

## THE FATHER'S INTERESTS

When Jesus was 12 years old, talking with the teachers in the temple, "*all who heard Him were amazed at His understanding and His answers.*" He was "*filled with wisdom, and the favor of God was upon Him*" in large part because of Scripture. Proverbs 9:10 says "*knowledge of the Holy One is insight.*"

**1- The PURPOSE OF GOD** was with Jesus. In Luke 2:48-52, not only were rabbis amazed, but Luke says His parents were "*astonished*" when they saw Him. But in her best mother voice, Mary let Him know He had caused great distress for the three days they spent looking for Him after the Passover.

Isn't it interesting how it's always someone else's fault, not yours? Yet Joseph and Mary were the irresponsible ones, leaving without knowing where their son was. They too were sinners in need of a Savior. But Jesus never sinned (John 8:29,46, Hebrews 4:15, 7:26, 1Peter 2:22, 1John 3:5, 2Cor 5:21). Jesus always obeyed God, and never ever sinned. Not even as a boy who stayed behind.

**2- THE FATHER'S INTEREST** was Jesus' business. He is mysteriously human and divine. RK Hughes notes that as a 12-year old boy, Jesus was capable of unknowingly causing His parents distress. But as a sinless being, He was incapable of knowingly doing so. His 12-year old mind was absorbed with massive spiritual realization of His identity as the Christ, especially in the context of Passover. Jesus answers, "*why were you looking for Me? Did you not know that I must be in My Father's house?*"

These are the first recorded words of Jesus in all of Scripture. Even as a pre-teen, there is no snark here, just an honest answer, just as He spoke to the rabbis. Jesus knew and obeyed all the commands and perfectly kept them, even "*honor your father and your mother.*" He stayed where they left Him! (As an adult teacher, Jesus was not always understood either; see Luke 4:22, 9:45, 18:34, 24:5-7,25-26,45).

**3- HIS FATHER'S BUSINESS** was Jesus' interest. Remember, when God seems absent, He is right where you left Him, always at work for you. In verse 49 Jesus says "*I must be in the things of My Father*" translated "*My Father's interests.*" The adopted son of Joseph was resolute that God the Father's interests must now be Jesus the Son's interests. Not just the temple, but all that it represents, all the interests of God, His Father. These are not only Jesus' first recorded words, but the first time in Scripture that anyone refers to God as their Father. Appropriately this was spoken by the Lord Jesus Christ.

The Son of God come in the flesh is perfectly divine and human. RK Hughes notes that in the 39 books of the Old Testament, God is referred as Father only 14 times, impersonally, as father of the nation. Only Jesus addressed God as "*My Father*" and some 18 years later when He was reviled as the Christ, He had used this term some 60 times. RC Sproul observes, "how significant that the first recorded words of Jesus are ones that go to the heart of His own destiny, to His vocation and calling as the Messiah. He consciously identifies Himself as the Son of God, in His Father's house, being about His interests."

**4- GROWING UP LIKE JESUS?** Before Jesus could begin to fulfill His mission as the Christ, He had to grow up. Verse 51 says "*He went down with them and came to Nazareth and was submissive to them. His mother treasured up all these things in her heart*" (an echo of Luke 2:19 and 1:26-38). We can understand parental concern for Jesus' upbringing. We should follow their devout example for all children around us, from conception onward, taking advantage of opportunities to help with godly training.

RC Sproul observes, "Jesus continued to grow, not as we do sometimes, from sinfulness to obedience, but He moved from faith to faith, from grace to grace, from strength to strength, from obedience to higher levels of obedience, because as he increased in His understanding and knowledge of what God had called Him to do, He had a greater capacity for deeper levels of obedience." It's fueled by the Bible!

**5- WHAT'S YOUR INTEREST?** Verse 52 says, "*and Jesus increased in wisdom and in stature and in favor with God and man.*" How are you increasing in wisdom and in favor with God and others? Proverbs 1:7 says "*The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge, but fools despise wisdom and instruction.*" 2Peter 1:1-5 says "*God has given all things for life and godliness through the knowledge of Him who called us.*" Like Jesus, we will increase in wisdom and favor as we live out God's written-down Word.

JC Ryle asks, "are we about our Father's business? Are we walking in the steps of Jesus Christ? Such questions often prove very humbling. But never is a church in so healthy a condition as when its believing members aim high and strive in all things to be like Christ." Is your spiritual growth, to become like Christ, the first priority of your day? How is this reflected in your personal time invested in God's Word? So that your daily life and interactions show your submission to God's commands and His purpose for you?

**6- GROW IN WISDOM AND FAVOR.** RK Hughes observes, "in His perfect development, Jesus was graced in relationship with God and with men. An obedient submissive spirit is a key to our experiencing proper spiritual growth. Our union with Christ makes us want to obey our Father, and empowers us to submit ourselves to others, for the advancement of the gospel and His glory. Our vertical obedience brings the fullness of the Holy Spirit, and brings God's favor in our horizontal relationships."

Will you resolve to "*be about the Father's interests*" in every aspect of your life? That's a resolution worth making and pursuing, because it emulates Jesus and glorifies Him. It improves your life and those around you - as you trust and obey the Lord each day - all by His power within you! ☐