



Scripture Story: Luke 2:39-52.

Commentary: *The Desire of Ages*, chapters 7, 8, 9.

growing up



Photo by Luis Guerra, Jr.

flashlight

“Jesus did not ignore His relation to His earthly parents. From Jerusalem He returned home with them, and aided them in their life of toil. He hid in His own heart the mystery of His mission, waiting submissively for the appointed time for Him to enter upon His work. For eighteen years after He had recognized that He was the Son of God, He acknowledged the tie that bound Him to the home at Nazareth, and performed the duties of a son, a brother, a friend, and a citizen” (*The Desire of Ages*, p. 82).

keytext

“And Jesus grew in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men.”

(Luke 2:52, NIV)

what do you think?

If Jesus were a teenager in my school or neighborhood,

I think I'd probably

- ___ want to hang out with Him, because He'd be really cool.
- ___ admire Him but not be all that comfortable around Him.
- ___ think He was weird and maybe even pick on Him a little.
- ___ ignore or avoid Him.

did you know?

The Gospels of Matthew and Luke each dedicate a little less than two chapters telling the story of Jesus' birth. Each of the Gospels gives several chapters to Jesus' death and resurrection, with most of the pages in between telling the stories of Jesus' ministry—the stories He told, the sermons He preached, the people He healed. Only Luke spends any time at all on Jesus' childhood and youth. From about age 2 to age 30, the young Jesus gets only 13 verses—most of those being about His trip to the Temple at age 12.

Except for that one story, we know almost nothing about Jesus as a child, as a teenager, and as a young man. We can make guesses based on the descriptions given in Luke 2: He "became strong" and was "filled with wisdom"; He grew "in favor with God and men" (NIV). In other words, He was everything He was supposed to be, appropriate for His age. At 6 He probably didn't have the same kind of understanding of His heavenly mission and message that He did at 26. He had to grow, learn, and discover who He was, just as we do.

INTO THE STORY

"When Joseph and Mary had done everything required by the Law of the Lord, they returned to Galilee to their own town of Nazareth. And the child grew and became strong; he was filled with wisdom, and the grace of God was upon him.

"Every year his parents went to Jerusalem for the Feast of the Passover. When he was twelve years old, they went up to the Feast, according to the custom. After the Feast was over, while his parents were returning home, the boy Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem, but they were unaware of it. Thinking he was in their company, they traveled on for a day. Then they began looking for him among their relatives and friends. When they did not find him, they went back to Jerusalem to

look for him. After three days they found him in the temple courts, sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions. Everyone who heard him was amazed at his understanding and his answers. 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.'

"Why were you searching for me?' he asked. 'Didn't you know I had to be in my Father's house?' But they did not understand what he was saying to them.

"Then he went down to Nazareth with them and was obedient to them. But his mother treasured all these things in her heart. And Jesus grew in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men."

(Luke 2:39-51, NIV)



OUT OF THE STORY

Do you think Jesus did “typical toddler” things when He was 2 or 3—like throwing His toys, yelling when He wanted something, or running away from His parents? Are those things sins, or just a normal part of a child’s development?

How might Mary and Joseph have taught Jesus when He was a child? Do you think they raised Him differently from how they raised their other children?

Was Jesus being rebellious when He left His parents in the Temple? Was it thoughtless of Him not to tell them where He was? Explain your answer.

How do you think Mary and Joseph felt when Jesus said, “Didn’t you know I had to be in my Father’s house?”

When Mary “treasured all these things in her heart,” what do you think she was thinking about?

punch lines

“Honor your father and your mother, so that you may live long in the land the Lord your God is giving you” (**Exodus 20:12, NIV**).

“These commandments that I give you today are to be upon your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up” (**Deuteronomy 6:6, 7, NIV**).

“Listen, my son, to your father’s instruction and do not forsake your mother’s teaching. They will be a garland to grace your head and a chain to adorn your neck” (**Proverbs 1:8, 9, NIV**).

“Train a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not turn from it” (**Proverbs 22:6, NIV**).

“Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. . . . Fathers, do not exasperate your children; instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord” (**Ephesians 6:1, 4, NIV**).

other eyes

[Editor’s note: Book cited for discussion purposes. See Monday’s section.]

“Another time Jesus went into the street and a boy running by rushed into his shoulder; at which Jesus became angry and said to him, You will go no farther. And he instantly fell down dead: Which when some persons saw, they said, Where was this boy born, that everything which he says presently comes to pass?”—From the *Second Gospel of the*

Infancy of Jesus Christ, a Syrian apocryphal book written about 200 years after the time of Jesus.

Sabbath

Because Jesus never sinned, we know that He didn't go through a "rebellious teenager" phase. But the story of His visit to the Temple (Luke 2:41-49) shows Jesus at age 12 doing something most young people do as they enter their teens: establishing His own identity, independent of His earthly parents, Mary and Joseph. Jesus was finding His own path and discovering His destiny. Even though He wasn't rebellious or rude, His new independence caused Mary and Joseph some worry and stress.

What does this tell us? That it's normal for everyone, even Jesus, to move apart from their parents and become a little more independent in their teens. And it's normal for every parent—even Mary and Joseph!—to worry about their kids. But it's also possible as a teen to go through that search for independence without rebelling against or getting angry with your parents. The story in Luke 2 ends by telling us that Jesus went back home and "was obedient" to His parents during His teen and young adult years, even as He was growing up into the person God had planned for Him to be.

What can you learn from this story that you can apply at this time in your life?

Sunday

Why do you think the Bible tells us so little about Jesus' early years?

Early Christians obviously wanted to know more about the young Jesus, and in later centuries some people made up stories about what Jesus might have been like as a boy (one of these is quoted in *Other Eyes* above, and we'll discuss that tomorrow). But the inspired words of the Gospels contain only one story about Jesus' youth.

For each of the following phrases from Luke 2, write an example of something you think

Jesus as a child or teen *might* have done that would fit with that description:

- He became strong _____
- He was filled with wisdom _____
- The grace of God was upon Him _____
- He was obedient to His parents _____
- He grew in stature _____
- He grew in favor with God _____
- He grew in favor with man _____

Monday

Read the *Key Text* summing up Jesus' early life, then compare it to the story from the "Infancy Gospel" in the *Other Eyes* section of the lesson. The "Infancy Gospel" is a book that the early Christian church decided was not inspired and should not be included in the Scriptures. Why do you think they decided this? How does the picture of the boy Jesus in this story differ from the Jesus we see in Luke 2 and in the rest of the Gospels? Does this seem like the "real Jesus"? Why or why not?

Tuesday

Read the *Flashlight* section of the lesson, which talks about the time between Jesus' visit to the Temple at 12 and the time He began His ministry at age 30. Why do you think Jesus waited for so long before He started preaching and teaching, if He already knew what God wanted Him to do? What valuable lessons do you think Jesus learned during those years in Nazareth?

Wednesday

All the verses in the *Punch Lines* section contain biblical advice to parents or to children. From that list of Bible texts (or other Bible verses you know of), is there something you wish your parents would follow that they don't follow now?

Is there something you could do differently in relating to your parents, based on the Bible's advice?

Thursday

Jesus spent 18 years, between ages 12 and 30, learning what God wanted Him to do—and only about three years doing it. Action is important, but so is waiting for God's timing and learning the lessons He wants us to learn. Think of Moses, who spent 40 years in the wilderness preparing to lead the Israelites out of Egypt.

Maybe this is *your* time of preparation. God is getting you ready for the work He wants you to do in the world. What's one practical thing you can do today to help discover God's will for your life?

Friday

As you pray today, ask God to make you more like Jesus as a young person—learning about Him and growing in a way that's appropriate to your age and in keeping with His will.

*A special adaptation of *The Desire of Ages* has been created just for you by the White Estate and the Pacific Press Publishing Association. Get more info about it at: www.cornerstoneconnections.net.

this week's reading*

The Desire of Ages, chapters 7, 8, 9.

*By following this plan you will read at least one book of the Conflict of the Ages Series each year.