

The Luke 2:52 Principle

Luke 2:52

The very definition of “Christian” is “little Christ’ or imitator of Him. Those who abide in Him, live like Him. Luke 2:52 tells us ‘how’ Jesus lived His life. The verb phrase ‘kept increasing’ does not imply a passive activity, but rather Προέκοπτε (**‘he advanced’**) is a word derived from pioneers *cutting down trees in the path of an advancing army*. As Jesus Christ ‘grew’ in His life as a man, so too we are to grow.

Christian growth is holistic and involves advancement mentally, physically, spiritually and socially.

I. As a Christian, I am to make progress mentally - “Jesus kept increasing in wisdom.”

Wisdom has been defined as ‘viewing life from God’s perspective.’ It is different from book smarts, or knowledge, and implies knowing things from God’s perspective. How does Jesus grow in wisdom? “As a man; for neither his divine wisdom, nor the treasures of wisdom and knowledge in him, as mediator, could admit of any increase; but as he grew in body, the faculties of his soul opened, and received gradually large measures of wisdom and knowledge, in things natural and spiritual, through the in dwelling of his divine nature in him, and the Holy Spirit that was, without measure” (John Gill).

(A). The ‘fear of the Lord’ is begins our wisdom (Proverbs 9:10).

God must be bigger to you than people are. This is a process whereby your mind is renewed.

What God gives you must be more precious than anything a human being gives you in this life.

(B). The ‘word of the Lord’ becomes growth in wisdom (Proverbs 2:6).

“For the Lord gives wisdom from His mouth.” We are not to live by “bread alone” but by every Word that proceeds from the mouth of God (Matt. 4:4). “Thy word have I hid in my heart.”

(C). The ‘people of the Lord’ bring confirmation of wisdom (Proverbs 15:22).

“In the counsel of many people there is great wisdom.” This is why Christian friends are best!

II. As a Christian, I am to make progress physically - “Jesus kept increasing in stature.”

Some say that the word stature means ‘age,’ but this would be meaningless, for that is unavoidable.

The sense is that he made progress in his physical condition, referring to his body (see Luke 19:3).

“Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God? You are not your own, for you were bought with a price, so glorify God in your body” (I Cor. 6:19-20).

III. As a Christian, I am to make progress spiritually - “Jesus kept advancing in favor with God.”

Notice something very subtle, but very important. **Jesus** kept advancing in favor (**charis**) with God.

Some call grace ‘unmerited favor.’ Not true. Grace **is** favor (pleasure), and favor is always *merited*.

How does one *advance* in favor with God? There are two ways: (a). Through Law via obedience, and (b). Through Christ, via faith. “**But now apart from the Law the righteousness of God has been**

manifested...righteousness through faith in Jesus Christ ... for we are justified as a gift by His grace in Christ” (Rom. 3:21-24). “Grow in grace and the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ” (II Pet. 3:18).

The moment that we begin to believe our obedience to the Law, that our efforts and striving to meet the Law, somehow makes us more holy, the further we move away from the gospel. We are to be transformed by beholding the glorious grace and beauty of God in the work of Christ (II Cor. 3:18).

IV. As a Christian, I am to make progress socially - “Jesus kept advancing in favor with man.”

Jesus increased ‘in favor with man.’ because the favor of man is fickle. In the end, the man who

exhibits the character of Christ will grow in favor with man. What kind of character did Christ exhibit?

(A). A love for the ungodly. These are those for whom Jesus died. (B). A life of unselfishness. The Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve. (C). A light for those in darkness. We show the Way.