



My Father's House

Luke 2:41-52

- ❑ Jesus' family eventually returned to Galilee to their own town of Nazareth,¹ and the child Jesus "grew and became strong; he was filled with wisdom, and the grace of God was on him" (Luke 2:40, NIV). Read Luke 2:41-52.

Visit to Jerusalem

- ❑ "Every year Jesus' parents² went to Jerusalem for the Festival of the Passover.³ When he was twelve years old,⁴ they went up to the festival, according to the custom" (2:41-42). Joseph and Mary were faithful in their observance of Jewish laws and customs (2:22, 23, 24, 27, 39, 41-42).

Jesus Misplaced?

- ❑ After the Feast, Jesus' parents began their return to Nazareth. They thought Jesus was in their company⁵ (2:43-44). But when they looked for him among their relatives and friends, they could not find him.⁶ So they went back to Jerusalem to look for him (2:45).
- 📖 "After three days⁷ they found him in the temple courts, sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions" (2:46, NIV).

1. What was the reaction of the people who listened to Jesus? Why?⁸ (2:47)



2. How did Mary and Joseph react when they found Jesus?⁹ (2:48)

¹ Matthew 2 records the visit of the Magi and the family's escape to Egypt. Most commentators believe these events (especially the escape to Egypt) occurred after Jesus' presentation at the temple (Luke 2:22-24) but Luke does not mention them. Some suggest that Jesus' family went to Nazareth and returned to Bethlehem later, either to live or stay during a feast, while others suggest that Luke omitted these details for whatever reason in his summary of events.

² Jesus' 'parents' (*goneus*) refers to Joseph and Mary. Though Joseph was not Jesus' physical father (Luke 1:34-35; Matthew 1:20-23), he was his legal father and thus rightly called his 'parent.'

³ The Old Testament commanded men to return to Jerusalem for three festivals: Passover (Unleavened Bread), Pentecost (Harvest, Weeks), and Tabernacles (Booths, Ingathering) (Exodus 23:14-17; 34:22-23; Deut. 16:16). First century Jews who lived far from Jerusalem may go only to Passover (the most important festival) and not necessarily every year. Passover week was celebrated at the beginning of the Jewish year (Nisan 14-21, around March-April).

⁴ 'twelve years old' – the year before Jewish boys assumed the moral responsibilities of adulthood (at age 13).

⁵ 'company' (*synodia*, caravan) – a group of people traveling together for safety. The trip to Nazareth took 3-4 days.

⁶ There is no indication that Jesus' parents were neglectful. If the caravan was large, it would be easy for them to not notice his absence. And it was reasonable for them to assume Jesus was with relatives or friends. Even if they were somewhat neglectful, it is not Luke's purpose to make that point.

⁷ The 'three days' probably includes the first day of their journey toward Nazareth, the day of their return to Jerusalem, and the day of their searching within Jerusalem.

⁸ They were 'amazed at his understanding and his answers' (2:47). Since Jesus had 'answers' the teachers must have asked him questions too, likely counter-questions to his questions.

⁹ They were 'astonished' (*exeplogēsan*) – probably both amazed and relieved. After their anxious search for him, Mary wanted to know why Jesus had done such a seemingly insensitive thing.

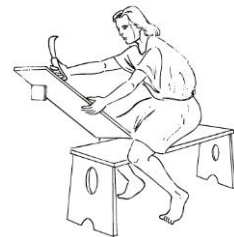
📖 Mary said to him, “Son, why have you treated us like this? Your father and I have been anxiously searching for you.” (2:48, NIV)

3. How did Jesus respond to his parents? Do you think his answer was disrespectful? What do you think he meant by his answer?

- ❑ “‘Why were you searching for me?’ [Jesus] asked. ‘Didn’t you know I had to be in my Father’s house?’” (2:49, NIV)¹⁰
- ❑ Jesus’ response revealed his special (and unique) relationship with God the Father, and the priority of his special mission.¹¹ Mary and Joseph did not fully understand this (2:50).
- ❑ Though obedience to his Father in heaven was his highest priority, he was also obedient to his earthly parents (2:51).¹²

Back to Nazareth

- ❑ Jesus returned to Nazareth with his parents, and he was obedient to them (2:51). We have no other information about Jesus’ life until he began his public ministry around age 30 (Luke 3:23).
- ❑ “But his mother treasured all these things in her heart. And Jesus grew in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man” (2:51b-52, NIV).



Application

- ❑ The Bible passage in this lesson is about Jesus. It tells us that the 12-year old Jesus understood his priorities. His highest priority was to be one with his Father (God the Father) and to accomplish His will. Jesus’ love and obedience eventually led to the cross (Philippians 2:8).
 - ❑ “[W]hen Christ came into the world, he said... ‘Here I am, I have come to do your will’ ... And by that will, we (as believers) have been made holy (set apart for God) through the sacrifice of the body of Jesus Christ once for all” (Hebrews 10:5a, 9a, 10, NIV).¹³
 - Jesus came into this world to die for our sins, so that we could be forgiven and restored to a relationship with God. It is a gift received through faith. Do you need to trust in Christ?
- ❑ The priorities of Jesus are an example for all believers. Our relationship with God and living according to His will should be our highest priority too.
 - Can you say that God and His will are *your* highest priority? Read Matthew 22:36-40; 6:33; Luke 9:23-25; 14:26-27.¹⁴ Think about these challenging verses and discuss them with other believers. If you have questions, please ask.

¹⁰ ‘in my Father’s house’ (*en tois tou patros mou*) – literally, ‘in the ...of my Father.’ Thus translators must insert a word. The King James Version and NKJV insert ‘business,’ resulting in the translation, ‘Did you not know that I must be about My Father’s business?’ However, the context does not support this translation. Most English translations insert ‘house,’ which makes sense because it denotes a location. The temple was considered God’s house.

¹¹ While Mary referred to Joseph as ‘your Father,’ Jesus referred to God as ‘my Father’ (2:48, 49). Years later, Jesus spoke of the priority of God’s family over his earthly family (Mark 3:31-34; Luke 8:19-21). Jesus’ highest priority was the will of God. As Jesus said, ‘My food is to do the will of him who sent me and to accomplish his work’ (John 4:34).

¹² It is God’s will that children obey their parents (Ephesians 6:1-3). Jesus affirmed the Jewish commandment, ‘Honor your father and your mother’ (Exodus 20:12; Matthew 15:3-6).

¹³ The writer to the Hebrews quotes Psalm 40:6-8, originally written by David, but applied here to Jesus.

¹⁴ Luke 14:26 may sound harsh. However, the love/hate contrast used in the Bible reflects a Hebrew idiom that communicates fundamental preference. To give God the priority that He deserves means ‘hating’ one’s family members, or one’s life, in comparison. Certainly, Jesus wants his disciples to love others, especially their own family members, but one’s relationship with God should be highest priority, as Jesus indicated in ‘his Father’s house.’