

Everyone wants to believe their child is unique. But how likely is it that your child is going to be the next Sam Bradford or Kevin Durant? How likely is it that your child will be the next Carrie Underwood or Governor Mary Fallin? Not to say they couldn't, but the percentages of that happening are small. Most likely they'll grow up to be much like you and your parents. Maybe not famous but unique in their own way, and much like many of the other girls and boys. And that's okay.

If you had walked the streets of Nazareth looking at the children running and playing nothing would have drawn your attention to him. He probably liked to watch his dad do carpentry. He never acted like the next great leader. He didn't showcase religious talents. The picture of young Jesus we get from the Scriptures isn't a lot. Nothing really to note in Jesus' life from birth to thirty years old. Just life like we'd expect. So was Jesus like all the other boys? If he wasn't doing anything special during those years then maybe he's really no big deal for us.

Luke tells just one story of Jesus' childhood. One story from the time Jesus was eight days old till he was thirty years old. In that one story we get to see from the gospel that Jesus was...

**Not like the other boys
Tending to his Father's business
Still obeying his parents**

Mary and Joseph traveled to Jerusalem because the laws of Moses made the Passover festival an obligation. Celebrating the release of the Israelites from Egypt, it was one of three great festivals celebrated in Jerusalem each year. Passover was God's great deliverance story and Jews from all over would come to remember. Mary and Joseph and their twelve year old son Jesus came too. Traveling pilgrims were required to stay only two days, so Mary and Joseph quickly turned around for home. Walking in a big caravan of family and friends they didn't concern themselves with exactly where Jesus was. He had stayed behind in Jerusalem. Not to play with other kids or get into trouble in the big city. He was in the temple and for three days Jesus sat at the feet of the teachers. He listened. He asked questions. He potentially answered some of their questions. This is where his parents found him after a frantic search.

What would your reaction be to finding your twelve year old son after three days? You might yell at him for getting lost. You might just hug him and hold him overjoyed you found him. Mary surprisingly was shocked and scolded. **"Son, why have you treated us like this? Your father and I have been anxiously searching for you."** Jesus, just twelve years old, revises the idea of father. **"Why were you searching for me? Didn't you know I had to be in my Father's house?"** Jesus wasn't lost. In fact he was right where he needed to be. God was father to the human race including Mary and Joseph. But Jesus realized it's a different relationship with him. God the Father is Jesus' father.

More important to Jesus was his heavenly Father's business. From the moment of his birth Jesus never forgot his purpose on this earth wasn't like other boys. He was there in his Father's house already knowing he had his Father's business to do later in life. No matter how old he was Jesus was still the Savior tending to his Father's business and one day soon he would do that full time. Mary needed to know that. Joseph needed to know that. We need to know that. Jesus never forgot it.

Mary and Joseph didn't understand. Jesus acted and looked so much like a regular kid. Could it be that Mary and Joseph forgot already the miraculous birth twelve years before? Could they have forgotten the angels, the shepherds, the wise men? We're only one week from celebrating the same, have we forgotten? We can think the same things about Jesus. He becomes just like all the other people of history, more like a great philosopher or teacher. He's a great man with a powerful message. Here he's just a twelve year old kid. And if that's all true then he doesn't mean anything and can't do anything for me and you.

Jesus was not like the other boys. He was tending to his Father's business. **"I had to be in my Father's house."** He was fully conscious even at twelve that he wasn't just the son of Mary. He was the very Son of God the heavenly Father sent for a special purpose, business God specifically put into his hands. **"Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you, he is Christ the Lord."** At twelve Jesus is assuring us that this will be his work. He hasn't forgotten even if we have. He knows his purpose even if we can't understand. Spending time in his Father's house gives evidence Jesus was intent on doing everything required of the business of his Father. **"I had to be..."** The necessity of Jesus being in his Father's house is based on Jesus' love for you and me. His love for sinners says he's not like other boys. He's tending to his Father's business, the clear purpose to save people as the Redeemer.

When mom asks you to clean your room and dad asks you for help in the garage, there might be confusion. Which first? Which parent to listen to? Kids need a united front from parents. Jesus faced a united front from his earthly parents. They were both very worried and were a little disappointed he let them worry. But Jesus had another parent he was trying to please. On the surface what his earthly parents wanted conflicted with what his heavenly Father wants. For Jesus there's no conflict. Jesus obeys his heavenly Father and shows he understands his role as Savior. Yet he still recognizes the relationship with his earthly parents. So for the next eighteen years, really his entire life, Jesus obeys them too.

Jesus seemed like the perfect kid. Instead of maliciously staying back just to make his parents mad; or running with the bad crowd in the big city, or getting into all sorts of trouble Jesus was in the temple. He wanted to study and learn. He wanted to ask questions. Jesus didn't sin by staying back and the surprise of Mary and Joseph may have been partly because they found him in the temple rather than somewhere else. But after spending time in his Father's house he goes back with his earthly parents.

Take note of the obedience Jesus offers. **"Then he went down to Nazareth with them and was obedient to them."** It's an active obedience to God's laws, specifically the 4th commandment to honor father and mother. Jesus attends the Passover with them. That's keeping God's laws and his parents' rules. He listened to them as he became a teenager. He respected their decisions. He honored them by his life. They were after all his God given representatives on earth. All the years we don't hear about are filled in by the simple statement he **"was obedient to them."** Jesus was obedient and actively keeping the laws you and I are asked to keep perfectly.

Obedience is hard for human beings to offer because it means lowering and subjecting ourselves to someone else. We owe obedience to the government, parents, and others in authority. But it's extremely difficult at times. We want to be master of ourselves. Whenever parents ask us to obey, our sinful nature tells us not to. Especially if parents are asking us to do things which seem to take away from fun and from experiencing life, we rebel in sin.

Where can we apply this story of the twelve year old Jesus to ourselves? Forgiveness for our sinful rebellion and disobedience of our parents comes from the striving, purity, and obedience of Jesus. He is the perfect example of obedience. He never sinned against his parents. Yet more than a perfect example, Jesus is the Savior. He was perfectly obedient for us, even here at twelve years old. The laws you and I should keep perfectly but didn't, he kept. The full penalty of death we should've paid for our constant disobedience, he bore. His life was wholly perfect in every aspect. What our life should be but isn't. Part of Jesus winning full and free forgiveness was his perfect obedience which he gave on the cross.

Mary and Joseph had a child that was truly unique. Little Jesus never sinned, never talked back, always listened, and always respected them. What made Jesus unique to them also makes him unique to us. He's not just an example for us to follow on how to love and honor and respect our parents. Jesus is first and foremost our Redeemer. He tended to his Father's business of saving the world by going to the cross. He obeyed his parents to achieve the perfect life to offer there on the cross. Jesus is our Savior. He's not like the other boys.