

# Matured

Jesus, as the unique Son of God, experienced human life fully and without sin.

LUKE 2:41-52



cities

the synag

to pass, that, as th  
 him to hear the wor  
 the lake of Gen-nes'-a-ret  
 two ships standing by t  
 fishermen were gone out of th  
 washing *their* nets.

and he entered into one of th  
 which was Si'-mon's, and prayed him  
 would thrust out a little from the la  
 he sat down, and taught the people o  
 ship.

4 ¶ Now when he had left speaking

us world), and (4) those ruled (individuals who believ  
 pel]. The kingdom of God is already present in at le  
 senses (Matt. 12:28) but also still future (Matt. 6:1

5:1-3 Gennesaret was an alternate name for the se  
 lee, which is also called the sea of Tiberias (John  
 The boat Jesus chose belonged to Simon Peter  
 mother-in-law He had recently healed (Luke  
 Jesus **sat down** in the boat; this was the normal p  
 a teacher (see note at 4:19-21).

5:4-7 In spite of the fact that his night labors had t  
 less, at Jesus' command Peter responded in faith



**Share about a time you or someone in your group became physically separated. What lessons did you learn about yourself as a result of that separation?**

Many know the feeling of being left behind or leaving someone behind. Our attention led us one way while the rest of the group went the other way. We may have been on the other end when we realized someone in our group was no longer with us. After celebrating the Passover in Jerusalem, Mary and Joseph found themselves separated from Jesus as they journeyed back to Nazareth. This account gives us a glimpse into the uniqueness of Jesus.

## UNDERSTAND THE CONTEXT

After Simeon and Anna's encounter with the infant Jesus in the temple, nothing else is known about His childhood except this passage in Luke 2:39-52. Joseph would have provided Jesus with the early elements of His education. Scholars are undecided whether Jesus would have had the opportunity to attend a synagogue school in Nazareth, as most of these types of schools were limited to Jerusalem in that day. As a child, Jesus would have learned to speak, read, and write Aramaic. He also would have picked up Hebrew and Greek from its prevalence in society. His study of the Torah would have been from Sabbath services in the synagogue, because sacred scrolls were scarce and the price was extremely costly.

Jesus would have learned a trade from Joseph. Custom decreed that the eldest son follow the occupation of his father, so Jesus would have spent time in the carpentry shop (Mark 6:3). He would draw from lessons learned from carpentry. He spoke of specks that irritate the eyes and logs that blind a person (Matt. 7:5). He spoke of a

house foolishly built on sand and another built upon a rock (Luke 6:46-49). He spoke of the impossibility of adding one cubit to a person's life (Matt. 6:27). On the way to Calvary, He spoke of the difference between green wood and dry wood (Luke 23:31). Jesus' formal education and His trade shaped His early years.

When a Jewish boy turned thirteen, he was regarded as an adult. The year before Jesus turned thirteen, His parents brought Him to the temple during Passover, and the ensuing events demonstrated that Jesus was the unique Son of God.

# LUKE 2:41-52

**41** Every year his parents traveled to Jerusalem for the Passover Festival. **42** When he was twelve years old, they went up according to the custom of the festival. **43** After those days were over, as they were returning, **the boy Jesus<sup>A</sup>** stayed behind in Jerusalem, but his parents did not know it.

**44** Assuming he was in the **traveling party<sup>B</sup>**, they went a day's journey. Then they began looking for him among their relatives and friends. **45** When they did not find him, they returned to Jerusalem to search for him. **46** After three days, they found him in the temple sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions.

**47** And all those who heard him were **astounded<sup>C</sup>** at his understanding and **his answers<sup>D</sup>**. **48** When his parents saw him, they were astonished, and 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 them. "Didn't you know that it was necessary for me to be in my Father's house?"

**50** But they **did not understand<sup>E</sup>** what he said to them. **51** Then he went down with them and came to Nazareth and was **obedient to them<sup>F</sup>**. His mother kept all these things in her heart. **52** And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and with people.

## Passage Outline

Engaged (Luke 2:41-47)

Questioned (Luke 2:48-50)

Obedient (Luke 2:51-52)

## Key Words

- A. Jews considered age thirteen as the point at which a boy becomes a man. Verse 42 notes Jesus was twelve years old at this time.
- B. Large numbers would travel to Jerusalem together, giving them protection from bandits. This journey would've been about twenty miles.
- C. The Greek word *ekistemi* is similar to the idiom "they were knocked off their feet."
- D. "The boy" Jesus wasn't just asking the elders' questions; He was answering questions from them!
- E. Prior to Jesus, it was unusual to refer to God as "Father."
- F. This doesn't mean Jesus had been disobedient before. Jesus never sinned, so He couldn't have broken the Fifth Commandment (Ex. 20:12).

# EXPLORE THE TEXT

When Jesus was *twelve years old*, His parents took Him to observe the Passover. This would be the final year He observed it as a child. At age thirteen, Jesus would become a full son of the covenant, meaning He had reached adulthood in the eyes of the Jews. As the events unfolded, Jesus would prove to be more than prepared already.

**DID YOU KNOW?** All Jewish males were expected to attend three annual festivals in Jerusalem if possible: Passover, Pentecost, and Tabernacles (Ex. 23:14-17; Deut. 16:16).

Mary and Joseph *did not know* that Jesus remained in Jerusalem. When the family got back together at night, they discovered that Jesus was not with *their relatives and friends*. They found Jesus *in the temple, sitting among the teachers, listening, and asking questions*.

**Why is it important to emphasize Jesus' being fully divine and fully human? Why are both important to understanding who Jesus is?**

**BIBLE SKILL: Use multiple Scripture passages to understand a major doctrine.** Read Matthew 1:23; John 1:14; 1 Peter 2:21-24; Isaiah 53:3-10; and 1 John 4:2-3. What aspect of Jesus' human nature can you identify in each passage? Review John 8:58; 10:30; 20:28-29; Mark 2:9-12; and Matthew 28:9. What do these texts reveal about Jesus' deity?

Jesus' parents reacted like everyone else who heard Him conversing with the rabbis—they were *astonished*. The words that follow indicate that at least a portion of Mary's astonishment was that Jesus had remained behind to speak with the Jewish scholars. The heart of Jesus' answer was in the latter part of verse 49. He asked, *Didn't you know ...?* He was saying He was under compulsion or divinely ordained to be in His *Father's house*.

**What could Mary have learned from this incident about Jesus?**

**KEY DOCTRINE: God the Son**

Jesus perfectly revealed and did the will of God, taking upon Himself human nature with its demands and necessities and identifying Himself completely with mankind yet without sin (Phil. 2:5-11).

Jesus had just shined light on His divinity as the unique Son of God, but what happened next illuminated His perfect humanity. Jesus *went down* with His parents. Because of Jerusalem's elevation, to travel to Nazareth was to go down in elevation. He returned as a dutiful earthly son with Mary and Joseph.

**How did Jesus' obedience to both His Father and His earthly parents highlight His divinity and humanity?**

What happened between Jesus' discourse in the temple and His reappearance at His baptism some eighteen years later? We must be content merely with a summary statement found in verse 52. Jesus *increased* in several areas of His life.

# APPLY THE TEXT

- Jesus demonstrated unique understanding of and concern for the things of God even as a child.
- Jesus can be trusted to answer our anxious questions.
- Jesus obediently returned to His home with His parents, growing spiritually, physically, and socially.

**Rate your concern for the affairs of God the Father. What actions do you need to take to increase your concern for the affairs of God the Father?**

**Who do you know who seems to be anxious about the identity of Jesus? What truths can you share with them from this passage that might help them?**

**Discuss how your Bible study group affects the spiritual growth and development of children in your church and community. What are some practical ways your group can increase that impact?**

## Prayer Requests

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# DAILY EXPLORATION

## Day 1: Jesus understood the things of God at a young age.

**Read Luke 2:41-47, noting where Jesus was and His actions.**

As the caravan that included His parents left for Nazareth, the *boy Jesus stayed behind*. This phrase could imply that Jesus intentionally stayed behind in Jerusalem or that He inadvertently was left by His parents. Either way, the parents *did not know* that Jesus remained in Jerusalem. They had spent a day journeying, and now they would have to return to Jerusalem to find him, which would require another day's journey. The *three days* would have included the day they traveled, the day they returned, and a third day that they looked for Jesus in Jerusalem. Joseph and Mary found Jesus *in the temple* where theological discussions took place. Jesus was *sitting among the teachers*, who were rabbis and scholars of the Mosaic law. It would have been highly unusual for a boy who was yet to reach the age of thirteen to be welcomed in the discussions they were having in the temple. Jesus was doing two things with the rabbis. First, Jesus was listening to the discussions of the foremost scholars and authorities of the Hebrew Scriptures of His day. Second, He was *asking them questions*. The degree of amazement that resulted from these two actions suggests that this was not passive listening and questioning. They were not childish questions placated by simple answers but were probing questions that challenged the authorities of the law and provided *answers* that the rabbis had not considered. Jesus' *understanding* amazed everyone in the temple courts who heard Him.

**Why is it important to emphasize Jesus' being fully divine and fully human?**

**Why are both important to understanding who Jesus is?**

## Day 2: Jesus is God's Son.

**Read Luke 2:48, considering Mary's human response to her missing Son.**

Mary asked Jesus, *Son, why have you treated us like this?* Partly with the relief of having found Jesus, Mary reproached Jesus for not joining the caravan back to Nazareth. She took Jesus' actions personally, when Jesus' following statement indicates that no such mistreatment was intended. Mary next indicated that they had been *anxiously searching* for Him. She used an unusually strong word to describe this search. Her word choice included a word that normally meant physical torment or suffering. Luke used this same word to describe the depth of suffering the Ephesian elders felt when they realized that they would never see Paul's face again (Acts 20:38). In Mary's words, one might sense relief from the panic she had felt for three days as her son was missing.

**How would you react if your spouse, child, or parent suddenly went missing?**

**How does that give you insight into Mary's response?**

### **Day 3: Jesus obeyed God.**

*Read Luke 2:49-50, noticing Mary and Joseph's confusion.*

Perhaps it is significant that these are the first recorded words of Jesus in this Gospel account. Jesus was not rebuking His parents nor disregarding their feelings, He was indicating He had a higher allegiance to His heavenly Father. Jesus had a relationship with God that transcended that of His earthly parents, and obedience to His Father exceeded that of His parents' understanding. Joseph and Mary *did not understand what he said to them*. How did they not understand? Had not the angel miraculously announced this birth to Mary (Luke 1:26-38)? Did not the angel come to Joseph explaining the situation with Mary's virgin birth (Matt. 1:20-21)? Did they forget about Simeon and Anna's pronouncements in the temple when Jesus was a baby (Luke 2:25-38)? One must remember that even with these things, Jesus had apparently lived a normal life as a child without stories such as this one leading to amazement and wonder. Later, Jesus' own disciples would seem confused after seeing Him do miracles and hearing Him preach (Luke 9:44-45; 18:31-34; 24:25-26). Even today, having access to Scripture and volumes written about Him, people have a difficult time comprehending Jesus, the Son of God. Mary understandably struggled with His identity.

**What did you learn about Jesus from this incident?**

### **Day 4: Jesus had a higher calling.**

*Read Luke 2:51, identifying Jesus' response to His parents.*

The text carefully stated that Jesus *was obedient to them*. Luke probably emphasized this to note that Jesus did nothing wrong in this case and was not disobedient to His parents. He had a higher authority than His earthly parents and a higher calling with His heavenly Father. At times this calling would cause concern and even suffering and pain to His earthly mother. A sword would pierce her own soul as she stood at the foot of Jesus' cross (John 19:25-27), as Simeon had prophesied (Luke 2:35). In this case, Jesus had to do the will of His Father. The confusing events surrounding Jesus' discourse with the rabbis in the temple caused Mary to file away these memories for further contemplation. This is what she had done when the shepherds arrived at Jesus' birth (2:19). Perhaps Mary herself served as Luke's source for these two unique events.

**How did Jesus' obedience to both His Father and His earthly parents highlight His divinity and humanity?**

## Day 5: Jesus was fully God and fully man.

*Read Luke 2:52, noting Jesus' growth.*

Jesus *increased* in several areas of His life. First, Jesus advanced intellectually. He grew *in wisdom* as He aged. As He had to learn to walk as a baby, He would also learn to think with increasing wisdom. This did not divest Him of His divinity but demonstrated His humanity. Jesus also grew physically—*in stature*. Jesus also advanced *in favor with God*. Though He was tempted in all ways yet without sin (Heb. 4:15), in His humanity He grew in understanding how to please His heavenly Father. Finally, He grew in favor with *people*. He knew how to live in relationship with people and achieve social respect. The fact that Jesus grew in these areas does not imply that He was not fully God prior to His development. Rather, it indicates that as fully divine and also fully human, He experienced growth and development as any human would, except that He was without sin.

**How does growing in favor with God result in growing in favor with people? How have you seen this happen in your life?**

## TALK IT OUT

Reflect on the truths found in Luke 2, sharing with other members of your Bible study group.

**How can we imitate Jesus in understanding God's plan for us and concern for others?**

**How can we, as fully-human people, discern what God wants us to be doing and when?**

**How does Jesus demonstrate the kind of life God expects from His people?**



For additional context, read “At Age Twelve” in the Winter 2020-21 issue of *Biblical Illustrator*. Available at [LifeWay.com/BiblicalIllustrator](http://LifeWay.com/BiblicalIllustrator).