

The Growth of Christ – Infancy to Manhood

Luke 2:40; 51-52

There are deep mysteries as we glimpse into the first 30 years of Jesus' life. Like all men, He moved from infancy to childhood, from childhood to youth, and from youth to manhood. The wonderful fact is we all can take the same journey with the favor of God and man! Phil. 2:7-8 tells us that Jesus was fashioned as a man and these verses give us a glimpse at the development pattern of Christ from infancy to manhood.

Here are two similar passages but given at two different points of Jesus' development.

I. Infancy to Childhood – 0-11 years of age After the incident with infant Jesus and the observances in the Temple (Luke 2:21-40), we hear nothing of Him again until the Christ child is 12 years old and forgotten in Jerusalem by His parents.

“And the child (Gk - infant) grew and waxed (became) strong in spirit, filled with wisdom: and the grace of God (God's love and cherishing care) was upon him.” Luke 2:40

- These early years, as with any Jewish child, would be centered around His mother and their home. Mary would have been His first teacher of the Scripture and the Law. New Testament example. Timothy - 2 Tim. 1:5; 3:15
- Jesus would have started a formal school at 5-6 years of age, and it would continue into his early teens. This would be very heavy in Scripture, language, and math. Jesus probably spoke three languages, Aramaic (the language of His home); Hebrew (language of the Jews); and Greek (language of commerce and trade).
- Dr. Luke gives a doctor's perspective of Jesus' growth. Physically – “grew”; Spiritually – “waxed strong in spirit,” Mentally – “filled with wisdom.” He ends with an acknowledgement of God's special grace on Jesus – God's love and care!

II. Young Adult to Manhood – 12-30 years of age After the incident of 12-year-old Jesus in the Temple (Luke 2:41-50), we hear nothing of Him again until He begins His ministry at age 30 – 18 years of silence. This is the only glimpse we have into those years – youth to manhood!

“⁵¹And he went down with them, and came to Nazareth, and was subject unto them: but his mother kept all these sayings in her heart. ⁵²And Jesus increased (Lit. – “to cut one's way forward”) in wisdom and stature (also translated – age, years, maturity), and in favor with God and man.” Luke 2:51-52

- “but his mother kept all these sayings in her heart.” – from this statement we can be certain that Mary gave Luke the details to this event. She did not have understanding at the time, but she remembered it!
- After the events in the Temple that day, Jesus went with Mary & Joseph and was obedient to them. Obedience was Jesus' pattern! He was obedient to His parents, the Law, government, and most importantly His Father! Jesus' relationship with His Heavenly Father did not override or nullify His duty to His earthly parents. 5th commandment - Heb. 5:8-9
- Fully human and balanced development – physically, mentally, socially, spiritually. But Jesus was free from the sins that are found in the rest of humans at each stage of growth.
- Growing up in Galilee – 1) Galilee was known as a blue-collar area. 2) It was far from the legalistic influences of the modern religionist. The Galilean's love for God was pure and untouched by the pollution of the Religious Leaders of Jerusalem. 3) There was a heavy Gentile presence because of major trade routes 4) The land and weather were very favorable to agriculture. All these influences are evident in His ministry.

- Education: **Home** – learned a trade; enjoyed family – both near and extended; learned of loss with Joseph’s apparent death; took on added responsibility as head of the family
Nature & Everyday Life – Jesus’ use of illustrations showed His understanding of different aspects of everyday life. Examples: birds, flowers, chickens, sheep, fox, crops, vineyards, cooking.
Prevalent Modern Thought – Jesus was well informed of the topics and thought of the day. Zealots, Messiah’s coming misunderstanding, shallowness of Religious teachings, prejudice towards Samaritans, publicans, Romans, those with handicaps
- Jesus did no miracles during these years – Water to wine found in John 2 is called the first miracle.

Jesus was the Ideal Man and the Ideal Son of God!

1. Physique – no flaw – perfect
2. Mind – unclouded
3. Emotions – love dominated – perfect
4. Will of God centered – no war between flesh and spirit – no sin
5. Spiritual – grace of God was upon Him – Meditation, prayer, obedient, loyal, service, pure

“The Boy Jesus grew up in a large family, in a despised city, nurtured by parents who were probably poor. The Jewish religion was at an all-time low, the Roman government was in control, and society was in a state of fear and change. Yet when Jesus emerged from Nazareth, eighteen years later, the Father was able to say of Him, Thou art my beloved Son; in thee I am well pleased.” Warren Wiersbe p. 146

Believer’s Application: Jesus’ growth was complete and perfect in every area. Yet, we find in Scripture that any believer can mature in wisdom and in favor with God and man. Using the same pattern of Jesus’ growth, here is a brief overview of with hints for young people who love God or those who help direct them!

- I. Increase in Wisdom – The pursuit of wisdom needs to be the principle priority of the teenage years. Prov. 4:5-9 The verbs in this passage come in the form of a command!**
- Wisdom is not solely the result of age and experience. Prov. 8:4
 - Wisdom - the ability and willingness to base all of our thoughts, actions, and decisions on the principles of the Word of God.
 - Wise Man – one who has invested the time to learn what God wants from him and has a heart that longs to obey and please the Lord. Matt. 7:24

Bible Formula for Wisdom – getting wisdom involves effort and dedication

1. Fear of the Lord - reverence and understanding of God Prov. 1:7; 9:10
2. Be teachable - We must trade in our “own” wisdom Prov. 3:7; 23:4
3. Pray for Wisdom – James 1:5 Act of humility
4. Study the Scriptures - 2 Tim. 2:15 “Wisdom is God’s reward for your willingness to search and study the Scriptures.” Prov. 2:4-7 Hebrews 5:11-14
5. Receive instruction – God has commanded others to teach you wisdom - public and group instruction – good attitude – Prov. 9:9; 21:11 Mother’s teaching – Prov. 1:8; 6:20; 31:1
6. Seek counsel - private – one on one instruction Prov. 19:20; 24:6 – select godly people who will give Biblical advise
7. Accept rebuke – Prov. 9:8; 15:31; 25:12 Our pride hates rebuke but it is necessary. Not all friends are brave enough to rebuke you. Appreciate those who love you enough! Listen—Evaluate—Adjust

8. Seek others for God – Prov. 11:30; Dan. 12:3 When seeking souls for God the Scriptures become very important.
9. Choose wise companions – Prov. 13:20; 14:7-9 Be able to identify a foolish person and avoid them.

II. Increase in Maturity - Stature means maturity of life, mind, or person. Jesus “grew-up” physically, mentally, and socially

Maturity – “putting away” childish things I Cor. 13:11

- Develop Excellent speech - Matt. 12:34; James 3:6-8; Prov. 17:7; 25:11
- Deepen your Biblical understanding
 - learn to see a situation as God sees it - Isaiah 55:8
 - acquire Biblical convictions - I Tim 4:12-16
- Discipline your thinking – “Sober minded” - controlled thoughts 2 Cor. 10:5
 - Daydreaming vs. diligent Prov. 14:23; 21:25 (work ethic)
 - Proud minded vs. humility Prov. 3:34; James 4:6 (demeaner)
 - Evil vs. pure minded Phil. 4:8 (morals)

III. Increase in Favor with God – it seems that Jesus increased in God’s favor by the attributes and actions that pleased God. Study the Bible characters who gained God’s favor—Abraham, David, Mary, Samuel, Moses, Ruth, Esther

How to Gain Favor with God

1. Live righteously - Ps. 5:12; Prov. 14:9 this righteousness is two-fold:
 - Positionally - Salvation - by faith, believing and accepting the fact that Christ died on the cross for your sins - receiving Christ’s righteousness 2 Cor. 5:21
 - Practically - everyday actions and thoughts of the believer – RIGHT is defined in God’s word not by our opinion Jug. 17:6 “every man did that which was right in his own eyes.”
2. Pursuit of Wisdom – Prov. 8:35 First quality of Christ’s growth
3. Performing of good works – Prov. 11:27; 12:2 Die to self and live for others
4. Finding a good wife – Prov. 18:22 Satan is good at exploiting the weakness of youthful lusts.
“Marriage will determine to a large degree your direction and happiness!”

IV. Increase in Favor with Man – “favor” means “to cheer” men both respected Jesus and were impressed by him. We can also find this favor with man. I Tim. 4:12

Character Traits that Please God and Man

All based on humility and submission!

1. Excellent speech - well spoken **Not full of worry, complaints, or gossip, but God-centered.**
2. Mature behavior - friendly **Sober – love-centered**
3. Selfless love - kind **compassionate, others-centered**
4. Good attitude - enthusiastic **full of humility and submission**
5. Sincere faith - love God **trust Him**
6. Wholesome purity - creditability **honest, true**

V. **Subject to His Parents** – Jesus humbled himself to His heavenly Father and His earthly parents. He expects no less from us and our children.

A Submissive Teenager becomes:

1. A Superior citizen - I Peter 2:13-15; Rom 13:1
2. A Superior employee - I Peter 2:18 **Dependability is the best ability!**
3. A Superior church member - Heb. 13:7, 17
4. A Superior wife - Eph 5:22
5. A Superior leader Matt. 23:12
6. A Superior Christian Phil 2:5-8

VI. **Learned a Wage-Earning Skill** –Mark 6:3; Matt. 13:55 Jesus learned a work ethic when learning from his father. As a child grows their responsibilities and work load should grow as well. **Our homes should be the training ground for our children’s work ethic and learning the satisfaction of a job well-done.**

Proverbs 3:3-4

*“Let not mercy and truth forsake thee; bind them about thy neck; write them upon the table of thine heart:
So shalt thou find favor and good understanding in the sight of God and man.”*

“mercy” – loving-kindness; “truth” – God’s Word

“bind them about thy neck” – ornament all can see; adds beauty and draws others

“write them upon the table of thine heart:” – engraft loving-kindness and God’s Word into your very being

THEN

You will find both the favor of God and man AND Wisdom for life!