

Christian Living in a Muslim Home?

Tim Conway | illbehonest.com

Question: So here's the last one. Last question. Now this question could easily involve a young man, but it does happen to involve a young lady and I actually think you'll see by the nature of this question, I really believe that this situation probably impacts young ladies in a tougher sense, in a harder sense, in a more difficult sense than it does young men. And you'll probably see why as I give it. She doesn't even give her name. She just comes across with this: "God's girl."

She says, "Dear Pastor Tim, I'm a 21 year old girl who used to be a Muslim. God had mercy on me and opened my heart to His truth. I currently live with my parents who are strict Muslims. I have no way to fellowship with other believers since I have to practice my faith in secret. I know that the Lord had geared me towards biblical teaching during the past few years..." And I'm imagining that came over the Internet. "...My heart's desire is to be able to move out and not hold back as a Christian. I hold back due to the strict environment I live in. It is an extreme taboo and I'm looked at as an evil person by my parents for even questioning Islam. I've tried to tell them, but I was threatened with being disowned. I just don't know what to do. I get aggravated, because when they talk about Islam, they debase Christians and Christianity. I feel angry a lot because of their religion and that they pressure me to practice it. I resent their authority because they pressure me to practice Islam. Is my resentment unbiblical? Should I act differently? Thanks."

Discussion:

Tim: Look, you know one thing I realize, when James puts stuff on I'll Be Honest, I don't know - this girl doesn't say where she is, but I know this, I suspect that people in Muslim countries that understand English are coming across some of these. And so I'll speak to those Muslim young people that may be in Saudi Arabia. They may be in places like Pakistan or Indonesia or Turkey. Many places. Many Muslim countries. Iran. What do we say? This girl's 21. If she was in this country, obviously, that scenario might look different than if she was in Saudi Arabia, right? I mean, I think this question that she's asking - I think just the scenario - it's different if you're a boy than if you're a girl. I can tell you this, boys are typically more high esteemed in those countries than girls. They'll tolerate more in boys than they'll tolerate in girls. Age has a lot to do with it. Obviously, she's 21, but if you're 10 years old, that's a different scenario, right? The country you're in - so the gender, the age, the country, obviously, the strictness of the parents, if somebody is genuinely converted in these families, all those factors are going to come into play.

To simply give a blanket answer is very difficult, but I would say this: If there is any Muslim young person that is likely to be disowned and thrown out of a Muslim family in the United States of America, contact us. We will see to it that you are given housing; that you are taken care of entirely. We will take care of you. If you'll contact us, we will send somebody to get you if that's the case. If you're in Maine, if you're in Washington, if you're in Hawaii - or if you're in

another country, and it's possible somehow for us to even get you here, but obviously there's visa issues when that kind of thing takes place. If somebody already had a visa, somebody already had a passport, they were able to get here, we would harbor somebody like that. We would do whatever is in our power to help people. To a young lady like this, even if she's in Saudi Arabia, the truth is this young lady has access to the Internet. In this day, if a young Muslim has that access and they understand English like this young lady obviously does, then the sky is almost the limit as far as the teaching you can get. Obviously, that's restrictive as far as meeting with other believers.

Brethren, I guess we just have to say this to people like this: There's several principles that young folks in Muslim families need to consider. One is that as a follower of Jesus Christ your commitment needs to be to Him above all else. Matthew 10:21, "Brother will deliver brother over to death, a father his child, and children will rise against parents and have them put to death." The truth is - the truth is this: we cannot tell Muslim young people that they will not suffer if they come public to their families as being Christians. We cannot offer you words from our Lord Jesus Christ or anywhere from the Bible that would be words that would lead us to believe that there won't be any suffering. In fact, what Jesus said is there is very likely going to be, and in fact, they may even put you to death. But I would say on that note exactly what Jesus said. "Blessed are you when others revile you." He said this in Matthew 5:11. "...And persecute you, and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on My account," He says, "Rejoice and be glad for your reward is great in Heaven, for so persecuted they the prophets who were before you." And so I would say this, to suffer even at the hands of your family for the namesake of Jesus Christ, He would tell you rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for your name is written in Heaven. And I would say what Paul said. Even though they might martyr you, even though they persecute you for the next ten years, Paul called it momentary light affliction in light of an eternal weight of glory.

But I would say this, I would say this as well. If you are a child of God, He knows you. He has promised never to leave or forsake you. He promises that He will provide for you. He promises to be with you. He promises to take care of you. He promises that. If your family throws you out, go to Him. He will not abandon you. Even if you were ten years old and your family put you on the streets.

I just read last night, I think, in devotions to my children about a young Sicilian man who was Roman Catholic. And in the courtyard of his Roman Catholic school, he found a Gospel of John. The teachers were outraged. And they took it. And the priest there in his school burned it in front of all the kids. Well, you know what that did to him. That made him all the more wondering what was in it. Well, he came to faith, and his family put him out. And God provided him a cave to live in, and then gave him a job so that he was able to support himself. Listen, isn't that what Hebrews says? Some of them wandered about in this world. Some of them lived in caves. There's the true caveman, right? We find it in Hebrews 11. But you know what it says? People of whom the world is not worthy. And you know what Samuel Rutherford said? He said that when they threw him in the Anwoth Prison, they meant to make it a living hell to him, and God

made it heaven. If God can make a dungeon heaven, if your parents throw you out on the street and you have to live in a shack or in a cave, God can make it paradise.

And so, trust the Lord. Listen, Jesus said very plainly that we should not deny Him. In Matthew 10, He says, "Whoever denies Me before men, I also will deny before My Father who is in Heaven." I call upon every young person, if you're in a Muslim family, do not deny Christ. Stand for Christ though it cost you your life. Do not deny Him. Now, just like the women that we just talked about in the last question who sometimes live before lost husbands, who can win those husbands without a word by their godly conduct, that may be the way you testify to Christ in the midst of a Muslim family. You seek to honor and reverence your father and your mother every way possible without dishonoring Christ. Don't dishonor Christ. Jesus Himself said you need to love Him more than your parents or you're not worthy of Him. But I would seek to honor them and reverence them every way possible that by your holy conduct, show them that Christianity is radically different than Islam. Show them that there is truly a God who transforms sinners. Show them by the joy in your life; the joy in what Christ accomplished for you on the cross. Show by that that Christianity has so much more, infinitely more to offer than what Islam has to offer. But don't be ashamed of Him.

I guess the other thing that came to my mind is pray. Pray. If you're a child of God, you have His ear. You may seem all alone in the situation you're in, but you're not alone. And I would say pray. Listen, if God did not hold back His Son for you, but gave Him up for you, pray. Though you be in Iran; though you be in Saudi Arabia, there are other Christians there. I doubt anybody could possibly, even in a situation like North Korea, very unlikely anybody would ever hear these, but you never know with the Internet today and with God all things are possible. But whether it's Vietnam, whether it's North Korea, whatever country we might be talking about, there are underground churches there. Pray. Pray. I mean, it is not impossible for God to lead you though you be ten years old in a Muslim country like Saudi Arabia, that God leads you to cross the path of other Christians that are right there in the same city where you live. Even in the same block where you live. So pray. You guys have anything else you'd say to a person like that? Those are the things that came to mind that I would tell somebody if I could get through that camera through the Internet and be able to put words of encouragement in their ears.