

Advancing into Adulthood Like Jesus

Luke 2:52

Today, is an “Adding More” Sunday. We have been considering monthly lessons on this theme. Last month, we considered the apostles asking Jesus, “Lord, increase our faith” (Luke 17:5). Today, we are going to consider an often-overlooked aspect of the life of Jesus: His youth.

There is very little documented Biblically or otherwise relating to the youth of Jesus. We know about His birth, His family fleeing to Egypt, and an incident when He was twelve years old. Then, the record is silent for the next eighteen years, with one exception. Luke summarizes the life of Jesus during his formative years: “Jesus increased in wisdom and in stature and in favor with God and man” (Luke 2:52).

Youth is a time of learning, growth, and maturation. Luke’s writing that “Jesus increased” during this time of His life is an accurate characterization. To increase means “to advance forward and to make progress.”

Young people can learn important lessons from Jesus about making progress towards adulthood. Youth is a time of hope and possibility. Yet, like all opportunities, youth can be misused and misspent. Notice what young people can learn from Jesus increasing.

Adding More Like Jesus

1). Jesus’ parents were faithful. We do not focus much attention on the earthly parents of Jesus. Yet, Joseph and Mary have a vital role in Jesus’ life. The Son of God was entrusted to them. This was an awesome responsibility. They struggled to understand how God was using them. Mary often wondered about what would become of her son. Yet, they remained faithful to God in their stewardship of Jesus.

The context of Luke’s statement about Jesus increasing is the time when Jesus separated Himself from His parents in Jerusalem. He was twelve years old. The scene begins by saying, “Now his parents went to Jerusalem every year at the feast of the Passover” (Luke 2:41).

Joseph and Mary were faithful to God, the Law of Moses, and teaching Jesus and their other children the Scriptures. When children are raised by faithful parents, they are given a tremendous advantage in life and faith. Young people who come from godly families have every reason to increase and advance as responsible adults and faithful servants of God.

2). Jesus was faithful to God & His parents. As a parent, I have wondered about the upbringing of Jesus. What did the house of Joseph and Mary sound like in the mornings as

everyone was getting ready for the day? Did Jesus and His siblings bicker over who got the last scoop of...at dinner? Jesus was a real boy, with real parents and real siblings, who grew up in a real family. Well, Jesus was a real boy, but not any boy. Jesus was different. He was the Messiah. Without a doubt, Joseph and Mary knew their oldest son was not like their other children.

Back at the Temple scene when Jesus was twelve, Joseph and Mary spent five days separated from Jesus. When they finally found Him at the Temple lecturing the Jewish leadership, Jesus said He was doing His Father's business (Luke 2:49). Joseph and Mary did not understand what Jesus meant. Doing His Father's business only added another layer of curiosity. Jesus, though, knew exactly what He meant. Jesus understood His purpose early in His life. He came to do the will of His Heavenly Father.

While Jesus had a Heavenly purpose, He was still faithful to His parents. Luke writes that when the family returned to Nazareth, Jesus was submissive to His parents (Luke 2:51). Sometimes young people can become rebellious in their teenage years. They think they know what they want to do with their lives and that permits them to disregard the authority of their parents. This was not Jesus' understanding. Jesus knew His purpose in life, yet was obedient to His parents.

3). Jesus matured into an adult. For young people, adulthood can be intimidating. Some may try to avoid responsibility. Even parents can coddle their children as they come of age. Luke considers specific areas in which Jesus increased and advanced as He became an adult. Notice the following:

Strong in spirit: Young people are often timid and unsure of themselves. They need courage to find and take their place in life. Confidence comes from taking on new responsibilities. When a young person fulfills their responsibilities, they gain the confidence to take on new responsibilities. This is how they grow. They become strong in spirit (Luke 2:40).

Wisdom: Young people lack experience; therefore, they lack wisdom. Yet, they can make wise decisions by implementing the teachings of their parents. Also, they can begin to use the principles of godliness to discern the people and world around them. They can learn from the unwise choices some around them may make. When they are unsure, young people can ask for help.

Stature: This description is not about physicality. Stature is about character. By respecting authority, making godly decisions, and being responsible, young people can gain Him a good reputation in the community. Stature relates to character.

Favor with God & man: The results of increasing in life and faith, we receive the favor of God and man. This is about reputation. Some young people have a reputation for all the wrong reasons. They are lazy and irresponsible. They are disrespectful and rude. They are wild and promiscuous. These traits will not garner any good favor with God or man.

Young people trying to increase like Jesus will be diligent and reliable. They will be respectful and courteous. They will be self-controlled and disciplined. These traits will greatly aid them in life and faith.

Conclusion

While the youth of Jesus is often overlooked, there are beneficial principles noted about His upbringing. Sometimes, young people can feel overlooked in a church. Please know that the Gospel is for you! Jesus is for you!

Being on the precipice of adulthood can be a bit scary. Your character and beliefs are being tested for the first time. You are beginning to make decisions independently that will affect your future. This can be daunting. Remember, Jesus shows how you can increase and advance forward to the glory of God.