

## "IMPERFECT MOTHERS FOR PERFECT KIDS" LUKE 2:41-52

### **This Week's Core Competency**

**Personal God** – I believe God is involved in and cares about my daily life. Psalm 121:1-2

*I lift my eyes to the hills-  
where does my help come from?  
My help comes from the Lord,  
the Maker of heaven and earth.*

The story of Jesus in the temple when he was twelve years old raises a number of curious questions. For example, how could the boy be overlooked for an entire day (Lk 2:44), and where did Jesus sleep for the two or perhaps three nights that he was alone in Jerusalem (v. 46)? What's more, given his wisdom and understanding, why wasn't he more considerate with regard to his parents? Although Luke doesn't bother to answer these questions, reasonable answers come to mind. Joseph and Mary may have left the city without Jesus in part because they were traveling with a company of pilgrims. Because the women and younger children traveled together as did the men and older boys, Joseph may have thought that Jesus was with his mother and Mary may have thought that he was with his father. Once Jesus realized they had left without him, he remained in the temple courts assuming they would know to look for him there. In the meantime, his needs may have been met through the kindness of strangers in the temple

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***I don't study the Bible to know the Bible; I study the Bible to know God.***

**– J. Dwight Pentecost  
1915-2014**

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precincts or family friends in the city. Luke has no interest in answering these questions since they have nothing to do with the point of his narrative.

Aside from those practical questions, the story raises much more profound theological questions regarding the incarnation and Jesus' understanding of his identity and mission. The statement on the person of Christ incarnate formulated by the Council at Chalcedon in the fifth century states in part: "as regards His Godhead, begotten of the Father before the ages, but yet as regards his manhood begotten, for us men and for our salvation, of Mary the virgin, the God-bearer; one and the same Christ, Son, Lord, Only-Begotten, recognized in two natures, without confusion, without change, without division, without separation; the distinction of natures being in no way annulled by the union, but rather the characteristic of each nature being preserved and coming together to form one Person and subsistence, not as parted or separated into two Persons, but one and the same Son and only-begotten God the Word, Lord Jesus Christ" (quoted Charles Caldwell Ryrie, *Basic Theology*, 284). Stated more concisely, Jesus is fully God and fully man "united without mixture, change, division, or separation in one person forever" (284). He is one person with two natures: one divine, one human.

In light of this, a nuanced answer must be given to the question of when Jesus knew that he was the Son of God and Messiah. He is clearly aware of his identity and mission by the time he converses with the temple teachers at twelve years of age. When he responds to his Mary's question with a question of his own he indicates as much. He

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refers to "my Father's house" not "our Father's house." "When the boy first became conscious of his peculiar relation to the Father in heaven we do not know. But he has it now at twelve and it will grow within him through the years ahead in Nazareth" (Archibald Thomas Robertson, *Word Pictures in the New Testament*, 2:35). This awareness of his identity and mission, which would continue to grow from the time he was twelve, had apparently been growing up to that time as he developed and matured. What he knew in his divine nature, he became aware of in his human nature as he grew in wisdom and stature.

One author helps us understand the union of deity and humanity in Jesus when he writes: "Much speculation has arisen over the problem of self-consciousness in such a unique person as Christ. In His own self-consciousness was He aware of His deity and humanity at all times? The orthodox doctrine necessarily implies that Christ in His divine self-consciousness was aware of his deity at all times. There was no point in the life of Christ when He suddenly became aware of the fact that He was God. His divine self-consciousness was as fully operative when He was a Babe in Bethlehem as it was in His most mature experience. There is evidence, however, that the human nature developed and with it a human self-consciousness came into play. In view of the varied forms of manifestation of the divine and human natures, it seems possible to conclude that He had both a divine and human self-consciousness, that these were never in conflict, and that Christ sometimes thought, spoke and acted from the divine self-consciousness and at other times from the human" (John F. Walvoord, *Jesus Christ Our Lord*, 118-19). By the time Jesus was an adolescent, he had developed a personal awareness of his divine identity and salvific mission.

## day 1 ENCOUNTER – read God’s word to put yourself in touch with him.

### Luke 2:41-52

41 Every year his parents went to Jerusalem for the Feast of the Passover. 42 When he was twelve years old, they went up to the Feast, according to the custom. 43 After the Feast was over, while his parents were returning home, the boy Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem, but they were unaware of it. 44 Thinking he was in their company, they traveled on for a day. Then they began looking for him among their relatives and friends. 45 When they did not find him, they went back to Jerusalem to look for him. 46 After three days they found him in the temple courts, sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions.

47 Everyone who heard him was amazed at his understanding and his answers. 48 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."

49 "Why were you searching for me?" he asked. "Didn't you know I had to be in my Father's house?" 50 But they did not understand what he was saying to them.

51 Then he went down to Nazareth with them and was obedient to them. But his mother treasured all these things in her heart. 52 And Jesus grew in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men.

## EXAMINE – what the passage says before you decide what it means.

\* Underline "every year" in v. 41.

\* Circle "parents" in v. 41.

\* Bracket "Feast of the Passover" in v. 41.

\* Circle "twelve" in v. 42.

\* Bracket "after the Feast was over" in v. 43.

\* Box "but" indicating *contrast* in vv. 43, 50, 51.

\* Bracket "after three days" in v. 46.

\* Circle "teachers" in v. 46.

\* Circle "amazed" in v. 47.

\* Underline the rhetorical question in v. 48.

\* Circle "your father" in v. 48.

\* Circle "my Father's house" in v. 49.

\* Highlight v. 49.

\* Circle "treasured" in v. 51.

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## day 2

**EXPLORE** – the answer to these questions to better understand what the passage means.

Consult the explanation of the message and the notes to follow if you need help.

1. Passover was one of three annual festivals. What did that celebration entail? (Cf., Ex 12:1-20)
2. What do you infer about Jesus' parents from verses 41-42?
3. Put the events described in verses 43-46 in chronological order.
4. The incident described raises puzzling questions. *What* are they, and *why* would Luke leave them unanswered?
5. What is Luke getting at in verse 47?
6. Placed next to each other, verses 48 and 49 create palpable tension in the reader. How so?
7. The point of the narrative is found in Jesus' saying in verse 49. Put it in your own words.
8. Why would Luke add the comment in verse 51?
9. **Discussion:** Read verse 52 and talk about your answer to this *living* question: How is God making himself known to you?

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# day 3

## EXAMINE – an explanation of the message to better understand the meaning of the passage.

Luke's Gospel opens with a number of so called "infancy narratives." They include: the announcement to Zechariah (1:5-23); the announcement to Mary (vv. 26-38); the meeting between Mary and Elizabeth followed by Mary's song (vv. 39-56); the birth of John followed by Zechariah's song (vv. 57-80); the birth of Jesus (2:1-7); the visit of the shepherds (vv. 8-20); and Jesus' presentation in the temple (vv. 21-40). Although the story of Jesus' visit to the temple twelve years later isn't exactly an infancy story, it clearly brings the infancy narratives to an appropriate end (2:52; cf., 1:80; 2:40). One commentator observes, "With this account Luke ended the infancy narrative (1:5-2:52) in the temple where it began (1:5-23)," then regarding its purpose he adds, "The present account foreshadows Jesus' future greatness as well as his future teaching mission and reveals an awareness of his unique relationship with God. It forms a fitting transition to Jesus' ministry in 3:1ff." (Robert H. Stein, *Luke*, NAC, 120). Another commentator offers the following more detailed explanation of its purpose: "The purpose of this story is to transition to Jesus' ministry by demonstrating his exceptional spiritual and physical growth. The account has two themes. The first is Jesus' growing awareness of his unique father-son relationship with God . . . The second theme is Jesus' growth in wisdom, as revealed in his dialog with the Jewish teachers in the temple" (Mark L. Strauss, *Four Portraits, One Jesus*, 266).

Before reading Luke 2:41-52 closely, a comment on its *literary form* is in order. The Gospels contain different literary forms, e.g., genealogies, songs, parables, miracle stories, discourses, etc. The story at the end of Luke 2 is a *pronouncement story*. "Simply defined, it is a brief story about Jesus that culminates in a short, striking saying (and possibly an action) and reveals something of his character and facility in repartee when challenged by others" (James L. Bailey and Lyle D. Vander Broek, *Literary Forms in the New Testament*, 114). This is important to know because the point of a pronouncement story is found in the concluding statement or pronouncement by Jesus, which, in this case, comes in 2:49 (see Stein, 120).

Jesus' visit to the temple at twelve years of age is the first story of this kind in the Gospels. It's fascinating for a couple of reasons. First, it tells us the only thing we know about Jesus' childhood. It

comes as no surprise that this snapshot of him as an adolescent did not satisfy the curiosity of later generations. Consequently, we find in the apocryphal Gospels and other extra-biblical writings all sorts of stories about what Jesus said and did as a child. In the estimation of one writer: "Most of these stories are, however, so fantastic and childish and give such an unnatural and distorted representation that they cannot by a long way be compared with the contents of the four Gospels. We at once realize what an unbridgeable gulf exists between the canonical Gospels (written under the inspiration of the Holy Ghost by personal witnesses or by persons who had firsthand information at their disposal), and the apocryphal writings (which are the fruit of fabrications and legends)" (Norval Geldenhuys, *Commentary on the Gospel of Luke*, NICNT, 125-26). Second, it contains the first red-letter words—the first words of Jesus—recorded in the Gospels.

Verses 41-48 set the stage for Jesus' pronouncement in verse 49. He travels to Jerusalem with his father and mother to celebrate the Feast of Passover. Joseph and Mary are godly parents who make the three-day trip every year. This year is different, however. Jesus is twelve, and the following year he will become a "son of the covenant" obligated to obey the law as an adult. When the feast is over, his parents join their travelling companions and leave for Nazareth unaware that they are leaving Jesus in Jerusalem alone. (Apparently when a large group of festival pilgrims traveled together, the women and younger children went ahead while the men and older boys followed behind. Perhaps Joseph thought Jesus was with his mother and siblings at the same time Mary thought he was with his father.) When they stop the first night, Jesus is nowhere to be found. Joseph and Mary are unable to sleep that first night. At the crack of dawn they head off to Jerusalem to search for him, and spend a second sleepless night together after they arrive. The following day they find him in the temple conversing with Jewish teachers. Everyone within earshot is astonished by his words. The rabbis are taken aback by his wisdom and insight. "One suspects that some of these rabbis later remembered this incident when Jesus became a popular teacher Himself. Obviously Jesus already had unusual wisdom and insight into

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the Scriptures, which were the center of these discussions" (Thomas L. Constable, "Notes on Luke," 2014 ed., 48, www.soniclight.com). His parents are astounded by what he is doing. Relieved yet annoyed, mother Mary scolds her son, saying in essence, "Son, you should not have treated us like this. Your father and I have been worried sick searching for you." Her attitude was unwarranted but understandable.

Jesus answers by saying in essence, "You did not need to search for me. You knew I had to be in my Father's house." On Jesus' reply to his mother, one commentator observes: "Mary and Joseph's anxiety contrasts with Jesus' calmness. Mary's reference to Jesus' earthly father also contrasts with Jesus' reference to His heavenly Father. Jesus' first question prepared His parents for His significant statement that followed in His second question. Jesus' response to Mary and Joseph showed that He regarded His duty to His heavenly 'Father,' and

His 'house' (temple), as taking precedence over His duty to His earthly father and his house" (49). Clearly Jesus is aware of his unique relationship to God, his divine Father. What's more, he is conscious of the divine imperative on his life. "I must be (Gk *dei*) in my Father's house," he says. With regard to divine necessity, one commentator writes: "Luke loves to mark key sayings with *dei* ('it is necessary') to show the presence of the fulfillment of God's plan (4:4; 9:22; 13:33; 17:25; 19:5; 22:37; 24:7. 26, 44). Here is the high point of the infancy narrative, as Jesus explains his call in his own words. In the meantime, he is obedient to his parents" (Darrell L. Bock, *The NIV Application Commentary: Luke*, 101). Finding Jesus in the temple at twelve is analogous to finding young Tiger Woods on the golf course. In either case, it's impossible to miss that both are headed for greatness—albeit of very different sorts.

## *The Message of the Passage*

*You can be confident that Jesus is the Son of God and Savior because as an adolescent he, himself, testified to his unique relationship to God and his Father's unique calling on his life.*

## day **4** **EMBRACE** – how God spoke to you in his word.

Our desire is to not be merely hearers of the word, but doers of the word as James teaches in James 1:22. Reflect on 3 "living questions" to apply what you have learned this week.

- **Journal your answers to the following living questions:**

–How is God making himself known to you?

–How does God want to change you?

–How is God calling you to change your world?

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# notes **N** STUDY – the commentaries to answer the questions.

- v. 41 **every year** "Went' is an example of the iterative imperfect which indicates that Jesus' family habitually went to Jerusalem to celebrate Passover. 'Every year' further emphasizes this" (Stein, 120). "The opening verse not only sets the stage for the episode itself, but once again underscores the faithfulness and piety of Joseph and Mary" (Craig A. Evans, *Luke*, NIBC, 42).
- v. 41 **Feast of the Passover** "Passover was one of three annual festivals Jewish men were required to celebrate in Jerusalem (Deut. 16:16). Passover itself was the opening feast of the seven-day (or eight-day by another reckoning) festival called the Feast of Unleavened Bread and was celebrated on the fifteenth day of Nisan. The entire feast, however, was popularly called the Feast of Passover (cf. Luke 22:1; John 13:1). Passover commemorates God's deliverance or exodus of his people out of Egypt and the death angel's passing over Israel's firstborn. In this last plague the death angel visited Egypt's firstborn. However, when he came upon the house-holds of Israel, he observed the blood of the Passover lamb smeared on the door lintels and 'passed over' those homes" (Stein, 121).
- v. 42 **twelve** "At the age of thirteen a Jewish boy became obligated to observe the law (*Nid.* 5:6; *Nazir* 29b) and in more recent years has begun to be called a 'son of the covenant–*Bar-Mitzvah*'" (121). "The Rabbinical law enjoined (*Yoma*, 82 a) that even before that—two years, or at least one year—lads should be brought up to the Temple, and made to observe the festive rites. Unquestionably, it was in conformity with this universal custom that Jesus went on the occasion named to the Temple" (Alfred Edersheim, *Sketches of Jewish Social Life*, 120).
- v. 43 **after the Feast** I.e., "after seven days" (Stein, 121), or "on the third day of the Paschal week" as permitted by the law (Edersheim, 120; see note on v. 46 teachers), Jesus remained in Jerusalem while Joseph and Mary were returning home.
- v. 46 **after three days** "After the first day of travel from Jerusalem, they returned back on the second day to Jerusalem; and they found Jesus on the third day" (Stein, 122).
- v. 46 **teachers** "We know that it was the practice of the members of the various Sanhedrims—who on ordinary days sat as judicatories, from the close of the morning to the time of the evening sacrifice (*Sanh.* 88 b)—to come out upon the Sabbaths and feast-days on 'the terrace of the Temple,' and there publicly to teach and expound, the utmost liberty being given of asking questions, discussing, objecting, and otherwise taking intelligent part in these lectures. On the occasion of Christ's presence, these discussion would, as usual, be carried on during the 'Moed Katon,' or minor festive days, intervening between the second and the last day of the Paschal week" (Edersheim, 120; see note on v. 43 after the feast).
- v. 46 **asking** Jesus was no curious young lad; he was asking "probing questions designed to elicit decisions" (I. Howard Marshall, *The Gospel of Luke*, NIGNT, 127).
- v. 47 **amazed** "His unaffected questions and answers to their questions showed so many proofs of exceptional insight and lucid intelligence that the doctors marveled at it. With the Child Himself, however, there was no boasting, self-conceit, arrogance or self-exaltation" (Geldenhuis, 127). "We have already seen the response of 'amazement' in 2:18, 33, and this was a favorite word of Luke's (see comments on 2:18). Since this amazement is frequently the result of an encounter with the supernatural (cf. 8:56; 24:22; Acts 2:7, 12), Luke may have intended his readers to see in this incident a supernatural display of wisdom" (Stein, 122).
- v. 48 **why** Mary's question betrays her inward emotion "in words that give evidence of her deep motherly affection and her anxiety at the same time" (Geldenhuis, 127). The term "anxiously" refers to "deep mental anguish and pain (16:24-25; Acts 20:38)" (Bock, 100). But Jesus didn't "run away;" Mary and Joseph apparently left Jerusalem without him.
- v. 49 **why** "The point of the narrative has to do with Jesus' sense of mission and his preparation for it. This is most evident in the questions he asks his relieved (and possibly perturbed) parents" (Evans, 44). Jesus' questions "can be understood in two ways: (1) Why were you searching all over for me? Didn't you know I would be in the temple? (2) Why were you looking for me? Didn't you know I must be in my Father's house? The latter (which focuses on the why) is more probable than the first (which focuses on the where), since it better fits the thought of the rest of this verse. It is unnecessary to see in this a rebuke or accusation on Jesus' part. Rather it is better to see this as an expression of surprise. It assumes that Joseph and Mary, due to their previous experiences as recorded in chaps. 1-2, had a basis for understanding Jesus' unique behavior and relationship to God" (Stein, 123).
- v. 49 **my Father's house** Lit., "in the \_\_\_\_\_ of my Father." This idiom can mean "in my Father's house" or "about my Father's business." The context favors the first since that is where Jesus is found. What's more, "Jesus' point is that his career must be about instruction on the way of God, for the temple was not only a place of worship, but was also a place of teaching" (Bock, 101).
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## Family Talk

Encouragement from one parent's heart to another

Special Note to Parents: During the month of May, kid's teaching will not align with adult teaching. The Family Scrolls will follow the texts that kids are learning on Sunday morning. During His earthly ministry Jesus often used parables to illustrate principles. Parables are earthly stories with a heavenly meaning. Jesus used these stories to help explain spiritual truths so that His listeners would understand the things of God. Our story next week is from Luke 6:46-49. In this parable, Jesus taught his followers that they must build their lives on a firm foundation and obey his teachings. In October 2013, Ed Jarrett broke his own world record for building the tallest sand castle. Located on the beach of New Jersey, the sand tower stood 38 feet and 2 inches tall. It was beautifully ornate. Hundreds of workers spent hundreds of hours building the impressive structure. The castle brought visitors from all over the world and raised \$50,000 for victims of Superstorm Sandy. Although it was constructed only 7 months ago, if you visit the Jersey shore today, you will not see the structure. It was made of sand. A heavy rain or high tide is all it takes to destroy a sand castle. Jesus cautioned us not to build our lives on temporary things. He calls us to build our lives on the strong foundation of obedience to His Word. Let's be wise builders!.

### What Does The Bible Say

**Read:** Read Luke 6:46-49

1. What question does Jesus ask in Luke 6:46?
2. What does the wise man do in the parable?
3. What happened to the house on the sand when the storm hit?

### What Do You Think

1. Name some different "storms" your family has faced? (someone sick, moving to a new place, broken friendships)
2. What do you do when these difficult times come?

### What R U Going To Do

This parable reminds us that it is important to put God's Word into practice. Choose one of the following scriptures and do it. Write about how you lived it out!  
 1 John 3:17; Matthew 6:14; Philippians 2:3-4; James 5:16; Philippians 4:6

## MEMORY TIME

### Core Comp

Authority of the Bible - I believe the Bible is God's book that tells me what to believe and do.

### Memory Verse

Luke 6:46 - *Why do you call me "Lord, Lord," and do not do what I say?*

## KIDPIX COUPON

I memorized CC \_\_\_\_ and Verse \_\_\_\_\_. Family completed **Say** \_\_\_\_\_ **Think** \_\_\_\_\_ **Do** \_\_\_\_\_

Child's name \_\_\_\_\_ Grade \_\_\_\_ Parent's signature \_\_\_\_\_

Earn tokens by completing the Bible study portion of this page.  
 Questions: Kids@pantego.org

# 30 CORE COMPETENCIES

## 10 CORE BELIEFS

### **Trinity** 2 Corinthians 13:14

I believe the God of the Bible is the only true God - Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

### **Salvation By Grace** Ephesians 2:8-9

I believe a person comes into a right relationship with God by His grace, through faith in Jesus Christ.

### **Authority of the Bible** 2 Timothy 3:16-17

I believe the Bible is the Word of God and has the right to command my belief and action.

### **Personal God** Psalm 121:1-2

I believe God is involved in and cares about my daily life.

### **Identity in Christ** John 1:12

I believe I am significant because of my position as a child of God.

### **Church** Ephesians 4:15-16

I believe the church is God's primary way to accomplish His purposes on earth today.

### **Humanity** John 3:16

I believe all people are loved by God and need Jesus Christ as their Savior.

### **Compassion** Psalm 82:3-4

I believe God calls all Christians to show compassion to those in need.

### **Eternity** John 14:1-4

I believe there is a heaven and a hell and that Jesus Christ is returning to judge the earth and to establish His eternal kingdom.

### **Stewardship** 1 Timothy 6:17-19

I believe that everything I am or own belongs to God.

## 10 CORE PRACTICES

### **Worship** Psalm 95:1-7

I worship God for who He is and what He has done for me.

### **Prayer** Psalm 66:16-20

I pray to God to know Him, to lay my request before Him and to find direction for my daily life.

### **Bible Study** Hebrews 4:12

I read the Bible to know God, the truth, and to find direction for my daily life.

### **Single-mindedness** Matthew 6:33

I focus on God and His priorities for my life.

### **Spiritual Gifts** Romans 12:4-6

I know and use my spiritual gifts to accomplish God's purposes.

### **Biblical Community** Acts 2:44-47

I fellowship with other Christians to accomplish God's purposes in my life, others' lives, and in the world.

### **Giving Away My Time** Colossians 3:17

I give away my time to fulfill God's purposes.

### **Giving Away My Money**

#### 2 Corinthians 8:7

I give away my money to fulfill God's purposes.

### **Giving Away My Faith** Ephesians

#### 6:19-20

I give away my faith to fulfill God's purposes.

### **Giving Away My Life** Romans 12:1

I give away my life to fulfill God's purposes.

## 10 CORE VIRTUES

### **Joy** John 15:11

I have inner contentment and purpose in spite of my circumstances.

### **Peace** Philippians 4:6-7

I am free from anxiety because things are right between God, myself, and others.

### **Faithfulness** Proverbs 3:3-4

I have established a good name with God and with others based on my long-term loyalty to those relationships.

### **Self-Control** Titus 2:11-13

I have the power, through Christ, to control myself.

### **Humility** Philippians 2:3, 4

I choose to esteem others above myself.

### **Love** 1 John 4:10-12

I sacrificially and unconditionally love and forgive others.

### **Patience** Proverbs 14:29

I take a long time to overheat and endure patiently under the unavoidable pressures of life.

### **Kindness/Goodness** 1 Thess. 5:15

I choose to do the right things in my relationships with others.

### **Gentleness** Philippians 4:5

I am thoughtful, considerate and calm in dealing with others.

### **Hope** Hebrews 6:19-20

I can cope with the hardships of life and with death because of the hope I have in Jesus Christ.

## About the Authors

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**Wendy Hollabaugh** (B.S.W. University of Texas at Arlington) is the Children's Minister at Pantego Bible Church. Wendy has over ten years of experience in Children's Ministry. She has a passion for leading families to connect with God and each other. She enjoys creating compelling environments where kids fall in love with God and His Truth. Wendy and her husband, Greg, are also involved in their own personal youth ministry as they are training their three teenagers, Hannah, Aaron and Noah.



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The mission of THE SCROLLS is to help you Belong, Become, and go Beyond as follower of Jesus Christ through your own active reading of the Bible. Send any questions or comments you may have about this lesson to Tom Bulick. His e-mail address is [tbulick@pantego.org](mailto:tbulick@pantego.org).