

Case Study: Jesus and His Mother

by Jay Reed

Opening Activity

Ask members of your group to share one area in their lives where they feel their moms just don't get them. What habits, personality traits, thoughts or feelings do your members have that their moms don't understand? Next, ask them what is it about their moms that they don't get and why.

Bible Study

Read together Luke 1:26-38.

- Verse 29 says Mary was "greatly troubled." What do you think it was about the angel's words that troubled her?
- In verse 30 the angel tells her not to be afraid. Why would she have a reason to be afraid?
- In verses 31-33 the angel tells Mary five things about this son she is about to have. What are they?
- Verse 34 shows Mary wondering at the angel's words. The angel explains how this will take place in verse 35. What more does he tell her about this son she is about to have? Do you think Mary got it, that she really understood what was about to happen? Why or why not?

Read together Luke 2:15-19

- What was the people's reaction to the shepherd's sharing what they heard from the angels? (verse 18) What was Mary's reaction? (verse 19) Do you think she fully got it? Why or why not?

Now read Luke 2:41-51 together.

- When His parents finally found Jesus in the temple, what was their first reaction? (verse 48) Why do you think that was?
- Mary shows she's a pretty typical mom in verse 48. What emotions do you see behind her words to Jesus?
- Which of the below do you think best describes Jesus' response to His parents in verse 49:
 - It's a typical adolescent trying to get out of trouble.
 - He was trying to blame them for ditching Him.
 - He was letting them know that His first purpose was to fulfill God's mission for Him.
 - He was confused about where His house was.
- What was His parents' response to Jesus' explanation? Do you think they got it?
- What was Mary's reaction? (verse 51)

This passage sets up an interesting dynamic. On the one hand Jesus is focused on His Father's mission, which causes Him conflict with His parents. On the other hand (verse 51) He is a perfectly obedient son to them.

- Take a look at John 2:1-5 together. How do you see this same conflict in Jesus' conversation with His mother? How does Jesus show at the same time that He is the perfect son to His Heavenly Father as well as a perfect son to His mother? Do you think Mary got what Jesus was saying about it not being His time?
- Finally, look at John 19:25-27. How in this scene do you see Jesus being a perfect son to both God and Mary again? Thinking back on all the times Mary heard prophecies about Jesus and saw things and "treasured and pondered" them in her heart, do you think she finally got it? If so, when? If not, why not?

Application

Jesus was a perfect Son to His Heavenly Father, fulfilling His perfect will by dying on the cross for the sins of the world. Sometimes this brought Him into conflict with His mom's expectations, yet He was still a perfect son to her.

Are there times in your life where you feel a tension between doing what God wants you to do and doing what your parents want? What might be some situations where you could see that tension come up? How might you resolve it?

The bad news is that in being a son or daughter to our parents, we are far from perfect. And our parents are far from being perfect as well. Sometimes our imperfection results in stretches of time when it seems impossible to get along.

In those times, what guidance does God's Word provide to help us in our relationships? (Hint: Eph.4:32; Col.3:12-15)

The good news is that Jesus is not only a great model for us as a son, but in Him we find forgiveness for being imperfect kids to our parents and strength to try again. If you are in a tough situation with your parents right now, ask for His guidance and help in trying to reconcile the situation. Don't be afraid to ask for help from a pastor, youth worker or adult you can trust.

Spend some time this week thanking God for His forgiveness and for His gift of your parents, asking Him to show you ways to bless them and your relationship with them.