

## NEWS

## The Keys to Transition

JANUARY 4, 2022 BEN CRISP

**The Keys to Transition**

The new year is a time of transition. As the calendar turns its page, people try to change their life. Yet, the burgeoning enthusiasm of January 1st often wanes as the days pass. The idea of change becomes much more exciting than the actualization of change.

The Gospel of Luke uniquely deals with transition. Luke described Jesus' infancy and ministry with great detail, but only thirteen verses depict the time between them (Lk 2:40-52). These verses portray the twelve-year-old Jesus one year from His bar-mitzvah, the Hebrew ceremonial transition from boyhood to manhood. Encapsulated within these thirteen verses lay three keys to transition.

**Stay Behind (Luke 2:42-43)**

For the Passover Feast, Jesus' family traveled three days from Nazareth to Jerusalem. After completing the religious rituals connected with Passover, Jesus' family assumed He received everything needed for His next Passover as a man. Jesus' family left, but Jesus stayed behind. The point of the passage is not Jesus being left by His parents. The point is that Jesus chose to stay behind.

It is easy to move ahead while Jesus stays behind. Are you leaving where Jesus wants to stay? Both ends of the spectrum—excitement and boredom—cause people to abandon Jesus' pace. A new year should not cause you to abandon Jesus' pace. It does, however, provide renewed opportunity to examine Jesus' pace for your life. Stay behind with Him. Staying behind with Jesus will never place you behind schedule.

**Stay Engaged (Luke 2:46-47)**

Do not mistake staying behind with complacency or apathy. Three participles in this passage explain staying behind as staying engaged.

Jesus sat among the teachers, people who explained God's Word. It matters who you sit within transition. That is why the Psalmist declared, "Blessed is the man who [does not] sit in the seat of scoffers" (Ps 1:1). In transition, get around people with more experience, knowledge, and wisdom. Get around people that will instruct you with the Word.

As Jesus sat, He listened. Do not assume you know everything you need to know. In fact, "eye has not seen, ear has not heard, nor has it entered into the heart of man that which God has prepared..." (1 Cor 2:9). The Spirit reveals these things. Therefore, open your ears to listen through the Word of God, the people of God, and the Spirit of God.

After Jesus sat and listened, then He asked questions. Do not move through transition without asking questions. All questions are not created equal. There are better questions than others. Rather than asking, "why me?" Ask, "what are you teaching me?" Rather than asking, "why do I have to go through this?" Ask, "how do you want this to form me?" David said it like this, "One thing have I asked of the Lord...to gaze upon the beauty of the Lord and to inquire in His temple" (Ps 27:4). Before asking, gaze upon His beauty. Beholding God's beauty will better inform your inquiry.

**Stay Connected (Luke 2:49)**

Once Jesus' parents found Him, Jesus was baffled by their search. He could not understand why they did not know His location: "did you not know that I must be in my Father's house?" Jesus desired connection with His Father and the place of His presence. Do people know that His presence is your desire? Do they know you are connected? Do they assume you are in the Word, the place of prayer, and the Father's house?

In transition, do not succumb to the temptation to disconnect. Make it your aim this year to stay connected to the place of God's presence individually and corporately. Do not view personal intimacy with Jesus as optional. Do not view the gathered church as optional. Decide today that no matter what comes, you will not abandon the place of His presence.

**Final Thoughts**

If you stay behind with Jesus moving at His pace, if you stay engaged by sitting, listening, and inquiring, and if you stay connected to the place of God's presence, you will not get lost in the turns of transition. You will move from now to next in the "grace of the Lord Jesus, the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit" (2 Cor 13:14).

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