

## Biblical Foundations for Parenting • Luke 2:41-52

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Intro: Because of how far we've lived from our immediate family, we take multiple long road trips every year.

One of my pet peeves is when we are on a long road trip, that we stop after about an hour into the trip to take a bathroom break.

Figuratively speaking that is what we are doing today.

- We are taking a break from Galatians because elders asked me to preach on parenting as part of our SS topical series that begins next Sunday. We will get back on the road next week.

A couple of preliminary things:

1) I feel very inadequate for this task. I'm in the middle of parenting teens and tweens; learning is a major part of my own discipleship.

2) This message is not about me giving parenting advice.

If you want parent advice...go to one of the elders whose children are married. Go to a man or woman who has grandchildren who fear the Lord.

3) This message is on what the Bible touches on about parenting—I'm not afraid to go there.

- There is a challenge in this = If you read the New Testament, you find very little about parenting. The Bible is not written as a parenting manual.
- Even in our text, the purpose is not about parenting; it's a narrative about Jesus's life.

(I don't want to encourage you as Bible readers to search for some good principles and life hacks from just any random text.)

- But...the fact is, when the Son of God came to this earth, he came into *a family*.

--God gave the boy Jesus, parents—and we have a small snapshot of what family life looked like for them.

—We are going to look at some things shared by Joseph and Mary in their parenting.

The aspect of “shared” is important here—*Dad and Mom need to be on the same page*. There has to be unity—wearing the same jersey.

Parenting has potential to either unite strongly or divide a house.

—Shared commitments

—Shared desires

—Shared gospel focus

## SHARED COMMITMENTS

- The first place we see this is v39.

*Jesus’s parents had a shared commitment of diligently applying God’s Word to all of life.*

This is where everything needs to start.

Having a home with a biblical foundation, that God’s Word is going to have pride of place, ultimate authority.

- And it also comes out in v41.

This was no tour, sightseeing, family vacation time—it was a *spiritual commitment*.

It was not a one-off, but a yearly part of the rhythm of life.

- The Passover was 1 of 3 annual trips made to Jerusalem (Ex. 23:17)
- For Jesus and his family—from Nazareth to Jerusalem was an 80 mile walk.

- Now we might be quick to jump to what seems exciting about this story—a lost child; it makes the story real and human.

—We could be quick to either judge, “How could they?” “I lost our kids for three hours, not 3 days.”

—Or we could use this to justify laid back parenting: “See they are not helicopter parents”.

- We can cut Mary and Joseph some slack if we understand how the ancient traveling caravan looked.

—Women and young children would travel in groups together in the front.

—The men and bigger boys would follow.

Imagine our entire church walking together like this to Greenville!

- We can speculate about the how. But what about the “why”? Is there a lesson?

*Maybe part of the lesson is just to show us that Jesus was under the Father’s care the whole time.* In other words, we can trust the God’s sovereignty in parenting—that’s another shared commitment.

Parents, it’s foundational that we need to entrust our children to God’s sovereignty.

We all have our stories; the things that cause us “great distress”, like Joseph and Mary (v48).

I’ll share one of my moments.

My son was about 3 years old. We were at a Sunday school Christmas party at someone’s house. The house had a basement that we tried to put a dozen or so small kids in.

Sparing you some of the details, my son fell off the side of a flight of stairs going down to the basement—maybe a 6-7 foot drop—and hit his head smack on the cement floor.

I remember anxiously sitting at the Children’s Hospital waiting to know what the CT scan told us.

“In Great Distress”

Yet, knowing that even greater than a doctor’s care is my Father’s care.

Parents, you are able to entrust your kids to the Father's care.

- Another foundation:

- These annual trips would also be a shared experience of *togetherness* in the family.
- We don't see Jesus and his family living fragmented lives of doing their own thing.

We are losing, or maybe have lost, the shared experience of being able to just be together.

The little glowing rectangle devices we constantly have at our side or in front of our face—fragment us. They destroy togetherness.

How many moments are there, when a family is “together” ...but this is what it looks like:

- Dad is doing work or checking email (or ESPN)
- Mom is scrolling Facebook
- Kids are on Snapchat, or playing video games

*No one knows about what happened that day or how God is working or where counsel is needed.*

Or, a fragmented family may have *nothing* to do with devices.

- See, God has built togetherness and shared experience into the fabric of parenting and family discipleship.

For parents: Dt. 6:4-9. Read it. Ask how it looks and needs to work...and build a shared commitment of *being together*.

- Finally,

(V51) —Jesus was submissive.

*Parenting authority in the home is a spiritual commitment.*

Parents need to be together on what the rules and standards are.

It can't be that mom is the strict rule follower, and dad is the laid-back one.

Parents need to share what authority, submission, and consequences are.

Sum:

So there are multiple shared commitments:

—God's Word as ultimate authority

—Trust in God's sovereignty

—Intentional togetherness

—Commitment to authority and submission

### **SHARED DESIRES (40, 49-52)**

- The main narrative is flanked by two verses that described the boy Jesus. (v40 & 52)
- There is no doubt this is tied to Jesus's fulfillment of being the Messiah. (Is. 11:2)

#### **Isaiah 11:2 ESV**

And the Spirit of the LORD shall rest upon him,  
the Spirit of wisdom and understanding,  
the Spirit of counsel and might,  
the Spirit of knowledge and the fear of the LORD.

- There is something staggering when we reflect on the boy Jesus.
  - Ps 20:10: The Lord sits enthroned over the flood: Same person who took on human flesh and sat in the temple.
  - Same boy in a few decades would be cursed and crushed by crucifixion to atone for sin.
  - Same person sits enthroned over us today. Now.
  - Same person will wrap up this age at his return and rid the world of all sin, suffering, and death.

- Now there is a great, driving desire: (v49)

*Jesus had to be with his Father.*

Often when I hear parents describe parenting problems, it is typically obedience or behavior. I get it.

Yet we can fall into a trap of having the ultimate desire of having well-behaved kids.

*But a well behaved child, without a relationship with his or her heavenly father, will still spend eternity in hell.*

The chief desire: To be in a relationship with God; for our children to hunger and thirst to know God.

- › The main point of this passage: to show us what relationship was most important to Jesus. It's God the Father.

Children: Your relationship with your parents is very important; more important than your friends.

Yet the most important relationship for you to have is with God the Father.

- v49- Is also a highly significant: These are the *first words* we have in the Bible of Jesus speaking.

The first time we see Jesus talking, it's about the Father.

The last time we see Jesus talking in Luke, it's also about the Father.

Turn to the end of Luke (Ch 24).

Luke 24:49 (ESV)

And behold, I am sending the promise of my Father upon you....”

## SHARED GOSPEL-FOCUS (24:46-40)

- That last, final, yet most vital thing that needs shared: gospel-focus.
- If we miss this, it could leave the impression if you just plug in the formula, you get the results.

*That leads to a moralism, and self-righteousness that totally misses the main point: The Gospel.*

The gospel focus is what this is all about

(Lk. 24:46-49)

### **Luke 24:46–49 ESV**

and said to them, “Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer and on the third day rise from the dead, and that repentance for the forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem. You are witnesses of these things. And behold, I am sending the promise of my Father upon you. But stay in the city until you are clothed with power from on high.”

Just like marriage by design teaches us some vital things about the Gospel, so does parenting.

- › *The main foundation for parenting must be the gospel, not just for mom and dad, but the whole church.*

*I need the gospel focus:*

- Because I, as a parent, will sin countless times, and need forgiveness.
- Because my kids are sinners, and they will need to repent and seek forgiveness.
- Because change in me (and my children) needs to be supernatural, by the Spirit.
- Also, this gospel-focus helps families to see that the world is so much bigger than us.

Sum: Parenting needs shared commitments, shared desires, undergirded by a shared-gospel focus.

- As we close, look at Mary's response. It's the way of discipleship.

"Treasured up all these things in her heart."

"Treasured" is not Hallmark card material.

The word in the original means: to keep something in your mind for the long haul. Keep it so it sticks.

- › Mary is a model disciple: she treasured Jesus for who he is—that the key to all of life

If you feel like your failing, or have failed at being a parent, don't make parenting the main focus.

Make your main focus treasuring Christ in your heart.

Let parenting be the overflow.

The greatest gift a parent can give a child, is a life that treasures Christ.

Church family: Treasure Jesus for who he is.