

Who Gets Priority? Luke 2:41-52

ETS: Jesus pursued His priorities even when others did not understand

ESS: The pursuit of God must be our priority—even when others do not understand

OSS: I want people to pursue God—even when others do not understand

PQ: Is the pursuit of God your priority?

UW: Priorities

ME

Google searched the word “Priorities”

- [These are the top priorities for tech executives in 2022 - CNBC](#)
- [These are the top Board priorities for 2022, from digital to ESG](#)
- [Key Priorities for 2022 Planning - LinkedIn](#)
- [CIOs spell out top tech priorities for 2022](#)
- [Top six priorities for business leaders to focus on in 2022](#)
- [Polis, Democrats outline top priorities for 2022 legislative ...](#)

- Looking Ahead: Congressional Priorities for 2022 - Bloomberg ...

What makes something a priority?

- It is “first importance”

For some, the first priority is just getting out of **bed!**

- *Early morning **dog walk** is a priority for me or else!*

For some, the first priority is getting a cup of **coffee!**

IF we were to list our priorities, I’m sure they’d be...

- **Family**
- **Financial stability** and security
- **Health**
- **Safety**

How can you tell what is a priority in a person’s life?

- By what they **consider important**
 - What you consider important, you will give the **time** and **attention** you need to it.

What is the TEST of your priorities?

- **Distractions** and **Disruptions**
 - How you **navigate distractions** and disruptions shows your priorities.

For example, **financial stability** may be a priority, but suddenly you lose your job.

- How will you handle that disruption?
 - If **financial stability** is a priority...
 - You'll cut back to the bare minimum
 - You'll immediately look for another job

If Family is your priority, then...

- You'll consider them in your **planning**
- You'll **make time** for them
- You'll **focus** on being present for them

WE

We all have priorities!

A look at how you **spend your time** will reveal your priorities

A look at how you **spend your finances** will reveal your priorities

A look at how your **interactions** will reveal your priorities

A look at how you **spend your energy** will reveal your priorities

The question is: **Is God a priority?**

- Do your **actions** show that God is a priority?

- Does your **calendar** show that God is a priority?
- Does your **use of resources** prove that God is a priority?

GOD

Turn to **Luke 2**

Skipping ahead 12 years in the life of Jesus

- Gospels are **NOT biographies**; do not try to fill in every detail of Jesus' life
- Gospels are **historical-theological** documents
 - There is a **theological reason** for the **historical events** they record.
 - That **theological reason** is often **geared** for the **audience** the original author had in mind.
 - **Luke's first audience was Gentile Christians.**
 - He wanted to present an "**orderly, well-researched account**" of Jesus to the Gentiles who were hearing the Gospel about Jesus.

After Jesus' presentation in the temple as an infant, *there was (at least in Luke's mind) no reason to record any*

more events because they were not pertinent to his original Gentile audience. **Luke skips....**

- The **visit of the Magi**—which happened several months later
- The **flight** of Mary, Joseph and infant Jesus to **Egypt**
- The **return** of Mary, Joseph and young Jesus (maybe 2 yrs old?) to **Nazareth**

However, there was one event **prior** to the beginning of **Jesus' public ministry**, that Luke felt should be included.

- **WHY did Luke include this event?**
 - WHY did Luke include this event and Matthew did not?
 - (Mark and John don't included any of these events!)

WHO is "in charge" when the readers first read Luke's gospel? The **Romans**

What did the Romans demand? Total **allegiance!**

- The **tendency of government** is to **control**. There is nothing more intoxicating than power!
 - There is a reason we have **three branches** of government! To create gridlock.
 - Why did the founders want to created gridlock (i.e., "checks and balances")?
Because they understood the human heart

and the desire to control people and have power.

In Luke's day, the **government** wanted to be the **priority** in people's lives.

- It was demanded that Caesar be worshipped as a god.
 - Your first allegiance was to be to Caesar and Rome!

I believe **Matthew** didn't include this account of Jesus' life because the **Jews** grew up with the belief that **God** was to be their **priority**; whereas the average Gentile grew up with the belief that obedience to Caesar and his government was to be their priority.

Let's unpack this account and I'll explain....

Luke 2:41 "Every year his parents traveled to Jerusalem for the Passover Festival.

- WHY?
 - According to the **Torah**, all the **men age 20** and up were to celebrate 3 of the 7 festivals "**before the Lord.**"
 - Since the **Temple** was regarded as the place where the **Lord dwelt** among the people,

three times a year the men were to travel to Jerusalem to celebrate the....

- **Feast of Unleavened Bread**

- Since feast of Unleavened bread began the day after **Passover**. They'd go to Jerusalem to celebrate Passover.

- **Pentecost**

- **Tabernacles**

The women and children did not have to make this trip, but **Mary, Joseph, Jesus** and the rest of the family made the trip together!

*The worship of God and obedience to God's laws was the **PRIORITY** for Jesus' parents!*

- *Their priority of God modeled faithfulness*
- **Obedience to God was Mary and Joseph's Priority!**

*Unbeknownst to Mary and Joseph, Jesus had the **SAME PRIORITY** and it was about to be revealed!*

Today, we load up in a **heated** or **air-conditioned car** and drive on paved roads. You could make the trip from Nazareth to Jerusalem today in a few hours.

- 2,000 years ago, this was a **3-day** journey from Nazareth.

- PLUS, it was a dangerous trip b/c **bandits** would often high-jack people on the road (The parable of the **Good Samaritan**)
 - SO, people traveled in Caravans—like when **settlers** in America went out west.
 - Bandits are less likely to attack a caravan than they are a lone family.

Luke 2:42 When he was twelve years old, they went up according to the custom of the festival.

- Why 12 yr old?
 - Why does Luke include Jesus' age?
 - Why didn't Luke say "*On one occasion when they they went up according to the custom of the festival*"?

Have you ever heard of a **Bar Mitzvah**?

- **Bar Mitzvah** was instituted until about **500 years later**, but the idea was the same.
- It is a "Coming of age" ceremony
 - Girls: Bat Mitzvah
 - Boys: Bar Mitzvah
- The boy, who has prepared for the ceremony by spending a lot of time studying it, reads from the Torah.

- After these ceremonies Jewish boys or girls become responsible for living according to Jewish Law.
 - At this point, each young person has to accept the law and its obligations, participate fully in services at the synagogue and set a good example for others.
 - After the ceremony, a Jewish boy can be counted as part of a minyan, and in Reform synagogues girls who are Bat Mitzvah can also be counted.

At the age of **12 years old**, the **education** of the Jewish boys became more **intense** because at **age 13** a Jewish boy was considered as entering into **adulthood**.

- **At age 13** a Jewish boy was held **responsible** for his actions—He could **no longer plead immaturity**. He was no longer treated as a child.

Jesus is in the year of **intensive training** because He is about to cross over into **“adulthood.”**

Luke 2:43-44 After those days were over (i.e., the celebration of Passover and Feast of Unleavened Bread), as they were returning, the boy Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem, but his parents did not know it. 44 Assuming he was in the traveling party, they went a day’s journey.

Then they began looking for him among their relatives and friends.

Remember, they had made this trip for years!

- This was routine—at least since they had returned to Nazareth from Egypt.
- Every year they'd attend the festival and then regather the caravan and leave
 - Jesus knew the drill!

But this year proved to be different!

After the first day, they realized they didn't see Jesus

- Based on past experiences they assumed Jesus was with them
- They assumed Jesus was likely playing with the other kids and was hanging out with them.

To be safe, they decide to look for Jesus, but can't find Him!

- THEY LOST JESUS!

Luke 2:45-46 When they did not find him, they returned to Jerusalem to search for him. 46 After three days, they found him in the temple sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions.

Why did Jesus “**stay behind in Jerusalem**” at this point in His life?

- Later, in **John 5:19** Jesus said “Truly I tell you, the Son is not able to do anything on his own, but only what he sees the Father doing. For whatever the Father does, the Son likewise does these things.”
- **John 12:50** Jesus said “I speak just as the Father has told me.”

Jesus only did and spoke what God the Father directed Him to do.

Why did Jesus “**stay behind in Jerusalem**” at this point in His life?

- Apparently, **God the Father told** Him to do so!
- Just like His parents, **Obedience to God was Jesus’ Priority!**

Apparently, God the Father told His Son to go to the Temple.

- This was the opportunity to show that 12 year Jesus was ready to move to adulthood—in fact, He was **MORE THAN READY!**

Look at the scene: **Luke 2:46-47** “they found him in the temple sitting among the teachers, listening to them and

asking them questions. 47 And all those who heard him were astounded at his understanding and his answers.

- Apparently, the “teachers” asked questions back to Jesus and “were astounded at his understanding and his answers.”

Gospel writers have favorite words.

- For example, “Immediately” is Mark’s favorite word
- “Astounded” is one of Luke’s favorite words

Do you know what it feels like to be “astounded”?

- If you saw Jurassic Park, you may remember the first moment when the scientists saw real-life dinosaurs
 - (Show Clip)
- That’s what it is like to be “astounded”

Can you imagine the “teachers” of the temple asking the 12 yr old Jesus questions and then Jesus giving them an answer?

- I’m sure the “Teachers” looked at each other when Jesus would answer with amazement!
- I’m sure Jesus’ answers had more depth than anything they ever heard!

Luke uses the word “astounded” in his gospel when people encountered the supernatural.

- In **Luke 5** there is a showdown with Jesus and the “**teachers of the Law**” over Jesus healing a man on the Sabbath.
 - Jesus fires back with a question which silences the “teachers” and then heals the paralytic man who then gets up, takes his mat and leaves.
Luke 5:26 “Then everyone was astounded, and they were giving glory to God. And they were filled with awe and said, “We have seen incredible things today.”
 - In **Luke 8**, Jesus raises Jarius’ daughter from the dead and Luke wrote: “**Her parents were astounded**”
 - In **Luke 24**, when the women reported to the two who were traveling to Emmaus that Jesus, they were “**astounded**” at the report that Jesus rose from the dead.

To be “**astounded**” is to be “**struck dumb with amazement**”

This WOULD NOT have happened if God were NOT Jesus’
PRIORITY!

Of course, the “teachers” were not the only ones who were blown away by 12-year-old Jesus!

Luke 2:48 When his parents saw him, they were astonished...

- What were they “astonished” about?
 - Astonished, amazed at 12-year-old Jesus...
 - “holding court” with temple teachers?
 - Being in the temple rather than out playing in the streets?
 - That Jesus had stayed behind in the temple; instead of being with them like always?

I think they were “astonished” to see Jesus discussing God with the “teachers” of the temple!

I think they were “astonished” to see the “teachers” reaction to Jesus!

I have a feeling that when they saw Jesus, Joseph wanted to run up and “Let Jesus have it” regarding why HE wasn’t with them, but maybe Mary grabbed him by the arm and said “Wait, let’s see what is happening”

- I have a feeling that they stood there in the crowd and watched as Jesus deftly answered questions and then came back with questions that set the “teachers” thinking and discussing amongst themselves.

Finally, Joseph says “We’ve got to go! The caravan is waiting on us.” So, they go up to Jesus “**and his mother said to him, “Son, why have you treated us like this? Your father and I have been anxiously searching for you.”**”

- Clearly, Jesus’ parents are upset!
 - You’d be upset too if you LOST the Son of God!

Jesus’ response is almost a “**Why are you asking the question?**”

- “**You should have known where I’d be and what I’d be doing.**”
- “**You should know that God is my priority!**”

Maybe part of the problem was that they still not grasp the uniqueness of their son!

- Perhaps they thought He’d be playing with the other children; they did not expect Jesus to be “**in the temple**” hanging out with the “**teachers.**”

Luke 2:49 “**Why were you searching for me?**” he asked them. “**Didn’t you know that it was necessary for me to be in my Father’s house?**”

- Jesus assumed that they should have known the **FIRST** place to go would be the Temple!
 - The Temple was “**Ground Zero**”!

Mary referred to Joseph as Jesus' father, but Jesus' response shows that Jesus knew WHO was his "real" Father-God!

- Joseph was Jesus' LEGAL father, but God the Father was the "Father" of Jesus!

It had been maybe a decade since any visions by an angel or any supernatural events and Jesus needed to remind His parents that He was not a typical child—soon to be recognized as an adult in Jewish society!

- Jesus needed to remind His parents that doing the **works of God the Father** was His **Priority**.
 - God was His priority over family.
 - If God called Him to stay in the temple, He was going to stay in the temple!
 - It was "**necessary**" because God was Jesus' first priority

It is also clear that Jesus was very **aware** of His **divinity**—even at **age 12!**

God Must Be Priority!

Here is the problem with God as our Priority....People will not always understand!

Luke 2:50 “But they did not understand what he said to them.”

- Even the reference to “being about my Father’s business” did not make sense to Mary!
 - Mary and Joseph still could not understand Jesus’ and the ministry He would have.

Making God priority means....

- Living according to God’s moral laws
 - Abstaining from all forms of immorality and impurity
 - Treating people with respect and honor
 - Loving your neighbor as people created in God’s image and NOT as objects to be used for your pleasure.
- Worshipping God with your time, ability and resources
 - Setting aside time to pray
 - Setting aside time to spend in His Word
 - Setting aside time to worship Him with others
 - Giving as you are able to support His work
 - Using your talents and abilities to serve Him as needed

Making God priority means....

- Being mindful of God as you go throughout your day
- Trusting God to provide

- Going to Him in times of decisions
- Living a life that brings praise to Him

George Mueller, 'For more than half a century I have never known one day when I had not more business than I could get through. For 4 years I have had annually about 30,000 letters, and most of these have passed through my own hands.

"Then, as pastor of a church with 1,200 believers, great has been my care. Besides, I have had charge of five immense orphanages; also, at my publishing depot, the printing and circulating of millions of tracts, books, and Bibles; but I have always made it a rule never to begin work until I have had a good season with God and His Word. The blessing I have received has been wonderful.?"

People Will Not Always Understand When You Make God Priority

Many people will not understand you IF you make God a priority!

They won't understand WHY you take the time to....

- Pray before you eat and throughout the day
- Gather with other believers

- Give your time, talents and resources to His ministries
- Spend time in His Word
- Act differently and choose to ignore fleshly impulses

What do you do when people don't understand WHY you make God a priority?

- Do what Jesus did-Be an example and simply live doing what is right!

Luke 2:51-52 Then he went down with them and came to Nazareth and was obedient to them. His mother kept all these things in her heart. 52 And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and with people.”

- Even though Mary did not understand Jesus' answer or His need to stay behind in the temple, she never forgot this moment.
 - Years later she would understand, but NOT FULLY until after the resurrection.

For His part, Jesus went home without an argument

- He was “obedient to them”—He had done what his Heavenly Father had called Him to do and without any more instruction from God the Father, He obeyed His earthly parents.

Jesus is FULLY God a FULLY Man

- As a human, He grew up physically both in height and strength
- As a human, He grew “in favor with God and with people

God Must Be Priority!

Observing the rituals given by God was a priority for Mary and Joseph

- They were doing the RIGHT thing
- Their hearts were in the right place
 - BUT they didn't have the **personal connection** to God the Father Jesus had!

Jesus showed that **making a God a priority** was NOT just about **observing ordinances** but about a **relationship with God**.

- The relationship with God His Father was more important to Jesus—even as a 12-year-old—than anything else.

Jesus came to show us WHAT a RELATIONSHIP to God looks like

Jesus came to MAKE a PERSONAL RELATIONSHIP with God possible!

- To make that Personal Relationship with God possible, it would be “Necessary” for Jesus to go to the cross and give the ultimate sacrifice!

YOU

Is God your priority?

- Do you know Him?
- Do you have a relationship with Him?
- Do you desire to be with His people?
- Do you keep His commandments?
- Are you willing to follow Him even when others do not understand?

Is God your priority?