

Are You About Your Father's Business?

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Parents, have you ever been guilty of leaving one of your children at the church building after services? I know of a few people that have done so, mainly because they had driven 2 vehicles and each parent thought the other had the child or children.

In Luke 2:41-52, we have the story of the 12 year old Jesus who was left behind in Jerusalem after the Passover feast. His parents assumed he was with the company, the group of relatives and friends that were traveling together. At the end of the day of traveling, they didn't find him, so they turned around and went back to Jerusalem. Imagine their fright and concern, not knowing what had become of him. What happened next is nothing beyond remarkable.

When Joseph and Mary found Jesus, was he playing with his Jerusalem friends? Did they find him distraught that he had been left by his parents? Did they find him on the road from Jerusalem to Nazareth trying to catch up with them? Not at all. What had he been doing for the past 3 days? He had spent his time *"in the temple, sitting in the midst of the teachers, both listening to them and asking them questions"* (vs. 46).

Mary is both amazed and a little perturbed with Jesus and the worry he had caused her and Joseph. But the 12 year old Jesus is amazed at his parents and asks them, *"Why is it that you sought Me? Did you not know that I must be about My Father's business?"* (vs. 49) And I, in turn, am amazed at Jesus' response to his parents. Here is a 12 year old boy who for 3 days hasn't been concerned about being left behind. Nor has he been concerned about the typical things that 12 year old boys are concerned with (playing, spending time with friends, etc.). Rather, he's been concerned with being about his Father's business. What business was that? Spiritual matters. The study of God's word. Learning what his responsibilities were as a servant of Yahweh.

One question we commonly ask is, "Did Jesus know that he was deity at this point?" I don't know the answer to that. Either he was just very spiritually mature for his age, or he truly knew just who he was. Either way, he knew that it was more important to be about his Father's business. How many 12 year olds today, even those who are being reared by godly parents, have the same spiritual maturity? I dare say, not many. That's not an indictment of our young people or their parents. But this story does provide some lessons for all of us, young people and parents alike.

First and foremost, we need to understand what is most important in this life, even at a young age. There are so many good things about our life, blessings and privileges that we have that we can enjoy. We have friends and family that we can spend time with, TV to watch, games to play, places to go visit, toys to play with (not limited to our young people), jobs we are blessed to have, schoolwork to finish. But in the grand scheme of things, none of that really matters.

Absolutely nothing should come before being about our Father's business. This doesn't mean that we can't spend our time with those fun aspects of life. The book of Ecclesiastes shows us that God has given us both work and fun for our good and for our enjoyment. But what Solomon found after years of experimenting with life was that the only thing that truly matters is serving God.

To the young, he said, *"Rejoice, O young man, in your youth, and let your heart cheer you in the days of your youth; walk in the ways of your heart, and in the sight of your eyes; but know that for all these God*

will bring you into judgment. Therefore remove sorrow from your heart, and put away evil from your flesh, for childhood and youth are vanity. Remember now your Creator in the days of your youth..." (Eccl. 11:9 - 12:1a).

To all he wrote, *"Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God and keep His commandments, for this is the whole duty of man. For God will bring every work into judgment, including every secret thing, whether it is good or whether it is evil"* (Eccl. 12:13-14).

Solomon is saying that it's OK to have fun and enjoy life, but you better be about your Father's business. You better be spending time in his word, spending time in prayer. You better be keeping his commandments. There is a judgment coming, and he will judge us on how we have lived our life.

Parents, are you raising your children to understand the priorities we need to place on all things spiritual? How do your children spend their time? Is it just in fun activities or in schoolwork? How much time is spent reading from and studying God's word? How much time is spent preparing for Bible classes? Do they see you place the Father's business first in your life or do they see other things get in the way of serving God, of attending the Bible classes or worship assemblies, of reading the Bible?

We live in a complicated and busy world. We are pulled in so many different directions by our obligations and by our interests. But all of those should be secondary to being about our Father's business. We may have to give up some activities that are very enjoyable to us. We may have to give up that TV show or that evening with family or friends. But we do so for our Father. Are you about your Father's business?