

global children's forum

HOLISTIC DISCIPLESHIP

The word "discipleship" rolls off our tongue continually in conversations right through Christendom and yet I still feel we have often missed the depth and lifelong journey that TRUE discipleship is.

One of my favorite passages on this topic is [Luke 2:39 -52](#). In 13 short verses it talks of Jesus' life as a boy and while I wish we had so much more than was told about this part of His life, there is so much we can learn from really breaking down these verses. Jesus, always was the Son of God, the journey of discipleship began when He was born and continued the whole of His life. Every part of it was important. It was always seen in the context relationship with God, relationship with others, within community and never in isolation with his physical, social and emotional growth.

Vs 39 - *They had done everything required by law.*

Jesus' parents taught Jesus at a very early age that special occasions, rituals, the law and the festivals were all important. I call them anchor points, which I believe we all need to create a strong foundation on what we believe. This was not possible to be done in isolation, but rather with people of all ages and experiences.

Vs 40 – *He grew strong in the body, wise in spirit, and the Grace of God was on him.*

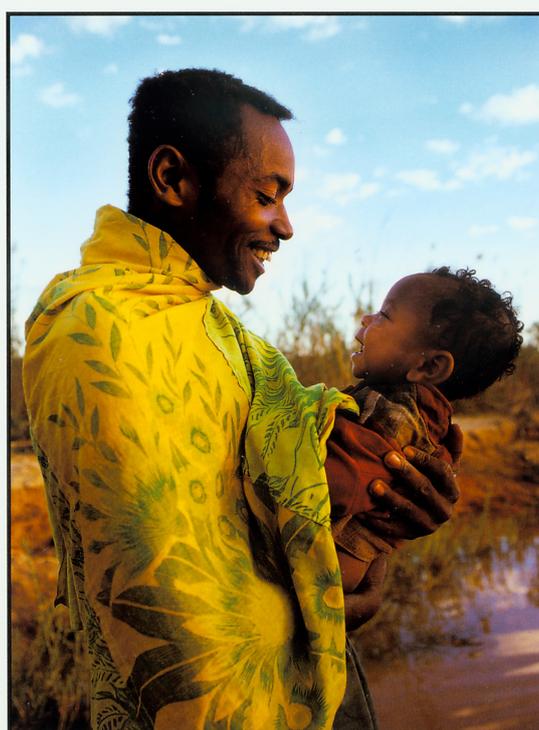
In a sentence you see the holistic nature of how Jesus grew up.

Vs 41-42 – *Every year they travelled to Jerusalem for the Passover, like they always did.*

This sentence is rich with holistic discipleship. This would have been a significant time "all" together. This is what I call a "classic road trip". It was strategic, it was a priority and it involved all ages, all together.

It was quality time. I remember the many road trips our family has had and the many road trips our community has had together. They have become significant anchor points, times of learning, growing together, spaces where God has moved and challenged. We have often been very strategic during our trips, during our times of travelling to an event. Sometimes our road trips have been especially for a conference or spiritual event or ministry, other times it has been pure holiday. God uses them all, to grow us and strengthen bonds and draw us closer to Him. Many have become "Peak experiences" we will never forget, sometimes even a "rite of passage", often a chance to share our gifts and passions with others. They are always an opportunity to give Him the glory and the honor He deserves. What are you doing to create traditions and peak experiences on the path of discipleship?

Vs 34-45 - *When they left for home, the parents didn't know where He was, thinking He was with other pilgrims, amongst relatives and neighbors, they travelled for a whole day and didn't know where Jesus was.*



Some would say "how irresponsible", I would say... (and that is not just because I have left my child at church once and gone home thinking she was with someone else) "how cool...is the extended family that parents feel safe enough to travel a whole day, knowing that Jesus was with someone they trusted." Their experience in the past was that Jesus was in the company of the village...they knew someone would be watching over him. Once again this is the power of a holistic experience of being a part of a Community, blessed by God and others.

Every year a large number of us go camping. We all watch over everyone's children, as we camp in close proximity and do life together.

All taking responsibility of who is in our view. There is freedom in this space, it lessens the burden and allows us all to enjoy the holiday. Western Society has lost this as we live in our isolated boxes and busy schedules, complicated by the many ways we cannot feel safe even in our own streets nowadays.

Vs 46 –47 - *They found Him in the temple, among the teachers, listening to them, asking questions, they were impressed with His wisdom.*

Jesus loved being in the temple, soaking in Gods word. Listening to his elders and in turn, they were stunned to hear what he had to say.

Laura is 15 years old, she comes from a non-Christian family, with very little encouragement at home to grow spiritually. She comes along to our intergenerational life group and sits herself down with the older men and woman of the community and soaks up what they say, as well as shares her little pieces of wisdom. She said to one of the older ladies last week at the end of the night "isn't this the best place in the world to be?" Needless to say this made the older ladies night as well.

Where are our children and why are they not sitting more and more at the feet of our wise ones, sharing and asking questions? Is it because we are not creating environments where this can happen! We are all so isolated in our own aged-programs, often listening to one person speak from the front and seldom able to ask questions. So many children don't even feel they can enter the sanctuary comfortably, let alone ask questions. Jesus didn't seem to have this experience of feeling uncomfortable, as a result He flourished in this environment.

Vs 48 –50 - *Jesus said to his mother "Didn't you know where I would be?" The parents didn't understand what He was saying,*

I like this statement, it reminds me of the faith of a child verses the adult mind that often works by rules and expectations. They were probably feeling a little irresponsible at the time. They needed to pull out the "parent card" and prove they really were the boss in this situation. As a parent, I get that. I would have felt the same. Jesus' innocent response was priceless, I can just hear His sweet voice, "didn't you know where I would be?". I can hear the apology in the tone, and yet I can hear the blind faith, that Jesus felt, as he just HAD to be at the feet of those talking about His father.

Ever been in that situation when your children see things so much clearer than you. I remember

When we are never together on the discipleship walk when do those opportunities present themselves?

Vs 51 - *Jesus went back home and lived obediently with them.*

Jesus was respectful and obedient of His parents. We don't see here disrespectful, cocky young man who clearly had insight that his parents didn't have. This is not the climate I see enough amongst our young people today unless there is relationship and collision together often enough to build a strong repore across the ages. There are older people in our community, that initially you might easily write off as "grumpy

old men". I have watched our young people gain respect, even when they are grumpy at times, and treat them with open hearts and kindness. As a result, it has gone both ways, as I have watched the grumpy men soften as the young people listen lovingly to their stories. We need to create more holistic environments where this can occur. It not only is what Christ talks about when he speaks of TRUE COMUNITY, but it also strengthens everyone's "discipleship" walk with God.

Vs 52 - *Jesus matured, grew up in both body and spirit, blessed by both God and people.*

Notice that it doesn't say "He learnt the Old Testament scrolls off by heart" or "He learnt the skills of being a great preacher" or "He followed the path of a good Jewish boy, and his credentials gave him credibility to become the Son of God." No, His discipleship was holistic and intergenerational, a balance of

learning and doing, with others and with God. What could that look like today as we seek to disciple the people we are called to walk with, in the lifelong journey of Discipleship?



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