

The Wonder of Jesus

The Intensity of His Walk

Lesson #8 for May 24, 2008

Scriptures: Matthew 4:4; Luke 2:40,52; 6:12; John 4:34; John 17; 1 John 2:6

1. This lesson is about how Jesus kept His focus. How did He manage to “walk a straight path” through “this life” in spite of the most severe temptations Satan could put on Him under the most varied circumstances? “It takes more than bread to stay alive. It takes a steady stream of words from God’s mouth.” (Matthew 4:4, *Message*)
2. How do you respond to adversity, even persecution? Are you like Peter and “fold” when someone “points a finger” at you? How will we as a group and as individuals respond when our church becomes “illegal”? When it is against the law to worship on Sabbath, what will you do?
3. Psychiatrists and psychologists have analyzed the stresses that Jesus was put through and wonder why He did not become psychotic! What was it that functioned as His strong “rock of foundation”?
4. We wish we knew a lot more about the early years of Christ’s life. The Gospel writers recognized that the final week in Christ’s life was very, very important. So, each of the Gospel writers focused nearly half of his writings on what happened during that last week. While we are thankful for that, very little space was given to cover the previous 33 years.
5. We have a few details about His birth and the events surrounding it. We have one very brief account of His “bar mitzvah” at age 12 at the temple. We know about His baptism and a little about His temptations in the wilderness. We know almost nothing about the next year He spent in His ministry in Judea. Then we have more information about the year He spent preaching, teaching, and healing in Galilee. We have almost no information about the next six months which He spent giving special instruction to His disciples. But, when we come to the last six months of His life, we have more detail about His ministry in Samaria and Peraea, and then we have much detail about the final week.
6. We know that Jesus passed “the test”! The question is, what did He do for His homework? The only reliable records we have for the vast majority of the life of Jesus are found in two chapters in *Desire of Ages*: “As a Child” and “Days of Conflict.” It was during those 30 years that He really prepared Himself for what was coming.
7. Let us take a look at a few of the comments from *Desire of Ages* about those early years of Jesus.
8. **“Through the Holy Spirit she [Mary] received wisdom** to co-operate with the heavenly agencies in the development of this child, who could claim only God as His Father.” {DA 69.1}
9. The child Jesus did not receive instruction in the synagogue schools. His mother was His first human teacher. From her lips and from the scrolls of the prophets, He learned of heavenly things. The very words which He Himself had spoken to Moses for Israel He was now taught at His mother's knee. As He advanced from childhood to youth, He did not seek the schools of the rabbis. He needed not the education to be obtained from such sources; for **God was His instructor.** {DA 70.1}

10. "He who had made all things studied the lessons which His own hand had written in earth and sea and sky...Heavenly beings were His attendants, and the culture of holy thoughts and communings was His." {DA 70.2,3}
11. **Every child may gain knowledge as Jesus did.** As we try to become acquainted with our heavenly Father through His word, angels will draw near, our minds will be strengthened, our characters will be elevated and refined. **We shall become more like our Saviour.** {DA 70.4}
12. "Satan was unwearied in his efforts to overcome the Child of Nazareth. From His earliest years Jesus was guarded by heavenly angels, yet His life was one long struggle against the powers of darkness." {DA 71.2}
13. "He did not employ His divine power to lessen His burdens or to lighten His toil." {DA 72.3}
14. "He held communion with heaven in song." {DA 73.3}
15. **"He was doing God's service just as much when laboring at the carpenter's bench as when working miracles for the multitude."** {DA 74.4}
16. "He would hear every word that proceeds from the mouth of God; but He could not obey the inventions of men. Jesus seemed to know the Scriptures from beginning to end, and He presented them in their true import." {DA 85.1}
17. "'It is written' was His reason for every act that varied from the family customs." {DA 86.1}
18. His strict obedience to the law of God they [His brothers] condemned as stubbornness...They recognized that His education was of a higher type than their own. But they did not discern that He had access to the tree of life, a source of knowledge of which they were ignorant. {DA 86.2}
- Does "access to the tree of life" mean listening to God's Word—Scripture—contemplating it and understanding it as well as listening to God in thoughtful prayer? Is that what we will have at the tree of life?
19. "He hated but one thing in the world, and that was sin. He could not witness a wrong act without pain which it was impossible to disguise." {DA 88.1}
20. There were those who tried to cast contempt upon Him because of His birth, and even in His childhood He had to meet their scornful looks and evil whisperings...Had He even admitted that there could be an excuse for sin, Satan would have triumphed, and the world would have been lost. This is why the tempter worked to make His life as trying as possible, that He might be led to sin. {DA 88.2}
21. "Jesus did not contend for His rights." {DA 89.4}
22. "From the time when the parents of Jesus found Him in the temple, His course of action was a mystery to them." {DA 89.6}
23. "...to every sufferer He brought relief, His kind words having a soothing balm. None could say that He had worked a miracle; but virtue—the healing power of love—went out from Him to the sick and distressed." {DA 92.1}
24. It should be clear that Jesus was able to pass "the great test" at the end of His life because He

had carefully done His homework!

25. Clearly, Jesus had an intense and close walk with His Father and with the Holy Spirit. Angels that excel in strength were constantly surrounding Him. But it is possible for us to have a similar kind of relationship. That made it possible for Him to rebuff Satan whenever Satan approached. Jesus knew His Father so well and was so close to Him that even the slightest variation from the correct path was immediately obvious to Him.
26. One of the most intense times of trial and temptation was obviously during the forty days in the wilderness. Why did Jesus go to the wilderness on that occasion? “Then the Spirit led Jesus into the desert to be tempted by the Devil.” (Matthew 4:1, *GNB*). “Jesus...was led by the Spirit into the desert, where he was tempted by the Devil for forty days.” (Luke 4:1,2, *GNB*). Did God “lead” Him there to be tempted or did Jesus go there intentionally so He could be tempted? Or did He go to a quiet place of solitude for a final intense time in communion with His Father in preparation for the challenges ahead, but then Satan tried to take advantage of His circumstances?
27. Can you imagine living a perfect life? Did Jesus ever make a mistake? Even as a child? Is making a mistake a “sin”? Did He have to learn how to be a carpenter? Did He ever hit His thumb? Did He ever cut a board incorrectly? Do we need to recognize that sin is really rebellion—not just making a mistake. Was He ever rebellious against any true authority? Our Bible study guide seems to suggest that Jesus never made a single mistake. Do you agree with that?
28. Try to imagine what kind of relationship Jesus had with the other two members of the Godhead. Have you ever had to try to maintain a long distance relationship? Because Jesus was perfect even as a child and as a young man, was He able to see God? Were the angels and the Holy Spirit able to make Themselves apparent to Him without destroying Him? Enoch and Moses apparently had their faces shine because of their association with God. Did the child or youth Jesus ever come back from His morning prayers with His face shining?
29. Is it possible for us to develop something similar to the pattern which Jesus followed? Can we have the kind of relationship that He had? Clearly, we do not have that kind of relationship now! What stands between us and that kind of a relationship?
30. Try to think about the time when you were first falling in love. Did you have trouble finding time to spend with your sweetheart? How much time on a daily basis did Jesus spend talking to the angels and to His Father?
31. Luke emphasized the prayers of Jesus. See Luke 3:21; 5:16; 6:12; 9:18,28,29; 11:1; 22:41-46; 23:34,46 and compare Mark 1:35. What do those verses tell us about His relationship with the Father?
32. Did Jesus wait until He was in trouble before He consulted His Father? Did He spend His time asking for groceries and thanking His Father for the many blessings He had bestowed? What were the conversations between Jesus and His Father like?
33. Would you say that you need more discipline in your life in order to have more time for God? Our Bible study guide describes three general categories of disciplines: 1) inward disciplines, 2) outward disciplines, and 3) corporate disciplines. Among the “inward” disciplines are meditation, prayer, and fasting. Some “outward” disciplines might include solitude, simplicity, and service. “Corporate” disciplines might include worship, Sabbath School, confession of

faith, and witnessing.

34. Did it make Jesus' life easier or more difficult to know that at every instant Satan was "after Him"? Try to imagine living a life when you could never let down your guard even for a second! Through all of that, Jesus was still able to say, "I am the light of the world." (John 9:5)
35. What has it cost you to be a follower of Jesus? How has your life been changed because of your Christianity? Is your life ultimately better? More complicated? More difficult? When making the decision about whether to watch an entertaining TV program or to spend the time in spiritual reflection with Bible reading and prayer, how do you make that decision?
36. Benjamin Franklin once stated, "There is a difference between imitating a good man and counterfeiting him." What do you think He had in mind? Would it be possible to "counterfeit" Jesus? What would that imply?
37. Sometimes it seems like the Christian life becomes a bit humdrum. Does it ever seem boring? Do we need more persecution? How much are we doing to try to witness for Christ?
38. Look back at the lives of some of the early patriarchs. What do you suppose a day in the life of Enoch looked like? Job? Abraham? Remember that none of these men had access to even a single page of Scripture. Instead, they talked with God!
39. Why is the church growing so slowly in North America? Do our friends, neighbors, and fellow workers even recognize that we are true Christians? If so, why? If not, why not?
40. **It would be well for us to spend a thoughtful hour each day in contemplation of the life of Christ.** We should take it point by point, and let the imagination grasp each scene, especially the closing ones. As we thus dwell upon His great sacrifice for us, our confidence in Him will be more constant, our love will be quickened, and we shall be more deeply imbued with His spirit. If we would be saved at last, we must learn the lesson of penitence and humiliation at the foot of the cross. {DA 83.4}

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