

And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man. (Luke 2:52)

Jesus—He was 12 years old when the events of verses 41-52 took place, and He had already astonished the doctors (teachers) of the law with His understanding and answers. We also see in 51 that when he returned to Nazareth with His earthly parents, He was subject (submissive, ESV) to them.

Increased—advanced(ASV). The idea is of growth. As seen above, Jesus had already astonished the experts with His knowledge and understanding, but He continued to grow after this. A different Greek word, but the same principle, is offered in 2 Peter 1:5-8, which encourages us to abound, or increase, in the characteristics given.

Wisdom—Greek word is *σοφία* (sophia), which comes over into English in words like *philosophy* (literally, love of wisdom). Jesus' divine nature could not increase or grow, but His human nature could. Jesus learned about the world and mankind as He grew as a man. We learn from Hebrews 4:15 that Jesus is the great High Priest because He was tempted in every way as we have been, yet without sin. So we see that Jesus grew in experience in this world. We can grow in wisdom by asking God for it (James 1:5; 1 Kings 3: 9), studying and applying God's word (Proverbs 1: 1-9), by learning from our own mistakes (like David) or better yet, learning from other people's mistakes!

Stature—Jesus grew physically. Naturally He “grew up” over time, but this also probably means that He took care of His body. Jesus was a carpenter by trade (Mark 6:3), and this was a physically demanding profession. Remember there were no power tools at this time. He survived the Roman scourging and survived long enough on the cross to willfully give up His life (John 10:17-18; Luke 23:46). We are expected to take care of our bodies as the temple of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 6:19).

Favor with God—Greek word is *χάρις* (charis), meaning “grace” or “gift,” and comes across in English in words like *charisma*. Jesus never lacked God's favor, but this perhaps means that He increased in those things that make man favorable to God. Remember that after Jesus was baptized by John, the Holy Spirit descended upon Him like a dove and a voice from Heaven (the Father) said “This is my beloved Son, in Whom I am well pleased” (Matthew 3:17). We do not “earn” God's grace, as it is a gift (Romans 6:23), but since we have been offered this grace we are expected to do the good works for which God made us (Eph. 2:8-10).

Favor with men—He was popular and well known to people. He was a popular speaker and drew crowds of thousands (Matthew 14: 21 [5,000]; Matthew 15:38[4,000]). Jesus did not gain favor with men by telling them just what they wanted to hear or compromising the truth in any other way, but by telling them the truth with authority (Matthew 7:29) and in terms they could understand, like parables (Matthew 13, especially v. 10). Favor with men can be a dangerous thing, depending on what men and how you gained their favor (Luke 6:26), but when we do the right things, we will find favor with the right people. The church in Acts 2:47 had favor with all the people because of the things described in earlier verses: the signs done by the apostles, their charity (notice this was to *all men*, not just members of the church) and sharing, their gladness, and their worship and teaching in the temple.