

Luke 2

Jesus' dedication, childhood and family

Study Summary and Learning Objectives

This study encompasses the only writings about Jesus as a child and adolescent. We will be focusing on His unique and extraordinary growth and development, and His dedication and consecration to God.

For this study we would like for you and your small group to:

- Identify how different and set-apart Jesus is from other adolescents, even from birth
- Reflect on what things captivate your heart and what things should captivate you.

Steps to Prepare for Leaders

- Read through the questions for discussion and accountability at the end of the study and be prepared to share first, and with some degree of openness or vulnerability, so as to lead by example and encourage the rest of the group to feel comfortable following suit.

Leaders Note: Pray for your time in the Word together.

? Was there ever a time where you got lost or you lost someone? What was that like?

Leader's Note: Even though this study will focus on the last half of the passage, you are welcome to read the first 24 verses to begin study. The first 21 verses deal with the birth of Christ and the events surrounding His birth in Bethlehem. Verses 22 - 24 surround the events dealing with his dedication.

Read Out Loud: For the purpose of this study we will be focusing on the life of Jesus in the second half of Luke 2.

Section One: Jesus' Blessing

Read Out Loud: Luke now gives more insight to who Jesus is. It was obvious from the events surrounding His birth that He is extraordinary, but now Luke makes the connection to how He is the One prophesied about as Messiah and what that means for the redemption of all people.

Read Out Loud: Scripture Passage Luke 2:25-35

25 Now there was a man in Jerusalem called Simeon, who was righteous and devout. He was waiting for the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was on him. **26** It had been revealed to him

by the Holy Spirit that he would not die before he had seen the Lord's Messiah. **27** Moved by the Spirit, he went into the temple courts. When the parents brought in the child Jesus to do for him what the custom of the Law required, **28** Simeon took him in his arms and praised God, saying: **29** "Sovereign Lord, as you have promised, you may now dismiss your servant in peace. **30** For my eyes have seen your salvation, **31** which you have prepared in the sight of all nations: **32** a light for revelation to the Gentiles, and the glory of your people Israel." **33** The child's father and mother marveled at what was said about him. **34** Then Simeon blessed them and said to Mary, his mother: "This child is destined to cause the falling and rising of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be spoken against, **35** so that the thoughts of many hearts will be revealed. And a sword will pierce your own soul too."

? Simeon takes Jesus into his arms, the Messiah, and all that he has been waiting for, and verse 29 is the first thing he says to Jesus. How does Christ change our perspective on this world and on death?

Possible Answer: With Christ and the salvation He offers in view, this world pales in comparison and our desires shift. The Messiah opens a way to God, death is a reunion with Him and it is no longer something to fear or dread.

In verse 25 the "consolation of Israel" is mentioned. This reference in Isaiah explains that the consolation they were waiting for was Jesus. Jesus is the one who will come and bring ultimate comfort and compassion to all people, including Israel.

Isaiah 49:13

Shout for joy, you heavens; rejoice, you earth; burst into song, you mountains! For the Lord comforts his people and will have compassion on his afflicted ones.

? With the Jewish people living under the Law, what is significant about verse 34-35 and Simeon's declaration about hearts being revealed?

Possible Answer: Men will now be judged on the thoughts of their hearts concerning Christ, not on keeping the Law. Some will come to Jesus and others will be repelled. Christ will be a target for suffering, as will those around him (like Mary).

Section Two: Jesus' Growth

Read Out Loud: This final section will highlight the growth of Jesus. The story demonstrates that Jesus knows what He is on this earth for and He is willing to make earthly sacrifices for His Heavenly Father.

Read Out Loud: Scripture Passage Luke 2:41-52

41 Every year Jesus' parents went to Jerusalem for the Festival of the Passover. **42** When he was twelve years old, they went up to the festival, according to the custom. **43** After the festival was over, while his parents were returning home, the boy Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem, but they were unaware of it. **44** Thinking he was in their company, they traveled on for a day. Then they began looking for him among their relatives and friends. **45** When they did not find him, they went

back to Jerusalem to look for him. **46** After three days they found him in the temple courts, sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions. **47** Everyone who heard him was amazed at his understanding and his answers. **48** When his parents saw him, they were astonished. His mother said to him, "Son, why have you treated us like this? Your father and I have been anxiously searching for you." **49** "Why were you searching for me?" he asked. "Didn't you know I had to be in my Father's house?" **50** But they did not understand what he was saying to them. **51** Then he went down to Nazareth with them and was obedient to them. But his mother treasured all these things in her heart. **52** And Jesus grew in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man.

The Passover was the opening day feast of the seven-day feast of unleavened bread, a festival remembering God's provision in their deliverance from Egypt.

? Why did Jesus choose to stay behind in Jerusalem and why did He have to be in His "Father's house"? What does this say about Jesus' identity and development?

Possible Answers: Jesus is compelled to do the work of God. Jesus is making a bold statement that God is His Father, not simply His earthly father, Joseph. He is captivated by the things of God (he spoke with the teachers for 3 days).

? How did Mary and Joseph lose Jesus and how did they respond? Has there ever been a time in your life where it seemed like you "lost" Jesus, and how did you respond?

Possible Answers: They were distracted and He did not have their full attention; they "anxiously" searched for him. They turned around to find Him; they made a 180.

? What does it mean for Jesus to grow in favor with God and man? What does this mean for us?

Possible Answers: Jesus passed through every natural stage of childhood and adolescence, growing in relationship with God, growing in spiritual wisdom and growing in favor with others (because He was without sin). We are capable of doing both. It is possible for people around us to like and respect us even though we may have a completely different view of life and even how to enjoy life.

For Discussion and Accountability

? Even from adolescence, Jesus is deeply captivated by the things of God, which we see reflected by the three long days He spends sitting among the teachers in the temple. What is captivating your heart right now?

? As we grow older, how can we continue to grow in wisdom on a consistent basis?