

Unit II: Jesus and the Temple

Home Alone

DEVOTIONAL READING: Psalm 27
BACKGROUND SCRIPTURE: Luke 2:41-52
PRINT PASSAGE: Luke 2:41-52

KEY VERSE

He said unto them, How is it that ye sought me? wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business? (Luke 2:49, KJV)

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“Why were you searching for me?” he asked. “Didn’t you know I had to be in my Father’s house?” (Luke 2:49, NIV)

Lesson Aims

As a result of experiencing this lesson, you should be able to do the following:

- Acknowledge our children’s spiritual wisdom.
- Value the wisdom shown by young Jesus at the Temple.
- Actively contribute to the spiritual and religious development of our children and youth.

*Key Terms

Asking (verse 46)—Greek: *eperótaó* (ep-er-o-tah’-o): inquiring of; questioning; interrogating.

Custom (verse 42)—Greek: *ethos* (eth’-os): a usage (prescribed by habit or law); a rite, habit, institute.

Passover (verse 41)—Greek: *pascha* (pas’-khah): the feast of Passover; the Passover supper or lamb.

Remained behind (verse 43)—Greek: *hupomenó* (hoop-om-en’-o): patiently endured; awaited; endured; “tarried behind” (KJV); “stayed behind” (NIV).

Returned (verse 45)—Greek: *hupostrephó* (hoop-os-tref’-o): turned back; started back; “turned back again” (KJV); “went back” (NIV).

Sought (verse 48)—Greek: *zéteó* (dzay-teh’-o): sought carefully; searched for; desired; “have been . . . searching for” (NIV).

*(Word Study Supplement—Refer to page 2)



The Biblical Context

The gospel of Luke is unique because it is the only account of Jesus' life and ministry written by an author who states his explicit purposes (see 1:1-4). His prologue to this book states his purpose for writing an orderly account so that his audience can know the certainty of what they have been taught. Luke's purpose is historical and theological. As an ancient historian, Luke carefully investigates to write a gospel that is actually two volumes (Acts)—with the second portraying the church as the continuance of Jesus' ministry after His ascension. Luke highlights Jesus as the God-man who came to seek and save the lost—who lived, died, and rose again to redeem fallen humanity. Another unique feature of Luke's gospel is that Luke is the only New Testament author who provides a brief and informative snapshot of Jesus' childhood, beginning with His birth in Bethlehem and concluding with Him in the Temple in Jerusalem, listening to and asking questions of the nation's religious leaders, returning home to Nazareth in submission to their parental authority, and attesting that He was human and that He matured physically and mentally like any other human being (see Luke 2:52).

Introduction

Some of us grew up under the philosophy that children should be “seen and not heard.” Although children of those prior generations were not given a voice to express their thoughts or feelings, their elders intentionally invested in their spiritual and religious development. A survey of the church's landscape will reveal declining numbers of children and youth engaged in Christian education and other ministries designed to foster their spiritual growth. Sadly, some congregations report having no children or youth populations. However, our actively contributing to our children and youth's spiritual and religious development is still critical in the church and in Christian families' homes. This vital investment supersedes maintaining and preserving cherished rituals and traditions, as meaningful as they may be. The world in which our children and youth reside has become overwhelmingly complicated socially, morally, emotionally, and religiously. Daily, children and youth are bombarded with negative influences from among their peers, the media, and, in some cases, educational philosophies that oppose or dismiss God's Word. Therefore, since we know that a person's early years' experiences are decisive in shaping their values and beliefs and that they are more open to receiving spiritual and moral guidance, their spiritual development must be prioritized now

more than ever. This concern that children and youth are taught values, ethical behavior, and spiritual principles is not new among God's people.

Moses exhorted the new generation preparing to enter Canaan to teach their children God's law and the importance of living out His commandments. Along with teaching, it is vitally essential that examples of godliness and faithfulness are set for children, especially the value of attending sacred spaces and participating in rituals dedicated to God. A biblical precedent is illustrated by Jewish families who traveled to Jerusalem to observe the feasts God required every male to attend annually, especially the Passover. Thus, it is not unusual that Luke records a childhood experience of Jesus attending the Passover with His parents and being found in the Temple listening to the religious leaders, teaching, and asking them questions.

ANALYSIS OF THE BIBLICAL TEXT

Jesus Explains His Mission (Luke 2:41-50)

KJV

- 41 Now his parents went to Jerusalem every year at the feast of the passover.
42 And when he was twelve years old, they went up to Jerusalem after the custom of the feast.
43 And when they had fulfilled the days, as they returned, the child Jesus tarried behind in Jerusalem; and Joseph and his mother knew not of it.
44 But they, supposing him to have been in the company, went a day's journey; and they sought him among their kinsfolk and acquaintance.
45 And when they found him not, they turned back again to Jerusalem, seeking him.
46 And it came to pass, that after three days they found him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the doctors, both hearing them, and asking them questions.
47 And all that heard him were astonished at his understanding and answers.
48 And when they saw him, they were amazed: and his mother said unto him, Son, why hast thou thus dealt with us? behold, thy father and I have sought thee sorrowing.
49 And he said unto them, How is it that ye sought me? wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?
50 And they understood not the saying which he spake unto them.

NIV

- 41 Every year Jesus' parents went to Jerusalem for the Festival of the Passover.
42 When he was twelve years old, they went up to the festival, according to the custom.
43 After the festival was over, while his parents were returning home, the boy Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem, but they were unaware of it.
44 Thinking he was in their company, they traveled on for a day. Then they began looking for him among their relatives and friends.
45 When they did not find him, they went back to Jerusalem to look for him.
46 After three days they found him in the temple courts, sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions.
47 Everyone who heard him was amazed at his understanding and his answers.
48 When his parents saw him, they were astonished. His mother said to him, "Son, why have you treated us like this? Your father and I have been anxiously searching for you."
49 "Why were you searching for me?" he asked. "Didn't you know I had to be in my Father's house?"
50 But they did not understand what he was saying to them.

The gospel of Luke offers the only New Testament glimpse into Jesus' childhood. Although Jesus Christ is God's Son, God incarnate, and divinity in human form, He was completely

human. Luke affirms this in Luke 2:40 and in the account of His family's visit to the Passover when He was twelve, highlighting His transition from childhood to adolescence (**verses 41-42**). This visit was not an isolated event in Jesus' life as a child and maturing youth. Despite the significant cost, Joseph and Mary set an example for their family by prioritizing obedience to the Law and dedication to God. God required all Jewish males to visit Jerusalem annually to celebrate Passover, the Feast of First Fruits, and Ingathering. This obligation was likely expensive for the self-employed like Joseph, but it demonstrated his and Mary's devotion to God and their commitment to setting an example for their family. After completing the eight-day festival, Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem. At the same time, His parents traveled home, unaware of His absence, a situation not unusual because pilgrims typically traveled in groups, allowing children to visit relatives and friends along the way (**verses 43-44**). However, after being unable to locate Him after a day's travel, they returned to Jerusalem. They found Him in the Temple, listening to and asking the religious teachers questions with spiritual insight that astounded them (**verses 45-47**).

His parents were astonished, and Mary reacted as any concerned parent would do in a similar situation (**verse 48**). Jesus' response was not disrespectful toward Mary and Joseph but reflected His surprise that they had not come to the Temple first to find Him (**verse 49**). His response also indicates that at this young age, Jesus understood His unique relationship with God, His Father, and His mission in the world. Yet, Mary and Joseph did not understand what He was saying, a recurring theme throughout His ministry, challenging the beliefs and expectations of the religious hierarchy (**verse 50**). This passage reminds us that it is vital to pray daily for discernment and wisdom and, most importantly, for understanding so that we can know and obey God's will.

WHAT DO YOU THINK?

Why is children's and youth's developing spiritual insight sometimes underestimated or overlooked by parents and older believers?

Jesus Prepares for His Mission (*Luke 2:51-52*)

KJV

51 And he went down with them, and came to Nazareth, and was subject unto them: but his mother kept all these sayings in her heart.

52 And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man.

NIV

51 Then he went down to Nazareth with them and was obedient to them. But his mother treasured all these things in her heart.

52 And Jesus grew in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man.

Despite Jesus' awareness of His true identity and the divine mission ahead, Jesus remained obedient to Mary and Joseph (**verse 51**). After their dialogue in the Temple, Jesus went home

with them and submitted Himself to their parental authority, demonstrating a disposition of humility that God expects among His children. Mary, His mother, “treasured all these things in her heart,” indicating that she engaged in continuous spiritual reflection and meditation, leading to a deeper understanding of spiritual things. She gradually understood Jesus’ identity as God’s Son. She may have recalled Simeon’s and Anna’s words concerning her Son a few years earlier when she and Joseph brought Him to the Temple in obedience to the Law (see Luke 2:23-38). Luke’s summary statement in **verse 52** highlights Jesus’ physical, intellectual, spiritual, and social development in preparation for beginning His mission. Thus, we can conclude that Jesus submitted and availed Himself to further teaching and training from God and humanity. Suppose believers desire to be prepared to fulfill their pre-ordained mission. In that case, Jesus and Mary provide pivotal examples, including demonstrating humility and submission to spiritual authority, practicing spiritual reflection and meditation, and being willing to be taught God’s Word and apply it to their lives faithfully and continuously.

WHAT DO YOU THINK?

How can the church actively contribute to the intellectual, social, and spiritual development of children and youth and assist in preparing them for their spiritual destinies?

A Closing Thought

Luke 2:41-52 details Jesus’ childhood experiences when He stays behind in the Temple after visiting Jerusalem for the Passover. Several life application principles are embedded in this account for the faith community, individually and collectively. These principles include the importance of parental modeling of commitment to obeying God’s Word, demonstrating love and devotion for God and His house, and investing in children’s and youth’s spiritual, physical, intellectual, and social development. Further, through Mary and Joseph’s initial failure to understand Jesus’ identity and purpose, we are reminded of how vital it is to our spiritual growth to pray for spiritual insight and understanding despite the number of divine encounters we experience during our lifetimes. Finally, Jesus’ growth described in Luke 2:52 is a model for the faith community to implement or enhance to ensure that their youth have opportunities to mature in their faith.

Your Life

This lesson underscores the importance of teaching children and youth about faith, guiding their growth in righteousness, being exemplary models for them to follow, and fulfilling the responsibility that parents and mature Christians have in nurturing their spiritual growth. Whether you are a parent, grandparent, or guardian, how can you become or continue being a positive role model in your home, church, and community to ensure that their spiritual development is a priority?

Your World!

The expectation for families to ensure the spiritual development of children has changed drastically among Millennials and GenZ. Some congregations see fewer attendance and participation numbers, while others have none. Therefore, consider what your congregation can do to address this challenge in the future by assessing and evaluating current ministries to reach parents and their children and youth.

Closing Prayer

Gracious God, we acknowledge the responsibility You gave us to train our children to respect and know You. Therefore, we commit to actively contributing to their spiritual, physical, emotional, and social development. May You fulfill the good purposes You have for their lives. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

Conclusion

(Preparing for Next Week's Lesson)

Next week's lesson explores Jesus' teaching regarding the proper observance of the Sabbath. Read Matthew 12:1-8 in preparation for the study.

Home Daily Bible Readings

MONDAY, July 7	"Honor the Sabbath Day"	(Deuteronomy 5:1-7, 12-15)
TUESDAY, July 8	"Strive to Enter God's Rest"	(Hebrews 4:1-10)
WEDNESDAY, July 9	"Who Defines the Sabbath?"	(John 7:14-24)
THURSDAY, July 10	"Give Thanks and Sing God's Praises"	(Psalm 92)
FRIDAY, July 11	"Jesus Sets Us Free from Satan"	(Luke 13:10-17)
SATURDAY, July 12	"Holy Bread for the Journey"	(1 Samuel 21:1-6)
SUNDAY, July 13	"Christ Is Greater than the Temple"	(Matthew 12:1-8)

NOTES
