

**Whenever** I read this portion of the Gospel, I am reminded of the time, when my little brother was lost. My mother visited every police precinct in city until midnight, when she located my brother. After a couple minutes of hugging and crying, my mother was shocked to realize that her 3<sup>rd</sup> child was now missing. She thought she had him with her. So she grabbed her newly found child, and ran out of the police station.

She was about a block away from the station, when she suddenly felt something hot in her back, as she retraced her steps. Then she realized that it was her 3<sup>rd</sup> child who was swaddled on her back. The kid was on her back for so long, his diaper was maxed out, and started leaking. My mom was so focused on finding her 2<sup>nd</sup> child, she forgot that she was carrying her 3<sup>rd</sup> on her back.

**Unlike** Jesus, my mom's first born was safely at home, not causing any trouble (that would be me). Such a good mama's boy he was.

From the perspective of the Jesus' parents, their first born should not have been lost. He was old enough not to get lost. It's like realizing in the mid-flight from Hawaii to San Francisco that your first child is missing, and catching another flight right back to Honolulu. You can imagine all kinds of thoughts oppressing the parents the whole way. There are no parents who could remain cool, when they discovered one of their children was missing—especially when they discovered it after a full day of journey.

Then again from the boy Jesus' point of view, the parents were acting weird: "Wassup, Ma? You knew, I was s'posed to be at my Pop's, right?" If Jesus was born in the U.S.A., he might have added, all too familiar, "I'm not a baby anymore!" And, "I can take care of myself!"

**If** we read Luke carefully, we catch the drift Luke is trying to insinuate to the readers: this child Jesus is not just any regular kid—he is the Son of God.

Listen to the way boy Jesus tells his parents—he thinks he is in his Father's house!

Maybe, the modern readers could deduce that boy Jesus might have already known that Joseph was not really his biological father. Even then, it would have been a cruel thing to say it to Joseph's face. I do not believe it was Luke's intention to present boy Jesus in the negative light. Luke's intention was to show Jesus was not like any other kids of his age. Jesus was obviously very intelligent, for he could carry out dialogue with the Ph.D. equivalent of the day, and impress them, too.

**What** we can see in Luke's attempt to impress upon us is that boy Jesus was no regular kid. What we can see beyond Luke's effort, however, is that, even if he was the Son of God, boy Jesus enjoyed a *normal* childhood. He grew up just like any other kids. Only he was smarter, more intuitive, and of a very good character. Luke describes how Jesus was like:

*And Jesus increased in wisdom and in years, and in divine and human wisdom.*

Jesus grew up a normal kid. And for that normal childhood, I can only blame the parents. Joseph and Mary raised baby Jesus to become a well-rounded person with the right mind, body, and spirit.

I believe that the sign of the normal human being is that he or she is well developed in both spiritual and human dimensions, and that he or she is able to gain good will from God and surroundings.

For example, too many times, I have noticed in the past that certain Christians were keen in the materialistic aspects of life, and tended to subject everything to the criterion of the commercial success. They seemed to care very much about getting ahead of others, and they behaved as if everyone else was there to be used for their own personal gain. In doing so, they lost something that made them human, and they became petty and greedy, but did

not realize it. But they thought they were still spiritual, because they were Christian. These Christians had the form of religion, but not the power of religion (II Tim. 3:5).

As far as their ambitions were concerned, it was indistinguishable from the non-religious, secular people out there: they all shared together the very similar secular, materialistic values. Those secular, materialistic values overrode their spiritual values by default, and pre-determined their behaviors in all situations.

**When** we look at the description Luke used to depict the boy Jesus, it was not the special characteristic that was peculiar to the Son of God. Rather, it was a description of a normal, human child who grew up with an all-round character upbringing.

It is normal to grow up in the intimate relationship with God and the fellow human being at once. It is normal to grow up both godly and humane at once.

It is not normal that a human being grow up lacking the spiritual dimension. It is not normal to grow up to become a selfish, greedy, and petty human being.

Even though Luke tried to present Jesus as the Son of God, what we see from Luke's bare writing is that Jesus was a well-rounded, Jewish, human child, who grew up spiritually under a stepfather, to become wise and healthy, and to be well spoken of. But people changed, when Jesus began to tell people to repent, and to love one another.

Jesus is not merely a Savior through whom we are saved. Jesus is the model of the human being. We have a lot to gain, by imitating Jesus. May each one of us grow up to become like him.