

LESSON 6 Learning from Jesus

A mother and her small son are talking.

“Mother, where did you live when Jesus was a boy?”

“Why, I wasn’t alive then, son. Jesus lived a long time ago—more than 2,000 years ago.”

“Oh, I thought He lived when you were little. You always seem to be talking about Him.”

It is a wonderful thing to be known as someone who is always talking about Jesus. It is clear that the things we talk about the most are the things that are closest to our hearts.

In this lesson you will study about the childhood, ministry, and influence that Jesus had when He lived on earth, and the influence He is still having. He is the greatest teacher who ever lived. Following Him closely will help us to live more like Him.

The Plan

- A. The Childhood of Jesus
- B. Jesus' Relationship to His Community
- C. The Influence of Jesus

The Goals

1. Describe ways in which Jesus was involved in His community during childhood.
2. Indicate Jesus' involvement in His community as an adult.
3. Discuss Jesus' influence on the world.

A. THE CHILDHOOD OF JESUS

Goal 1. Describe ways in which Jesus was involved in His community during childhood.

Even as a child Jesus was involved in the activities of His community. His parents were Jews who followed Jewish customs. Luke 2:21 tells that they took Jesus to be circumcised and named when He was a week old. By doing this, they conformed to the teaching of the Old Testament. Circumcision was an important tradition in the Jewish community. It was a physical sign of God's covenant (agreement) with the nation of Israel (Genesis 17:9–14).

The time of Jesus' dedication was a happy time for His parents, Mary and Joseph. They made the trip to Jerusalem to present Him to the Lord. (Read about the history of this ceremony in Exodus 13:1–2 and Leviticus 12:3, 8.) While in Jerusalem, Jesus' parents sacrificed two doves or pigeons according to the Law of Moses (Luke 2:22–24). Again, we see that His parents did what was expected of them as devout Jews. They identified with their community.

At the time of Jesus' dedication, an old man named Simeon was waiting for the Lord to send the Messiah. Luke 2:27–28 say of Simeon,

Moved by the Spirit, he went into the temple courts. When the parents brought in the child Jesus to do for him what the custom of the Law required, Simeon took him in his arms and praised God.

Simeon blessed Jesus, saying that Jesus was the Messiah and light to the Gentiles. He also prophesied about Jesus' ministry.

Next a woman named Anna came into the temple, and she also praised the Lord for sending this child to show the way to freedom. These expressions of joy at seeing Jesus confirm that God's will was done. God was pleased by this act of following the culture and religious tradition.

Joseph and Mary were ordinary people chosen by God to be the earthly parents of Jesus. We are told very little about Jesus' childhood. It appears that He was raised in a normal way. The Bible does not tell us anything more about Jesus until He was 12 years old. At that time, as they did each year, Jesus' family took a long journey to Jerusalem for the Passover Feast, which was a sacred Jewish holy day.

(Read the story of Jesus in the temple in Luke 2:41–51.) When the feast ended, Jesus' family started home, along with others of their community. After a day of traveling, they realized that Jesus was not with them. Mary and Joseph were very tired and worried as they searched for Jesus. When they found Him, they still did not understand why He had stayed behind. But He asked, “‘Didn't you know I had to be in my Father's house?’” (Luke 2:49). Even at this early age, Jesus was aware of His mission to His community and the world.

Jesus returned to Nazareth with His parents and was obedient to them (Luke 2:51). Jesus submitted to the authority of His parents—the Creator submitting to part of His creation. Truly this is amazing! Luke 2:52 is the key verse to understanding Jesus in His community: “Jesus grew in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men.” Jesus was in touch with God and with His community.

Application

- 1 Jesus was taken to the temple because He was
 - a) different from other Jewish children.
 - b) presented to God just like the other Jewish children.
 - 2 Joseph and Mary took Jesus to Jerusalem every year because
 - a) it was the custom to attend the feast there.
 - b) they liked to visit friends there.
 - 3 The Bible indicates that as He grew, Jesus was
 - a) well accepted by His community.
 - b) not a part of the community.
 - 4 We know that Jesus
 - a) never let people tell Him what to do.
 - b) obeyed those who were over Him.
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B. JESUS' RELATIONSHIP TO HIS COMMUNITY

Ministering to Needs

Goal 2. Indicate Jesus' involvement in His community as an adult.

Jesus' ministry began when He was about 30 years old. During His three years of ministry, He was constantly involved with other people in His community. Jesus had closest fellowship with the 12 disciples and spent much time training them. The disciples and Jesus lived in very close communion during the three years of His ministry, and they shared a common purse or expense fund (John 12:6). They experienced true community living.

Jesus also had other followers who were in communion with Him. Mary, Martha, and Lazarus were His close friends. On one occasion Jesus sent out about 70 men into the towns to prepare people for His visit (Luke 10:1–12). Mentioned in the Scriptures are many others who loved Him and had community with Him.

Jesus began His public ministry in His home province, Galilee. He ministered to the needs of people. The blind, lame, deaf, demon possessed, and those with other sicknesses were completely cured. Matthew writes of Jesus, “When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd” (Matthew 9:36).

Many times Jesus told lepers who were healed to go and show themselves to the priests and offer the proper sacrifices according to the Law. He affirmed, “Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them” (Matthew 5:17).

Jesus associated with people in all levels of society. He attended a wedding in Cana of Galilee along with His mother and disciples. There He showed interest in the problems of others and performed a miracle to help them (John 2:1–11). Matthew 9:9–11 records that Jesus ate with tax collectors and sinners. At other times He sat with the Pharisees (Luke 7:36; 11:37). The Gospel of John tells us about a Samaritan woman with whom Jesus talked (John 4:1–30).

Jesus himself expressed His ministry with these words from the book of Isaiah. (See Isaiah 61:1–2.)

The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to release the oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor. (Luke 4:18–19)

On two occasions Jesus fed the multitudes. (See Matthew 14 and 15.) He was concerned with the earthly condition of humanity. In Matthew 25:31–40, Jesus talked about the final judgment. He said that as often as you have helped the poor and visited the sick and imprisoned, you did it for Him. If you have failed to do these, you have failed to minister unto Him.

Thus, Jesus came to fulfill the Law. He came to bring a new day to His people, and to all people who would follow Him. His purpose was not to enforce a list of laws, but to write the Spirit of the Law on the hearts and minds of people. His death and resurrection completed this. Has Jesus' ministry affected your life? Are you in fellowship with Him? Ask Him to take your life into His control. He will help you to minister in your community just as He did in His.

Application

- 5** Circle the letter in front of the TRUE statements.
- a)** Jesus ministered only in His hometown of Nazareth.
 - b)** Jesus ministered to people from all levels of society.
 - c)** Jesus observed the laws of His community.
 - d)** Jesus did not get involved with ungodly people.
 - e)** When we help those in need, it is the same as doing it for Christ.
- 6** Name three ways in which Jesus showed the spirit of community.

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Submitting to Authority

Although Jesus was the Son of God, He accepted the authority or rule of those in power in His community. For example, we read in Matthew 17:24–27 that He submitted to payment of the temple tax. Not wanting to offend the people, Jesus told Peter to go fishing and he would find enough money in the mouth of a fish to pay the tax.

On another occasion, Jesus did not accept a custom that was contrary to the will of God. Money changers were doing business in the temple court known as the Court of the Gentiles

(Matthew 21:12). This was the only place a seeking Gentile could worship God. How could people pray when the buyers and sellers were making noise? Also, the money changers were taking advantage of the poor by charging too much interest to change foreign money for money used in the temple. They were also keeping sincere seekers from finding God. They had violated Isaiah 56:7: “My house will be called a house of prayer for all nations.” In this instance Jesus was more concerned that His Father’s will be accomplished. He acted against human customs because He was obeying the highest authority.

Jesus is the perfect example of one who showed the spirit of community. Yet He did not allow people’s customs to overrule God’s will.

Application

- 7 Circle the letter in front of each TRUE statement.
 - a) Jesus did not feel obliged to pay the temple tax, but He did so because He did not want to offend people.
 - b) Jesus ate with the tax collectors because He loved them and wanted to forgive their sin.
 - c) Jesus drove the money changers out of the temple because they were not paying taxes.
 - d) Jesus did not usually obey authorities in His community because He was the Son of God.
- 8 Give one instance when Jesus submitted to those in authority.

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C. THE INFLUENCE OF JESUS

Goal 3. Discuss Jesus’ influence on the world.

True Christianity brings freedom. Jesus taught, “If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free” (John

8:31–32). Later, He said, “So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed” (John 8:36). Christianity frees people from superstitions and bondage to sin. It puts within them the desire and ability to live above sin.

The ministry of Jesus still has an influence on our world. Jesus raised women to new heights of respect. He highly honored His mother. Even on the Cross, He was concerned about Mary’s welfare and left her in the care of John. (See John 19:26–27.)

Luke 7:36–39 tells of a woman who anointed the feet of Jesus. He did not turn her away even though she had been sinful. Instead, Jesus forgave her sin and changed her life. He honored her for her ministry to Him. Another time, in Samaria, He ministered to a woman who was an outcast, and her life was changed. Today, in many places where the gospel of Jesus Christ is preached, women are given great love, respect, and honor.

The life and ministry of Jesus has greatly influenced the whole world. Think of the way the western world measures time. Years are numbered in B.C. (before Christ) and A.D. (after Christ).

God started the seven-day week. In His creation of the world, He rested on the seventh day and commanded that it be kept holy and used as a day of rest. The day of rest changed after Jesus came. He arose from the dead on the first day of the week. Now many people in the world accept Sunday as their day of rest and worship.

Many of the highest standards of living in the world are enjoyed where the gospel can be preached freely. Our modern system of law has its roots in the Scriptures. The desire that moves many people to work hard is based on biblical teaching.

One of the most important concerns of Bible believing Christians has been to teach people to read so that they could read the Bible for themselves. Christian missionaries have put many languages into writing for the first time. Missionaries in

many countries of the world have started schools, so that boys and girls could learn to read. These schools have blessed many communities throughout the world.

The influence of Christianity has been great upon modern people and their world. Religion enslaves people; true Christianity frees them. When Christ died, His teaching did not stop. You are an extension of His ministry—you represent Christ to the world. When you show true Christian community, the world is better. In the next lesson we will discuss some ways you can extend Christ’s ministry in your community.

Application

9 Name two ways the world would be different if Jesus had not come.

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10 List two influences of Christianity on women.

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11 State one way in which Christianity has changed you as an individual.

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Check Your Answers

- 6** He shared money with the disciples; He ate with sinners; He healed the sick; He fed the multitudes; He attended happy occasions such as weddings.
- 1 b)** presented to God just like the other Jewish children.
- 7** Statements **a)** and **b)** are true.
- 2 a)** it was the custom to attend the feast there.
- 8** When He paid the temple tax
- 3 a)** well accepted by His community.
- 9** Your answer. Any of the many ways mentioned in this lesson, and other ways as well. Can you see how your own world would be different if He had not come?
- 4 b)** obeyed those who were over Him.
- 10** Possible answers: Women are given greater love, honor, and respect where the gospel is preached. They are set free from sin and superstition. They may have greater opportunities for education.
- 5** Statements **b)**, **c)**, and **e)** are true.
- 11** Your answer