

## Being Christ-like - The Priority of Devotion

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By Courtney Whiting

*Luke 2:49 - And he (Jesus) said to them (Mary and Joseph), "Why were you looking for me? Did you not know that I must be in my Father's house?"*

Many people know the story where young Jesus was in the temple in Jerusalem listening to the teachers and asking them questions. Mary and Joseph thought that Jesus had travelled back with them, but while they were on their way home, they realized he was missing. They searched for three days for him. Finally, they found him with the religious leaders in the temple. I am sure a mixture of panic, relief, and anger filled the mother and father when they saw Jesus calmly sitting down chatting alongside his elders. The word Luke used to describe their emotional state is astonished, or better yet, dumbfounded (BDAG). Can you imagine losing the Son of God?

They approach him and, in essence, ask how Jesus could put them through so much turmoil and distress. Jesus' answers them with a simple question that demands the following answer: they should have known that his devotion belonged to his Heavenly Father and he would act accordingly. There are several reasons why we know this as the interpretation. First, the questions use the Greek negative that demands a positive answer in questions. Second, when Jesus asks them the second question, he uses the Greek verb that means "it is necessary" or "it must happen that." This gives emphasis to the fact that this is the logical progression of what should happen because of the closeness of his relationship with God. Therefore, his response to be where he was is completely appropriate.

There are many times throughout the Gospels in which Jesus' closeness to the Father is made explicit. (Luke 10:22; John 1:1, 18; 3:35; 5:19-20; 10:30; 14:7,11, 31; 15:9). His devotion was his profound dedication to his Father played out on earth. He did the work of his Father and what the Father authorized him to do (John 5:17-22, 36; 10:25; 14:31). Jesus came in the name of his Father in order to represent Him (John 5:43). He spoke the message the Father told him to speak (John 12:49-50; 14:10, 24). In Luke 22:42 (Mark 14:36), Jesus surrendered his own will over to the Father to show his complete obedience with the cross.

What are we to learn from Jesus' example? First, as believers, we have been given the right to be called children of God (John 1:12). Therefore, we are given the ability to have an intimate and personal relationship with God. It is fitting for us to take advantage of this great privilege. By

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making our relationship with God a priority, some might not understand. We might offend others. Jesus offended many people because of his commitment to God. People were angry with him because he refused to back down on the message and the ministry God gave him. His relationship with the Father was the focal point to his life. Everything else he did stemmed from that relationship.

So how do we spend time with God? The first is through prayer. Jesus had a lifestyle of prayer (Luke 5:16; 6:12; 9:18; 9:28; 11:1; 22:41; 22:44). The second way we spend time with God is through the study of his Word. Jesus placed a high priority on Scripture, with the gospels recording him quoting from the Old Testament 78 times. Therefore, it is obvious that he had a high view of Scripture.

The challenge today is to ask yourself how you can improve your devotion to God. As we will continue to look at the life of Christ, we are going to see that he was not some fundamentalist Bible thumper. Rather, because of his devotion to God, he lived a radical, exciting, and fruitful life that was anything but mundane. When our lives consist of such passion and dedication, it is hard first, for us not to be changed, and second, for those we encounter to be impacted.

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