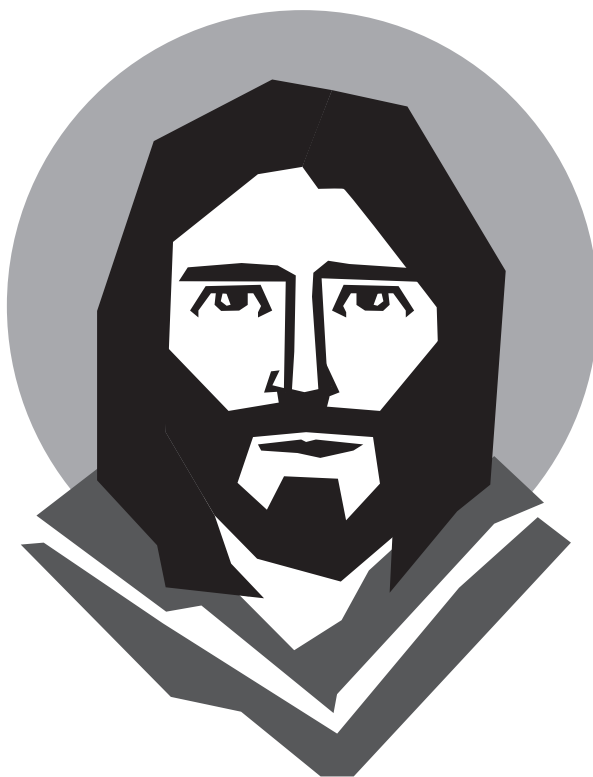
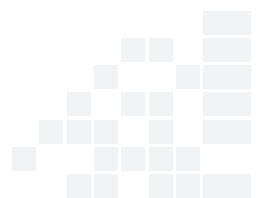
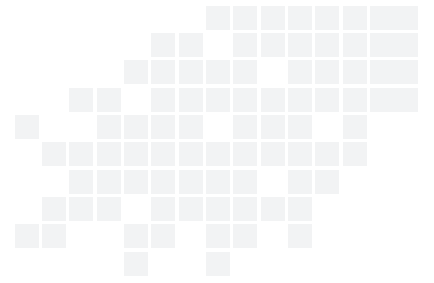
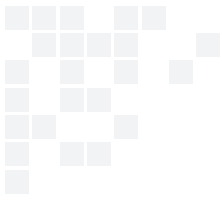


THE REAL JESUS



A study through the Gospel of Luke

BOOK 6: HIS PREPARATION





BECOMING A CHRISTIAN

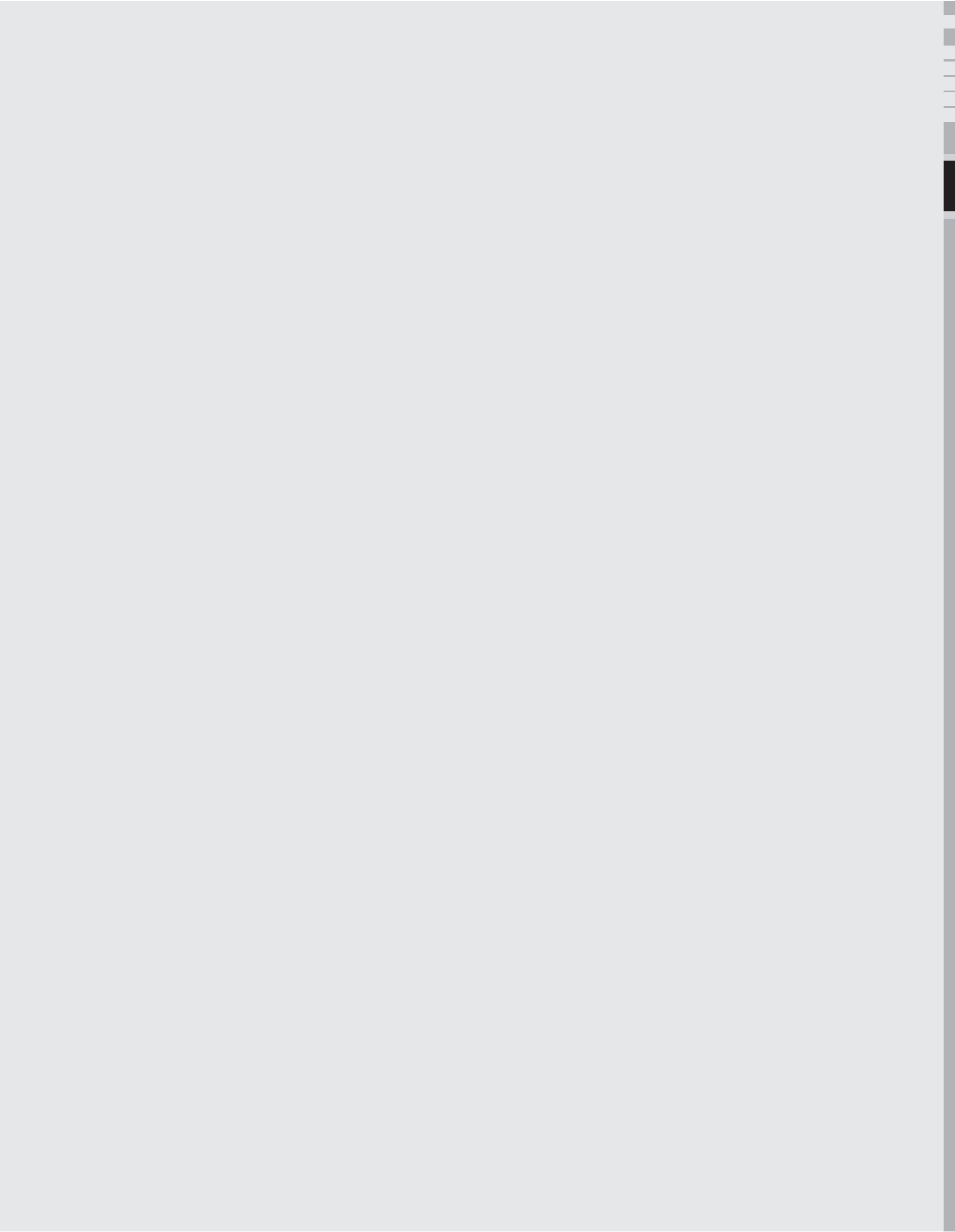
In the Bible, God reveals His truth about how to have eternal life by becoming a believer in the finished work of Jesus Christ. The believer is a Christian, a follower of Jesus Christ, a true child of God, and one who has been saved by God according to God's grace (undeserved favor). *"For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not as a result of works, so that no one may boast"* (Ephesians 2:8-9).

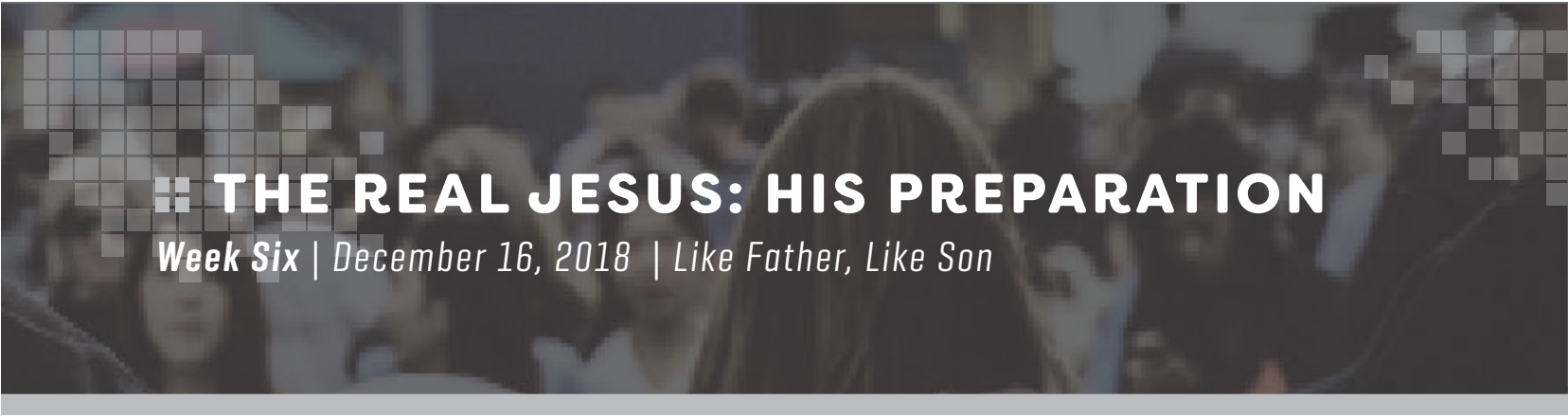
How does one become a Christian?

- The Bible, God's word, says that eternal life (salvation) is a free gift of God which cannot be earned or deserved (Romans 6:23; Ephesians 2:8-9).
- However, we also find in God's word that all people are born sinners and cannot save themselves from the penalty of sin, which is eternal death and separation from God. God's requirement is perfection and no one is perfect (Isaiah 53:6; Romans 3:3-23; Ephesians 2:1-3).
- God tells us in His word that He is holy, meaning that He is perfect and that He is also just, meaning that He gives to sinners what is deserved, and because of His holiness and justice He must punish sinners. But thankfully, the Bible also says that God is loving and merciful and does not take pleasure in punishing sinners (Exodus 34:6-7; Ephesians 2:4-5).
- God has mercy on sinners by not giving them what they deserve. This is only possible because He gave His only begotten Son, Jesus Christ, the God-man, to be the substitute for sinners bearing the penalty for their sin and satisfying God's justice (John 1:1,14; Isaiah 53:6; Romans 5:8).
- Jesus said that in order for anyone to have eternal life there must be repentance of sins and faith placed in His substitutionary death on the cross to pay for the penalty of one's sins. This faith must be in Jesus Christ alone not depending on anything else including "good works" (Mark 1:15b; Acts 20:21; Ephesians 2:8-9).

What then is the response to these things if one desires to have eternal life and become a Christian?

1. Pray and ask God to forgive you. The Bible says that you must repent of your sins, being ashamed of them, genuinely regretting and grieving over them, and firmly deciding to make an about-face and turn away from sin and your old lifestyle (Acts 3:19-20).
2. Pray and tell God that you place your faith in Jesus Christ alone to save you. The Bible says that for you to become a Christian, you must place your faith and trust in the finished work of Jesus Christ who died on the cross to become your substitute and who took the penalty for your sin upon Himself once and for all (John 3:36).





THE REAL JESUS: HIS PREPARATION

Week Six | December 16, 2018 | Like Father, Like Son

PREPARATION

❏ GETTING READY

Before your group meets next time, spend some time alone in God's Word reading through this week's texts, Luke 2:39–52. Pray that God, through His Spirit, would bring to life the truth of this text and how it applies to your life.

THIS WEEK

❏ KEY BIBLICAL TRUTH

Jesus came to earth to do His Father's will.

❏ THEOLOGY APPLIED

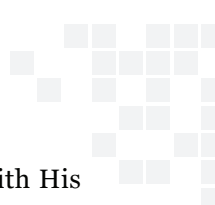
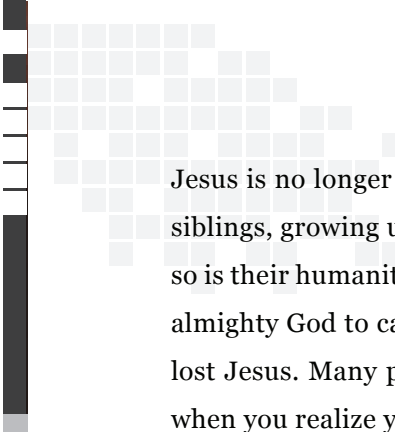
As followers of the Real Jesus, we will obey our Father's will for our lives.

❏ MEDITATE

*"And He said to them, 'Why were you looking for Me? Did you not know that I must be in My Father's house?'"
(Luke 2:49).*

GETTING STARTED

+ Use this section to prepare your heart and mind for the truths of this week. This section will help to introduce the focus of this week's lesson.



Jesus is no longer a baby in a manger in Bethlehem. He's a pre-teen in Nazareth (vv. 39–40), living with His siblings, growing up under the care of parents devoted to the Lord (v. 39, 41). While their devotion is obvious, so is their humanity, with all its inadequacies. In today's text, these righteous yet flawed parents, chosen by the almighty God to care for His only and beloved Son, temporarily misplace Him. That's right. Mary and Joseph lost Jesus. Many parents have hurried out of a store only to experience the heart-stopping panic that occurs when you realize you left your child behind.

As terrifying as that scenario is, Mary and Joseph had it far worse. They left their child in a different zip code. And not just any child, but the Son of God. Culturally, when groups traveled at that time, the men stayed together, and the women and children stayed together. Mary likely thought Jesus was with Joseph, while Joseph thought He was with Mary. When they met up at the end of the day, they realized their error. They traveled back to Jerusalem the next day and spent another day looking for Him. Three agonizing days later, they find their son in the temple, amazing the crowds. While they obviously were relieved when they found Him, they were probably angry as well. And confused. They had no idea what Jesus was doing that day in the temple.

Jesus knew exactly what He was doing even if His parents did not. He understood His purpose on earth. He didn't come for a vacation. He came to accomplish His Father's will. That day in the temple He was getting to His business, more importantly, to His Father's business. What about us? What's our business? Jesus came to earth to do His Father's will. As the adopted children of the same Father, we must share His purpose. Followers of the Real Jesus will not be content to be about their own business. They will be about their Father's business.

What is our Father's business on earth? We look to His Word for the answer. There is no shortage of commandments in Scripture to guide us toward purposeful living. We are told to understand what the will of the Lord is (Ephesians 5:17). Solomon teaches that our whole duty is to fear God and obey His commandments (Ecclesiastes 12:13). Before Jesus ascended into heaven He told us to make disciples around the world, baptize them, and teach them to obey His Word (Matthew 28:19–20). The prophet Micah makes it easy for us to understand God's will when he says, "He has told you, O man, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God" (Micah 6:8). Paul taught that our sanctification (1 Thessalonians 4:3) and gratitude (1 Thessalonians 5:18) are God's will.

The Bible is the most necessary resource for establishing our ethics and activities. In it we can find many more verses to address many more issues. Ultimately, we look to what Jesus did on earth to know how we should live. God sent His Son to reconcile a people to Himself. That's our purpose, too. That's the gospel work our Father equips us to join Him in (2 Timothy 3:17). We can be involved in a lot of good things. And good things are good. But like the Real Jesus, we must exercise intentionality in our day to ensure we're involved in the family business. Through Christ, we have not only been reconciled to God, but we've also been given the ministry of reconciliation (2 Corinthians 5:18). Our purpose is to implore others to be reconciled to God. Is that the



business you are about? Let's be imitators of the Real Jesus and do our Father's work on earth.



❧: *What is God's revealed will for your life? How can Scripture help you answer this question?*

❧: *Like the Real Jesus, are you about your Father's business? What changes should you make in your activities to ensure you are doing God's will?*

❧ UNDERSTANDING THE TEXT

In today's lesson we will study how Christ adopted His Father's mission as His own and how we should respond likewise.

1. ENCOUNTERS WITH JESUS LEAVE PEOPLE AMAZED
2. THE FATHER'S BUSINESS BECOMES THE SON'S BUSINESS
3. GOD'S CHILDREN OBEY HIM EVEN WHEN OTHERS DON'T UNDERSTAND

GOING DEEPER

+ *This next section will help show what God's Word says about this week's particular focus. Read through the Scripture passages and connect the text to this week's biblical truth.*

ENCOUNTERS WITH JESUS LEAVE PEOPLE AMAZED

❧ LUKE 2:39-47

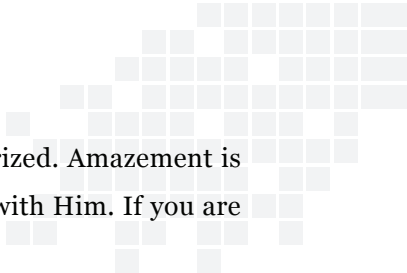
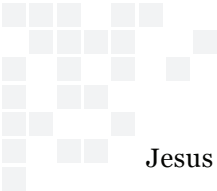
Q: *How long did it take Mary and Joseph to find Jesus?*

Q: *How did the people react to hearing Jesus teach?*

Today's text gives us our only glimpse into the life of Jesus as a child. He's now a twelve-year-old who is strong, wise, and favored by God (v. 40). We learn about our heavenly Father through this rare look at the child-Savior. As our scene unfolds with Jesus in the temple, we learn that our God is personal with us. He's not a distant ruler. He is Immanuel. He is with us. He could have accomplished our redemption with words or thoughts only, but He chose to send His Son to visit us. He reveals His relational nature by sending Jesus to involve Himself in our lives. He is not absent; He is very present (Psalm 46:1). He is a near God (Psalm 73:28). Even as a boy, He is with the people. He sits among the teachers at the temple (v. 46). He is not far off, clinically observing the culture. He's sitting right next to them. Our God is personal, relational, and very much present with us.

Our Father also reveals His purposeful nature through His Son. Jesus isn't merely hanging out in the temple. He didn't ditch his family for laughs. He's not wasting time until His family figures out where He is. Jesus came to engage the culture, not to merely observe it or bide His time before Calvary called. He didn't come to earth to sit back and watch. He came to compassionately involve Himself with us. As He sits among the teachers, He listens. He asks questions. He provides answers. Jesus used the time to learn. He was still growing in wisdom. He also challenged the way the culture thought through issues, offering His own opinions. And He did it in a way that didn't annoy the adults. Can you imagine a child today inserting himself into a theological conversation with a group of pastors? It's easy to envision a scenario where the child is thought of as a nuisance or as a know-it-all. This scene's audience probably thought, "Who does this boy think he is?" But when Jesus speaks, the audience is not left thinking of Him as arrogant. Their reaction is entirely different. They are not offended by Him. They are amazed by Him.

Yes, the Real Jesus is amazing, and when people encounter Him, they will be left amazed. That day in the temple, Jesus showed the people gathered there something they had never seen before. He displayed divine wisdom even as a youth. He demonstrated a thought process that was entirely unfamiliar. God revealed the divine uniqueness of His thinking through Jesus. "For My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways My ways, declares the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways and My thoughts than your thoughts" (Isaiah 55:8–9). The Gospels are filled with examples of people who encountered the Real Jesus and left amazed (Matthew 7:28, Mark 1:22, Luke 2:47, John 7:15). They looked at Jesus and saw the son of a carpenter from Nazareth (Luke 4:22). But the Real Jesus is not who we think; rather, He's not just who we think He is. He's more. He's the I AM (Exodus 3:14). We may have our own ideas of who



Jesus is. And He may be that. But He's so much more. He cannot be contained or categorized. Amazement is the proper response to an encounter with the Real Jesus. Consider your own encounters with Him. If you are not left amazed, perhaps you have not encountered the Real Jesus.

Q: *What do verses 41–42 reveal about Mary and Joseph? Does your life suggest that you share in their devotion to the Lord? If not, what are some ways you can prove your devotion to the Lord?*

Q: *What are some ways you might improve your own intentionality in how you spend your time each day?*

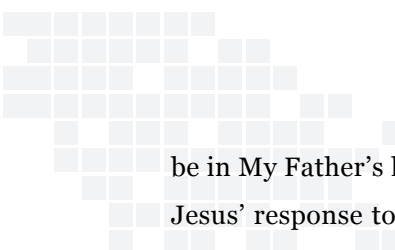
THE FATHER'S BUSINESS BECOMES THE SON'S BUSINESS

❏ LUKE 2:39–49

Q: *How does Mary summarize her feelings about Jesus staying behind at the temple?*

Q: *Where does Jesus tell His parents they should have known He'd be?*

While the crowd at the temple that day was amazed at Jesus, His parents were astonished, likely due to the relief of finding their son and bewilderment at the scene in which they find Him. You can hear Mary's frustration almost as loudly as her love. "Son, why have You treated us so? Behold, Your father and I have been searching for You in great distress" (v. 48). If you're a parent, you've experienced that feeling of wanting to yell at your child for their carelessness while you kiss them senseless at the same time because they are unharmed. This is what Mary is feeling. Jesus' response to His mother holds its own astonishment. He seems bemused that Mary would be baffled about His whereabouts at all. "Why were you looking for Me? Did you not know that I must



be in My Father's house?" (v. 49).



Jesus' response to Mary reveals that He knows His identity and He knows His purpose. Jesus knew who He was. He knew He was the Son of God. Even as a youth, He is secure in His identity. Kent Hughes suggests in *Preaching the Word* (Luke), "Because He knew who He was, He could profoundly obey." He knew who His Father was and that He was good and trustworthy. His identity shaped His desire to obey. Because He knew who He was, He knew what He was supposed to do. He knew what His father was about. He knew the family business. And His Father's business became His business. He tells Mary, "I must be" in My Father's house. The Real Jesus understood His first priority was to do what His Father wanted Him to do. Do we share His passion for obedience?

The Real Jesus lived His life on earth with clear intentionality. He said, "For I have come down from heaven not to do My will but to do the will of Him who sent Me" (John 6:38). He submitted to His Father's will even when He wished for another option. Remember how He prayed in the garden of Gethsemane. "Father, if You are willing, remove this cup from Me. Nevertheless, not My will, but Yours be done" (Luke 22:42).

Obedience is rarely the easy choice. It is human to want to do things your own way. There is tension in wanting your way and wanting God's. And Jesus, in His humanity, experienced that tension. That's why He asked His Father for another way to accomplish His plans. Obedience, while rarely easy, is always worth it. Jesus knew that too. He acknowledges the tension and lays down His own will to accomplish His Father's. Jesus, the Son of God, submitted to the Father's will. Is there a scenario where we think we're too great to submit? Remember the Real Jesus, in all His greatness, submitted to His Father. Will we also submit? Will we lay aside our plans and adopt His? As image bearers (Genesis 1:27), we reflect Christ. Christ obeyed His Father. His followers will, too.

We should be secure in our identity. As the adopted sons and daughters of the King and fellow heirs with Christ (Romans 8:17), we know who we belong to. We know His purposes. Like the Real Jesus, we must join the family business and spread God's glory in all the earth.

Q: *Jesus was about His Father's business. Do you know what your heavenly Father's business is? Take some time to examine the Scriptures and share examples of what God's will is for us.*



Q: *Our identity is not found in what we do but in who we belong to. Are you clear on your identity? How can we encourage one another in our identity in Christ? How does our identity shape our daily lives?*

GOD'S CHILDREN OBEY HIM EVEN WHEN OTHERS DON'T UNDERSTAND


❏ LUKE 2:50-52

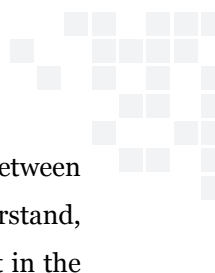
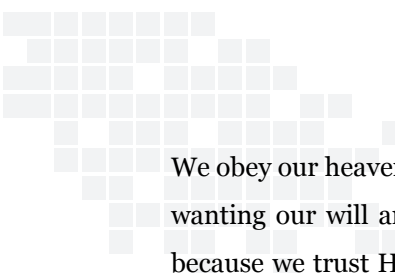
Q: *How did Mary and Joseph respond to Jesus' statement about where He'd been?*

Q: *What was Jesus' posture or behavior toward His earthly parents?*

The young Savior made it very clear in the temple that day that He would obey His Father. Mary and Joseph did not share His clarity. When Jesus declared His purpose and whose approval He sought, His parents “did not understand the saying He spoke to them” (v. 50). They might not have understood, but Jesus did. And so, he obeyed. Often, as we seek to obey the Lord, we will be met with confusion or opposition from those around us. Following Christ can lead us down countercultural paths. We may be accused of being unwise, unsafe, or irrational. How should we respond when our obedience is challenged by others, no matter how well-meaning? We respond like Jesus did. We obey our heavenly Father at all costs. We seek the approval of God, not of man (Galatians 1:10).

While the Real Jesus is the ultimate example of obedience when it doesn't seem to make sense, He has a lot of company. Consider Noah. He must have looked foolish building a giant boat without a cloud in the sky or even a known concept of a catastrophic flood. As he labored to build the ark, surely, he was ridiculed by the wicked men in his city. But Noah did all God commanded him (Genesis 6:22). Consider Rahab (Joshua 2 and 6), who betrayed her own people of Jericho by helping Joshua and the other spies. She obeyed when it didn't make sense. Many others obeyed because they cared more about pleasing God than man. Do we share their zeal to obey God when others don't understand our actions?





We obey our heavenly Father because we love Him (John 14:15). We obey Him even when there is tension between wanting our will and wanting His. We obey Him when we don't understand, or when others don't understand, because we trust Him. We know He's our good Father, therefore we can echo the psalmist's words, "Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding" (Proverbs 3:5). We obey God because we understand our identity and know our purpose.

Obedience leads to growth. Jesus obeyed not only His heavenly Father, but His earthly parents too (v. 51). "And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature and in favor with God and man" (v. 52). Jesus grew more than just physically. He grew intellectually, socially, and spiritually. As He obeyed, He grew wiser and was favored by God and man. Are we growing in the ways that matter? Are we seeking the approval of the One who matters? Does our business mirror our Father's? We must consider if we serve the Real Jesus or a god of our own making. Followers of the Real Jesus seek to please their Father above all else. Does that describe you?

You can't claim to follow Christ and not obey God's will. Jesus said, "Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but the one who does the will of My Father who is in heaven" (Matthew 7:21). In *The Great Divorce*, C. S. Lewis writes, "There are only two kinds of people in the end: those who say to God, 'Thy will be done,' and those to whom God says, in the end, 'Thy will be done.'" Which kind of person are you? May we be the kind of kingdom-minded people the Real Jesus was when He said, "Nevertheless, not My will, but Yours be done."

♀: *Have you experienced a time of obeying God when it made no sense? What happened because of your obedience? How were you encouraged to obey in that circumstance?*

♀: *Do you struggle with desiring the approval of man instead of the approval of God? How can your faith family encourage you to seek His approval?*

NEXT STEPS

+ *Connect the truths from God's Word to your daily life. Process how what you've learned this week will impact the way you live beyond today and into the future.*

Q: *Are you amazed by Jesus? If so, please share an example of being left amazed after an encounter with Him. If not, please consider whether you've ever truly encountered the Real Jesus.*

Q: *Jesus was about His Father's business. Are you? In what ways do your daily activities align with the mission of God? In what ways do they not?*

Q: *When you feel the tension between wanting to do what you want and wanting to do what God wants, how can your faith community help you crucify your own desires and submit to God? What encouragement can we find in Scripture for those who choose to obey?*

PRAY

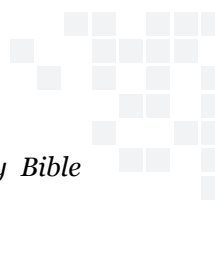

+ *Use this prayer point to connect your time in prayer to this week's focus.*

- Father, You are amazing. Thank You for opening my eyes to the wonder of You. Give me the grace to crucify my desires and long for Your desires. Help me obey You wholeheartedly. Thank You for Jesus and His example of humble obedience. Use my life as an example to others who struggle to obey in the face of confusion and opposition from others. Be glorified in my obedience, Lord.

COMMENTARY

LUKE 2:41 “Every year” reveals the piety of Joseph and Mary (see Deuteronomy 16:16). Passover was the opening-day feast of the seven-day Feast of Unleavened Bread (Leviticus 23:5–6).

LUKE 2:52 “Jesus increased in wisdom.” See Luke 2:40. His true humanity is seen in His learning as other human beings learn.



**All exegetical content and commentary resourcing for this lesson was provided by the ESV Study Bible Commentary Notes, the Christ-Centered Exposition (Luke), and Preaching the Word (Luke).*



