey your parents in the Lord,  
for this is right. Eph 6:1 NKJV***

The key words here are ***IN THE LORD***. God knows that sometimes some of the things some parents may ask you to do are not ***in the lord*** so he says you are only bound to listen to them and obey when those demands are to glorify God.

Don't get me wrong ***I'M NOT SAYING YOU SHOULD REBEL OR DESPISE YOUR PARENTS***. It is proper to seek their consent and blessing. Note that when you do things right it brings the favour and blessing of God. It says when you ***honour your parents; it shall be well with you (Eph 6:1)***

There are constituted authorities in our lives and they carry blessings when we obey them.

They are:

- Parents
- Pastors
- Leaders and bosses at work
- Husbands (for married women)

They serve as our covering for safety because they may see things that we do not but if you don't get your parent's consent there are a few things you can do.

Chapter Four  
**No consent, what do I do?**

o now if you do find yourself in a situation where your parents don't agree to your getting married to the one you love, what do you do? Here are a few steps:

Realize that God might be using them as a warning sign. So go and do a reassessment of your choice. Go and pray again, think about it very well, check your heart, do you have peace about your decision? If you have doubts in your heart at all, then don't go ahead with it because many marital disasters have been averted by parents but if you think you have made the right decision then you can go to step two.

**Talk to your pastor.** Every one should have a pastor. Even if you are a pastor you should have

a pastor. Someone you are accountable to. What does he think about it? If he also thinks there's something wrong, then ***out of the mouth of two or three witnesses the matter shall be established, [Deut 19:15-16 NKJV]*** there just might be something you are not seeing. If he thinks there's nothing wrong and thinks you should go ahead, then that takes us to step three.

Start praying. Both of you should start praying that God should turn your parents hearts to favour you. ***The king's heart is in the hand of the LORD [Prov 21:1 NKJV]***. Let your pastor also pray along with you. This also takes us to the next step.

As you take time to pray also act on your faith and get people to talk to them. Who are the people you think your parents respect and can get a fair audience with them? Get them to talk to your parents on your behalf. I've seen this work a lot of times. Sometimes, even your Pastor or some elderly church members can talk to them.

If they've talked with them and they agree, good go ahead with the marriage. If they don't, give them some time. **DO NOT ELOPE WITH SOMEONE'S CHILD – it is wrong and can bring a curse.** Be patient. Don't go fighting. God might

need some time to touch their hearts. After some time, talk to them again.

If after you have taken all these steps and they have not changed their minds and you are still convinced that you are making the right choice with the support and blessing of your pastor (he is your father too), go ahead and get married. A lot of people may not want to hear this but it is the truth. You cannot put your life on hold forever but you must be sure you have done your own part by obeying God on all fronts. You have honoured your parents. Go ahead and get married.

Let me close with a story I once read in a book by Kenneth E. Hagin titled *Marriage, Divorce and Remarriage*. It goes like this:

*I remember two RHEMA graduates. The young man was a good, successful minister. They met and decided to get married. At first, her mother said that it was fine. But then her mother got hold of some erroneous teaching and said, “No matter how old you are, you’re still supposed to obey your parents. You can marry him, but you have to wait a year.”*

*She was in her mid-twenties. She said, “Well, no, we’ve already planned everything.”*

*Her mother said, “Now, you are in disobedience.”*



*They both called me long distance, crying on the telephone. The young lady said, "What am I going to do? Do I have to obey Momma?"*

*I said, "You are twenty-four years old. You certainly do not have to obey your mother!"*

*Now that will go over big with some people who claim they believe the Bible! They don't believe the Bible at all if that offends them. Children should be trained while they're children to obey their parents. But children should grow up and get out on their own. Parents should teach their children to make*

*decisions for themselves. Parents are not responsible for their grown up children.*

*I told this young couple to go ahead and get married. I said, "You are not being disrespectful toward your mother. She can't run your life and tell you what to do."*

So no matter what you do make sure you follow God's word. You cannot put the responsibility of how your life turns out on someone else.

Just in case you are a parent and you find yourself in a situation where your

child wants to marry someone you don't approve of. There are a few things you can do.

- First I always encourage parents to teach and develop a relationship with their children when they are young. I've seen many parents at old age try to become relevant in their children's lives at a time when the child no longer needs them.
- When your child brings home someone you do not approve of, immediately ask yourself why. Is it a selfish reason or a genuine reason for concern?

- Talk to him or her about it. Try to make them understand your concerns about the relationship and why you are opposing it.
- Take time to pray for your child and yourself so the Lord will change the heart of who ever needs changing.
- Most importantly never draw a battle line by making threats. Your child needs a parent not an enemy.

Finally just trust God that all things will work out well in the end. Nothing is impossible for Him to do and he always knows how to make everything beautiful in His time. God bless you.

REMEMBER YOU CAN HAVE THE  
MARRIAGE OF YOUR DREAMS!

**About the author**

**Kingsley Okonkwo** is the Senior Pastor of David's Christian Centre in Lagos. A profound teacher with a passion for building strong marriages based on timeless biblical principles.

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He is happily married to his lovely wife and best friend Mildred who pastors with him.

### **Other books by the author**

- *When Am I Ready?*
- *25 Wrong Reasons People Enter Relationships.*
- *Should ladies propose?*

- *God told me to marry you.*
- Who should I marry?