

THE DOCTOR'S REPORT

Learning from a Child

TEXT: Luke 2:40-51

INTRODUCTION: One of the important roles for any parent is teaching our children. It is a role we cannot lay aside, even if we wanted to. We teach by every word we say and by everything we do. But parents, we are not the only teachers in the house. The kids teach us as well, don't they?

A Sunday School teacher was discussing the 10 commandments with her 5 & 6 year olds. After explaining the commandment to "honor your father and mother," she asked, "Is there a commandment that teaches us how to treat our brothers and sisters?" Without missing a beat, one of the kids answered, "You shall not kill."

On a more serious note, a woman wrote a letter to a Christian magazine to explain a miraculous lesson her family experienced. During one of their family Bible readings as new Christians, they ran across the verse, "If your enemy is hungry, feed him" (Romans 12:20 NKJV).

She writes: Our sons, 7 and 10 at the time, were especially puzzled. "Why should you feed your enemy?" they wondered. My husband and I wondered too, but the only answer John could think of to give the boys was, "We're supposed to because God says so." It never occurred to us that we would soon learn why.

Day after day John Jr. came home from school complaining about a classmate who sat behind him in 5th grade. "Bob keeps jabbing me when Miss Smith isn't looking. One of these days, when we're out on the play ground, I'm going to jab him back." I was ready to go down to the school and jab Bob myself. Obviously the boy was a brat. Besides, why wasn't Miss Smith doing a better job with her kids? I'd better give her an oral jab, too, at the same time!"

I was still fuming over this injustice to John Jr. when his 7 year old brother spoke up: "Maybe he should feed his enemy." The 3 of us were startled. None of us was sure about this "enemy" business. It didn't seem that an enemy would be in the 5th grade. An enemy was someone who was way off... well, somewhere.

We all looked at John. Since he was the head of the family, he should come up with the solution. But the only answer he could offer was the same one he had give before: "I guess we should because God said so."

"Well," I asked John Jr., "do you know what Bob likes to eat? If you're going to feed him, you may as well get something he likes." "Jelly beans," he almost shouted, "Bob just loves jelly beans."

So we bought a bag of jelly beans for him to take to school the next day, and decided that the next time Bob jabbed John Jr., John was simply to turn around and deposit the bag on his "enemy's" desk. We would see whether or not this enemy feeding worked. The next afternoon, the boys rushed home from the school bus and John Jr. called ahead, "It worked, Mom! It worked." I wanted the details: "What did Bob do? What did he say?"

"He was so surprised he didn't say anything - he just took the jelly beans. But he didn't jab me the rest of the day!" In time, John Jr. and Bob became the best of friends - all because of a little bag of Jelly Beans.

Both of our sons subsequently became missionaries on foreign fields. Their way of showing friendship with any "enemies" of the faith was to invite the inhabitants of those countries into their own homes to share food with them around their own tables. It seems "enemies" are always hungry. Maybe that's why God said to feed them.

We have been studying the early chapters of the Gospel of Luke. While there are many similarities between Matthew, Mark, and Luke, there are also certain things about our Lord that only Dr. Luke records. One of those things is in the passage we read today about the childhood of Jesus. Did you know that this is the only account of Jesus' life between the ages of three years and 30?

Has the thought ever occurred to you, "What would it have been like to be the earthly parents of the Son of God?" Talk about learning from your kids. What did Mary and Joseph have to learn in this episode of Jesus' childhood?

Luke 2:40-51 ⁴⁰ And the Child grew and became strong in spirit, filled with wisdom; and the grace of God was upon Him. ⁴¹ 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 according to the custom of the feast. ⁴³ When they had finished the days, as they returned, the Boy Jesus lingered behind in Jerusalem. And Joseph and His mother did not know *it*; ⁴⁴ but supposing Him to have been in the company, they went a day's journey, and sought Him among *their* relatives and acquaintances. ⁴⁵ So when they did not find Him, they returned to Jerusalem, seeking Him. ⁴⁶ Now so it was *that* after three days they found Him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the teachers, both listening to them and asking them questions. ⁴⁷ And all who heard Him were astonished at His understanding and answers. ⁴⁸ So when they saw Him, they were amazed; and His

mother said to Him, "Son, why have You done this to us? Look, Your father and I have sought You anxiously."

⁴⁹ And He said to them, "Why did you seek Me? Did you not know that I must be about My Father's business?" ⁵⁰ But they did not understand the statement which He spoke to them. ⁵¹ Then He went down with them and came to Nazareth, and was subject to them, but His mother kept all these things in her heart.

Did you find something that Mary and Joseph had to learn from the boy Jesus? Now let me ask the more important question: "Did you find something that you need to learn from the boy Jesus?"

I found three things from me.

I. EVEN JESUS HAD TO INCREASE IN WISDOM.

A. This touches on one of the age old mysteries of the incarnation.

- **How much of His deity did Jesus lay aside when He became a man?**
- **This passage does not give a final answer to this question, but it does offer us some data.**

B. The Second Person of the Trinity, who knew everything there is to know, past, present, and future before He entered the world He created, and the One who would know again all that there will ever be to know as He reigns at the right hand of the Father as King of Kings and Lord of Lords, for a brief interval of history, laid aside some of that knowledge, purged his mind of a portion of His understanding, **emptied Himself of some of His eternal wisdom.**

- **How do we know?**
- Because God's perfect Word declares,

Luke 2:52 And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men.

- You cannot gain more if you already have all there is.

And thus my main point here, and this is significant.

EVEN JESUS HAD TO INCREASE IN WISDOM.

And what am I to learn from this? What shall this twelve year old teach me?

If Jesus needed to increase in wisdom, how much more do I need to increase in wisdom.

- I don't have all the answers.

- I don't even know all the right questions.
- How about you?

Do not think this point trivial. For the seed of God's Word today to penetrate the soil of your heart and bear fruit, you must prepare the soil. The preparation for receiving more wisdom is the recognition that you need more.

**If you think you know it all,
you've heard it all,
you've thought through it all,**

then you are through growing in wisdom.

I know I still need to increase in wisdom because even Jesus had to increase in wisdom.

II. EVEN JESUS RELIED ON SCRIPTURE AS HIS SOURCE FOR WISDOM.

- Twelve year old Jesus is missing for three days in Jerusalem.
 - Where is He? The temple.
 - What is He doing? Talking to the Rabbis, the teachers.
 - What do they teach? The Scriptures.
 - Twelve year old Jesus can do anything He wants for three days without his parents and what does he do?
 - He goes to the Bible teachers of his day and enters into discussion about what the Word of God says!
- A. Jesus lived after Plato (429-347 B.C.), Socrates (469-399 B.C.), and Aristotle (384-322 B.C.), yet He never quoted these or other famous human philosophers.

1. Jesus knew the origin of wisdom.

Ps. 111:10 The fear of the LORD *is* the beginning of wisdom; A good understanding have all those who do *His commandments*. His praise endures forever.

Prov. 9:10 The fear of the LORD *is* the beginning of wisdom, And the knowledge of the Holy One *is* understanding.

a. When Jesus spoke of history, what did He quote?

Lk. 17:29

The Bible!

b. When Jesus spoke of the future, what did He quote?

Mt. 12:40

The Bible!

c. When Jesus spoke of the morality, what did He quote?

Mark 7:10

The Bible!

d. When Jesus spoke of the beginning of the universe, what did He quote?

Lk 10:18

The Bible!

B. We will never grow in wisdom apart from growing in our knowledge of and understanding of the Bible.

1. That is why Lifechange Groups are important.

2. That is why the preaching of the Word is important. (That is why I refuse to give you a little Scriptural snack in 15 minutes on Sunday morning like some of you want. I do my best by the grace of God to serve a full meal. And if it is more than you can eat, you just need to grow your appetite, because we all need wisdom for living and the Bible is the only place we are going to get it.)

3. That is why personal reading of the Bible is important.

Let me ask you something?

- **If Jesus, the Messiah, God's own dear Son, chose the Scriptures as His source for knowledge, understanding, and wisdom, why would you and I choose anything else?**
- **And if Jesus needed the instruction of Scripture to grow wise, how can we possibly think we can be wise without it?**

III. EVEN JESUS FOUND IT WISE TO JOIN HIS FATHER IN WHAT GOD WAS DOING.

Lk. 2:48-49 ⁴⁸ So when they saw Him, they were amazed; and His mother said to Him, "Son, why have You done this to us? Look, Your father and I have sought You anxiously." ⁴⁹ And He said to them, "Why did you seek Me? Did you not know that I must be about My Father's business?"

If Jesus knew that it was the wise thing to do to busy Himself with His Father's agenda, why don't we?

Through the life of His Son, even when He was just a boy of twelve, God speaks so clearly about the way to wisdom and the life of wisdom.

Erwin McManus, a pastor in Los Angeles, tells a great story about responding to God's voice.

My son, Aaron, was five or six when he began asking me, "What does God's voice sound like?" I didn't know how to answer.

A few years later, Aaron went off to his first junior high camp. In the middle of the week, I went up with another pastor at Mosaic to see our kids. Aaron, I learned, had started to assault another kid but had been held back by his friends. He was unrepentant, wanted to leave camp, pulled together his stuff, and shoved it into the car.

I asked him for a last talk with me before we drove away. We sat on two large rocks in the middle of the woods. "Aaron," I asked, "is there any voice inside you telling you what you should do?"

"Yes," he nodded.

"What's the voice telling you?"

"That I should stay and work it out."

"Can you identify that voice?"

"Yes," he said immediately. "It's God." It was the moment I'd waited for.

"Aaron," I said, "do you realize what just happened? You heard God's voice. He spoke to you from within your soul. Forget everything else that's happened. God spoke to you, and you were able to recognize Him."

I will never forget Aaron's response: "Well, I'm still not doing what God said."

I explained to him that that was his choice, but this is what would happen. If he rejected the voice of God coming from deep within and chose to disobey His guidance, his heart would become hardened, and his ears would become dull. If

he continued on this path, there would be a day when he would never again hear the voice of God. There would come a day when he would deny that God even speaks or has ever spoken to him.

But if he treasures God's voice, however it comes to him—through the scriptures, through his conscience—and responds to Him with obedience, then his heart would be softened, and his ears would always be able to hear the whisper of God into his soul.

Aaron chose to stay, I'm grateful to say. If he had chosen differently, he would have begun the path toward nominal discipleship. Perhaps he never would have rejected the faith overtly. He might have even chosen to be a faithful attendee at a church and been by everyone else's estimation a good man, but he would no longer be a close Jesus-follower.

INVITATION – Each of us chooses.

We choose if we will trust Christ as Lord and Master.

We choose daily if we will follow Him.

We choose whether we will walk in wisdom through His Word.

We choose whether we will be about the Father's business.