



“Family Talk”
Luke 2:39-52

Idea: The goal for Christian parents is to raise healthy, wise, and godly children.

Intro: Children are great teachers! If you are a parent, you know this reality well. How much more do the precious preschool leaders at Red Lane know it? Children have a way of teaching us more than we probably want to know. Just think about what we learn from them at church. First, during prayer, with every adult’s eye closed, anything can happen in a room full of preschoolers. One or two might even go missing. Second, juice boxes and hand motions are not a good combination. Third, Goldfish can be sneezed out the nose, and vomit comes in all colors.

Children teach us a lot of things, and one of the biggest things they teach us is that parenting is one tough job. Think about the job description for parenting for a minute. I came across a “job posting” several years ago that expresses it perfectly:

“Long-term player needed for challenging, permanent work in a chaotic environment. Candidates must possess excellent communication and organizational skills and be willing to work evenings and weekends and frequent 24-hour shifts. Some overnight travel is required, including trips to primitive camping sites on rainy weekends and endless sports tournaments in faraway cities. Travel expenses are not reimbursed.

You must keep this job for the rest of your life and be willing to be hated, at least temporarily. You must be willing to bite your tongue repeatedly and possess the physical stamina of a pack mule. You must be willing to tackle stimulating technical challenges, as of gadget repair, sluggish toilets, and stuck zippers. You must handle assembling and product safety testing, as well as floor maintenance and janitorial work.

You must screen phone calls, maintain calendars, and coordinate production of multiple homework projects. You must have the ability to plan and organize social gatherings for clients of all ages and levels of maturity. You must be willing to be indispensable one minute and an embarrassment the next. You must assume final and complete accountability for the quality of the end product.

There is no possibility for advancement. Your job is to remain in the same position for years without complaining, so those in your charge can ultimately surpass you. No previous experience required, but on-the-job training is offered on a continually exhausting basis.

Although you will receive no financial compensation, you must pay those in your charge, offering frequent wages and bonuses. A balloon payment is due when they turn 18 and attend college. And when you die, you give them whatever income you have left.

I think that pretty much sums up parenting. It is not easy being a parent and raising children. It takes concentration and focus. Often, the way you learn is through failure. In that moment when things did not turn out like you planned, you feel like a failure. As we round out Luke 2 today, we find Joseph and Mary in a similar situation. They have worked hard to raise Jesus in a godly fashion. They have worked hard to provide a good home, teach Him God's Word, and instill their faith in his heart. In fact, they had just been to Jerusalem for an important holiday, but somehow on the return trip, they lost the Son of God. Let's read the story and listen to their family talk.

Read Luke 2:39-52.

Inquiry: Luke tells us that after Joseph and Mary finished the ceremonial requirements of the Law for the birth of Jesus, they returned to Nazareth. The only thing shared about His life over the next twelve years was that He *"grew and became strong, filled with wisdom, and the favor of God was upon Him"* (2:40). During those years, Jesus developed physically, mentally, socially, and spiritually (2:52). In His incarnation, the Son of God set aside the independent use of His own divine attributes and submitted Himself wholly to the Father (Phil 2:1-11). He did not perform any miracles as a boy. Instead, he worked with Joseph in the carpenter shop and surely ran the business after he died.

The one story shared from Jesus' youth involved the family's journey to Jerusalem for Passover. The Law required Jewish men to worship in Jerusalem three times a year (Deut 16:16). Many times, they would take their families with them for the Feast of Passover because this was the most important date on the Jewish calendar. Families would travel in caravans with the women and children leading the way and setting the pace. On this trip to Jerusalem, the family had enjoyed their time of worship and celebration in Jerusalem. Joseph, Mary, and the members of their village are traveling back to Nazareth. Jesus, however, decided to stay behind and spend time with the priests in the Temple. Apparently, Mary and the other mothers in the caravan were not "helicopter moms" because for an entire day no one noticed that Jesus was missing. Each parent probably assumed He was with the other or another relative.

At dinner that evening, they discovered Jesus was missing. Can you imagine that conversation between Joseph and Mary?

"Where is Jesus? I don't know; I thought He was with you. No, I have not seen Him since we left. I thought you had Him. Mary, you lost the Son of God? I did not lose Him, you did! Are you not the leader of our family?"

Whatever blunder you have made as a parent, be encouraged, you have not lost God's Son. Luke tells us that four days later, they find Jesus in the Temple, sitting with the priests. He has been discussing spiritual matters with them. We do not know if He had been there the whole time. It could be that Jesus got sidetracked by something as his family left Jerusalem, and He did not know what to do or where to go. After wandering the streets of Jerusalem, Jesus decided to go to the one place He was most familiar with in the city, the Temple.

Let's look at this family talk and see what we can learn from it. Even though it seems like Joseph and Mary may have committed the unpardonable sin when Jesus was left behind, we learn some good lessons on parenting from the way they raised Jesus. As we relate this story to our own families, I want you to understand that the goal for Christian parents is to raise healthy, wise, and godly children.

Christian parents position themselves to raise healthy, wise, and godly children by...

1. Vibrantly walking with God.

How did Jesus end up in the Temple on His own? It started with Joseph and Mary's vibrant walk with God. We have already seen their commitment to the Lord and His Word when they named the boy Jesus, had Him circumcised, and redeemed Him according to the Law (2:21-22). Now, we see their

worship continued as they traveled to Jerusalem every year for Passover (2:41). Joseph and Mary were not casual, nominal followers of God. No, they possessed a real, vibrant walk with God, and they modeled that in front of Jesus.

As Christian parents, we have one major and overriding responsibility. We are to model a vibrant walk with God in front of our children so that they will want to follow Him themselves. It begins with you coming into relationship with Jesus. It is not enough to merely be religious. Then, it continues as you read, know, and obey God's Word. You also need to spend time in prayer and participate in church. A vibrant walk with God grows as you daily spend time with Him in prayer and gather with the local church. You will never fall into this kind of walk with God. It requires intentionally, discipline, and sacrifice. It is costly, but the benefits are worth it.

How is your walk with God? Can you describe it as "vibrant?" If that is what you want but it is not what you have, begin where you are and figure out your next step. Do you need to start reading and obeying the Bible? Do you need to make prayer a daily priority? Maybe you need to recommit yourself to gathering with the church. Share the deficiencies of your spiritual life with the Lord and ask Him to help you develop a vibrant walk. As Christian parents, this is our first step in raising healthy, wise, and godly children.

2. Responsibly walking with their children.

Joseph and Mary were a good model for Jesus to look at and see what a vibrant walk with God looked like. They, however, did more than just walk with God. They walked with their Son. They watched over Him. Obviously, they were not flawless in their oversight because they lost Jesus, but we read that they did not stop looking for Him until they found Him in the Temple. Sometimes responsible parenting is better seen in how you respond to your failings than in your successes. Joseph and Mary responded to this danger with parental care, urgency, and love.

I believe we can delineate from this story that they watched over His life to protect Him from dangers. Of course, they watched over to protect Jesus from physical dangers. They baby-proofed their house. Joseph did not let Jesus play with the saws, hatchets, and hammers in His crib. That is a given, but perhaps, more importantly, these parents sought to protect Jesus emotionally, socially, and spiritually. They did not allow Him to be exposed to things that would hurt Him in those areas.

As Christian parents, we need to realize that one of the best gifts we can give our children is a godly home, a place that is safe, loving, and holy. We need to provide strong discipline and correction. We must set the parameters for them. We need to be aware of who our children's friends are and be willing to step in if a friend is not a good influence. We need to listen to them and know what is going on in their lives, which requires us to walk with them. I am not talking about trying to be your kids' best friend. You are not tasked with that calling. God has entrusted you with the responsibility of being their parents. Lead your kids.

This brings us to a final step.

3. Intentionally helping their children discover their purpose.

It should not surprise us to learn that when Joseph and Mary found Jesus, He was in the Temple (2:46). They found Him in the one place they had intentionally always taken Him. It was a place of worship and teaching. As Jesus sat there with the priests, discussing spiritual matters, they were amazed at His answers (2:27). However, when Mary found Jesus there in the Temple, she could not help but sound like a mom. "Jesus, what are you doing here? You were supposed to be with us?" Look at how Jesus responded in verse 49. *"Why were you looking for me? Did you not know that I must be in my Father's*

house? In that sentence, the twelve-year-old boy demonstrates profound understanding of His identity and purpose.

How did Jesus arrive at this understanding of His purpose? The answer is found in Joseph and Mary's commitment to intentionally help Jesus discover His purpose. Christian parents, it is our responsibility to give our children the proper coordinates for how to live and discover their purpose. We need to show them what they need to say *yes* to.

- Yes, to Jesus as Lord and Savior.
- Yes, to a vibrant walk with Jesus.
- Yes, to a living a holy life.
- Yes, to finding community within the church.
- Yes, to marriage and family.
- Yes, to an unreserved, unapologetic, and unashamed love for God.

You cannot and will not help them discover their purpose (Col 1:16) by allowing them to chase the passions of their own hearts. Parents we must not raise kids that are committed to anything and everything in the world except the only thing that matters...God. We must intentionally direct their hearts to Jesus by regularly sharing the gospel and calling on them to respond. We must read and study the Bible together, spend time praying together, serving together, and participating in the life of the church together.

Our children need to know they are made by God and for God. They need to know this is their purpose.

Conclusion: Children are great teachers. Many times, what we learn from them is how poorly we are doing as parents. Too often the bad traits we see in our kids is like looking in a mirror. They have learned them from us.

We want so much for our children. We want them to live fuller, richer, easier, and more satisfying lives than ours. We want them to be more successful and to go farther than we did. That is probably why we spend so much time and money running them around to dance competitions, softball tournaments, football camps, and anything else that catches their eye. Please hear me, those things are good; they are just not great. They are temporal rather than eternal. Christian parents, we need to teach our children something far more greater and lasting than how to succeed at football or dance. We need to teach them how to become an uncompromising disciple for the Lord Jesus Christ. We need to remember that our goal is to raise healthy, wise, and godly children.

It is a tall order and one that will require everything you have to offer. In fact, you will not be able to accomplish it yourself. However, if you are in relationship with Jesus and chasing after Him, then He will empower you to steer your children toward the Lord. Where are you at today? What does your next step need to be? Let's take some time to ask the Lord to show us.

Good news: God loves you. He created you and desires to know you.

Bad news: You are a sinner in rebellion against your Creator.

Best news: God has done everything necessary to justly deal with your sin and bring forgiveness and restoration to your life. Today, He calls you to turn from your sin and self and turn to Him as Savior and Lord. Have you received forgiveness in Christ? What would keep you from embracing the truth and believing on Jesus today?

What keeps you from turning to Jesus in faith and repentance? What keeps you from allowing Jesus to satisfy you? You were made by and for Him (Col 1:16). Therefore, you have a God-shaped hole in your life that only

He can fill. What keeps you from gossiping the gospel? It could be that you need to come face-to-face with Jesus.