

# Teenage Jesus<sup>©</sup>

Heaven's Detailed Blueprint and Model For Building  
a Joyful God-Honoring Teenager in Today's World.



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# **Teenage Jesus**

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## #1 - Ya Gotta See The Doctor

Some think Jesus doesn't care about teenagers because very little is taught about them in the Bible. In fact, many will tell you the Bible says almost nothing about Jesus as a teenager. Nothing could be farther from the truth. In the minds of most folks, they think of Jesus in the manger and he somehow shortly began his public ministry. It had to be manger to maturity and miracles... no in between, they think. If this is what you see of Jesus, YA GOTTA SEE THE DOCTOR! You really do!

To learn all we can about Jesus Christ, the divine Son of God, we must look at scripture; first and foremost. You do need to know those scriptures are much like a diamond mine. In seeking gems you must look closely and often dig a little. Our Bible is just like that diamond mine.

The Bible is divided in two parts; the Old Testament and the New Testament. The New Testament begins with the birth and genealogies of Jesus Christ. The first four divisions in the NT are called the Gospels. Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. These gospels each have their own personality, but all are solidly connected by the critical truth of salvation only in Jesus Christ. Matthew wrote about Jesus to the Jews, Mark wrote to the Romans, Luke to the Gentiles, and John to everyone. When God inspired the writers about Jesus, no ethnic group was left out, yet the unity of God's sovereignty and provision is preserved. It reminds us that teenagers all have different personalities and character, but every one must obtain salvation only at the foot of the Cross.

Luke was the only gospel writer that was not Jewish. He was a gentile doctor of medicine; a physician. As a physician, he was most interested in teaching us about the person and purpose of Jesus in his humanity. While many places in scripture teach us about Jesus' maturing years, we'll zero in on just one chapter that the doctor (Luke) has provided for us.

As we begin looking at teenage Jesus, turn to Luke chapter 2 and read it more than once. Read it very slow. Remember we'll shortly begin mining for diamonds.

I can almost picture a teenage Jesus walking to the market to buy bread and cheese. As he walks in those quiet moments, he can still recall the stories his mother told him many times about his strange birth, and those wonderful birthday gifts some wise men traveled so far to bring to him. What questions he had asked, many times of the rushed life-saving trip to Egypt, his family made. Because Jesus was tempted in all points as we are, I'd say it's likely he had some peers that may have bullied or befriended him.

My grandfather heart tells me that some truths and principles for teens are so special; so tender, they can't really be put on paper – in spoken/written words. God has saved those to be given directly into every teenager's heart searching for love, truth, purpose, and provision. But for now, let's do some diamond mining as we see the doctor; doctor Luke, that is.

## #2 - Here He Comes! Get Ready!

As the theater lights dim and just before the spotlight is pointed onto Jesus' teenage life, we'll take just a minute more to emphasize the importance of those growing years, that, for you and I, have presented so many stormy challenges in learning who we are and why we're here. These elementary and teen years are so very important to us recognizing who we are, and God's provisions to us along the way, we live through them again, in the lives of our own children.

If nothing else moves you to put great emphasis on those growing years, take note of two simple facts Jesus teaches all the disciples and those others around Him. He states the heart of every one that is welcomed into eternal Glory must have a humble heart like a little child. The other is that Heaven has, always on duty, a guardian angel keeping an eye on youth and how others treat them.

These few words are meant to lead you to prayer, much as you begin meals with knife and fork. Ask God to strengthen your knowledge, compassion, and efforts as you find the promised diamonds to all those who reach out with Heaven's love to those of our God-given harvest fields of souls.

Set your heart in anticipation for another view of the Creator that hung on a cruel Cross, in fulfillment of prophecy, and slamming the coffin lid on Satan's evil march into the hearts of youth starving for meaning and victory in their future.

As you learn from scripture all the struggles Mary and her husband Joseph went through to deliver Jesus to his teen years, you must gain an appreciation, even now, that Jesus' young years entering his teens, must have contained powerful lessons that you and I need to learn and apply.

## #3 - Growin' Glorifyin' God

The POWER LIST of Jesus' maturing begins in Luke 2:40 and then continues to the end of the chapter. The impatient attitudes that you and I so often have to wrestle with, prompts us to skip to the last verse and somehow expect to see the rainbow of answers we seek; those answers so badly needed to minister to the youth in our neighborhood, or maybe even under our own roof.

**I WILL WARN YOU!** This is not the right time to skip anything. God has inspired Luke, the physician and writer of the gospel book that bears his name, to write these words that have been protected by God, down through the ages. Don't skip, just search and savor and store and

share.

Verse 40 begins with *“And the child grew...”* Now that doesn't sound like much. But do you see that it is at the beginning of the list (to the chapter end). “Law of First Mention,” suggests we should pay particular attention to “grew.” This little four-letter word has the powerful job of drawing our attention to the fact that Jesus went through a maturing cycle that most every young person does. He wasn't the divine son of God that was plopped right into the Jewish community.

Now I don't know if Jesus ever had a tooth ache, a skinned knee, or some bullies that taunted him. Actually I don't want to know. My response is to simply know that Jesus was exposed to all the evil that most every teen has... yet he did not sin. Notice why these 'skinned knee' details are omitted. God doesn't want us to be sidetracked with little details, and not relish the next attribute. Are you ready for this?

The next attribute of Jesus is described with four words, not just a four-letter word. *“waxed strong in spirit.”* When I see the word 'waxed' I think of strengthening, of preserving, of sealing something that is valuable to me. I really drink in the importance of dealing with the 'spirit', listed here. I am to preserve my strong spiritual character, as I mature and become more Christ-like.

*“Filled with wisdom”* is the next in our Power List. Notice it doesn't say 'knowledge' or 'data' or 'facts'. It specifically says 'wisdom'. That's the ability to properly and lovingly use that knowledge. Was Jesus satisfied with just the average amount of wisdom? You know, just enough to get by? Wow! Look at that word, “FILLED”. Discuss with those youth you minister to, to describe what that “FILLED” really means. How did Jesus get FILLED? How do we get FILLED? How are we different when we're FILLED?

The fourth factor in Jesus' maturing is maybe the best. *“and the grace of God was upon him.”* This is another one of those attributes that doesn't give any details. It's like the “grew” that we started with. God's grace doesn't have a part number, or a manufacturing blueprint. It's a gift we don't earn (and don't deserve either.) God's grace is tailored to just exactly what our all knowing God is sure we need. His grace for us today may be different that it was for us last Thursday, or when we were trying to find the words to tell that teen about His bountiful love.

The important thing to desire each and every day, is God's grace and that it be upon us, in a way that magnifies Him, strengthens church folks, and empowers us to reach out to discouraged hearts around us. God's grace helps us look past the unusual appearances and unexpected actions we, at first, don't feel comfortable around. Reach out with compassion, but first reach up with expectation and trust.

Next time, we'll take a good look at some of Jesus' schooling. You'll hardly believe what happened!

## #4 - The Teen Teaches Teachers

This incredible POWER LIST of maturing attributes of teenage Jesus is a place we could spend days and pages of descriptions of this Creator of all that is, and our one and only Savior. Previously, we mentioned the diversity in personality of the gospels of Jesus Christ. Remember? Matthew wrote to the Jews, Mark to the Romans, Luke to the Gentiles, and John wrote to everyone. The picture to see, is that God leaves no one out, as He presents His plan and provisions for you and I, no matter where we live or how we live. God has His compassionate eye on each of us, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

As John finishes his book of the “Gospel of John”, he feels swamped. He feels he hasn't even scratched the surface, of all that Jesus has done, around us, for us, and inside us. His closing words tell us,

*“And there are also many other things which Jesus did, the which, if they should be written every one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written. Amen.”* John 21:25

In Luke 2:42, we see some key facts, that each hold more diamonds than we can describe here. First is that scripture tells us that Jesus is now 12 years old. After his next birthday, the Jewish society would then consider him an adult, with all the responsibilities that come with it. The Bar Mitzpah ceremony proclaims this transition to the world. (Girls 'become adults' one year earlier.)

We see in just these few verses that Jesus stresses his parents out, in their 3 day search and rescue for him. When Mary and Joseph ask him why he's done this, his response had not a drop of apology in it. They didn't even understand his response. He told them, he was doing His father's business. His response began a transition from being just Mary's little boy, to a servant of the Most High God in heaven.

Taking responsibility for our actions and seeing God's claim on our life and mission, is a monumental transition. It may come in a blink of an eye or take days to take our life in our hands and hold it up to Heaven, and humbly say, “For whatever it's worth, Dear God, here I am; here's my life. Let it be a tool; a testimony to your unfathomable undying love and Lordship, upon me, and those around me.”

Those youth we minister to, have to come to this same place of recognizing their place and

purpose in God's plan. Only then can they view each sunny or stormy day in their lives as God's shaping their character and talents to magnify Him. This also gives us all a deeper understanding of God's character as we seek intimate fellowship with Him in Glory, for our eternity.

In Luke 2:46 and 47, I see a teenage Jesus in church (the temple). Wow! What a perfect place for every teenager to learn about life and God's love. Being in the right place at the right time is more than half of any battle, isn't it? This is a powerful truth that teens of every age need to understand and act upon.

My heart pushes to paint a picture of young Jesus right in the middle of all the lawyers and priests. In his quest to learn all he could about church and God, Jesus wasn't a back seat student in any fashion. I see him sitting and listening to all that was being taught, during those three days his parents were searching all of Jerusalem for their young son. Sitting and listening is not a real easy thing to deeply do. Most of us listen just close enough to form our replies. And our replies are often meant just to impress our listeners how smart we are (or think we are).

Jesus certainly heard the lawyers teach some things that were not true. This happens to us every day. We must be good at discerning truth from tale, fact from fiction. The youth we minister to, have incredibly poor ability in doing this. They become sidetracked; they become distracted the same way Eve was sidetracked by Satan in the Garden of Eden.

'Sitting and listening' also has a powerful influence on others, that we cherish. If we first listen to them, they'll more likely listen to us. It's a good partner to asking good questions that move us closer an understanding and actions that please God and produce our FULL JOY promised in scripture.

In asking good questions, Jesus got strong attention from his 'teachers'. This resulted in Jesus TEACHING HIS TEACHERS. More than that, he amazed them with how much he knew and how rich his answers were, to their questions.

As you minister to those troubled young hearts around you, do you compassionately listen to them? Can your heart be humble enough to expect they can teach you some things. We silver-haired mentors have a great deal of misconceptions about teenagers today. Our mentoring will never get to first base unless we want our 'students' to become our teacher, for a time. Can you deeply thank God for allowing you to minister to that teenager? Do your prayers show this? Can you pray with that young heart in a way that draws you both into the very center of God's grace and mercy?

## #5 - Deadly Consequences

It was a blow to my life, that I'll never forget as long as I live. It happened on the very first day of my new job as Director of a chapter of Youth For Christ, in a southern Ohio town. I was quietly seated in the rear of a juvenile court watching something happen, I still find hard to believe. Standing before the judge was a mother and father, almost in tears. Between them stood their teenage son, with no idea what is about to happen to him.

I clearly heard the parents both tell the judge to take this; their son and do with him whatever the judge wanted to. Their sorrowful testimony told everyone present, their teen would not mind them in any way. Right in my hearing, these two parents were giving away their own son. It wasn't until years later that I learned just how truly fortunate this teenager, standing between his parents, were.

Of the Ten Commandments presented in stone to Moses on Mt. Sinai, one stands out from the rest in a very special way. The fifth commandment says to honor thy father and thy mother and adds a promise. That promise is,

*“that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee.”*

The truth of that promise is detailed in a commandment for us in Deuteronomy, the fifth book of the Bible. Chapter 21, verses 18 through 21 order a stubborn and rebellious son to be stoned to death. That teenager in juvenile court that day has no idea what his future does or could have in store for him.

An easy to overlook phrase in describing the teenager Jesus, is back in Luke chapter 2, tucked in the middle of verse 51. It tells us, “...and was subject unto them;” Most every adult has tasted the daily struggle of balancing the beginning responsibilities of adulthood with the respect and honor due their parents. It's a skill that demands compassion and love, and remembering our roots. I fully believe this same struggle into adulthood was a part of Jesus' growing years. It figures into his being “tempted in all points, like as we... yet being without sin.”

Drawing life-long lessons in wisdom from our teenage years is not minimized or made trivial by scripture or all of Heaven. God made those searching stretching years a very necessary part of our lives, as He did his own only-begotten son that someday would open the only door needed for us to obtain salvation and all the eternal glory and gifts that come with it.

In prayer, prepare long and hard to show teenagers that to submit to authority. Show them it doesn't make them a second class citizen, but beautifully prepares them to better lead others away from the viscous jaws of sin and its consequences.

## #6 -The 50 Gallon Milk Shake

Now don't jump to the wrong conclusion! Jesus didn't make or enjoy a 50 gallon milkshake mixed with a real outboard motor. But I always think of this event when chewing on our next items on the POWER LIST of attributes in the growing life of teenage Jesus. I'll describe the milkshake and sticky gymnasium another time. Right now we have far more powerful things to look at.

The Gentile medical doctor, Luke, tailored his gospel about our Lord Jesus, to the Gentiles, in a fashion you'd expect from a doctor like him. It was so much centered around his humanity; what made Jesus much like you and I, and our every day challenges of growing. Though Luke didn't make any of the chapter divisions, it is, though like the frosting on the cake, that the best of the teenager Jesus descriptions were saved until now. Let's take a good look at them. They form a quartet; a wonderful group of four that becomes a four-part lesson for us to share with those troubled teens God has put in our field of ministry.

This quartet is simply listed in Luke 2 verse 52, as follows:

*“And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man.”*

We see here the quartet that is so critical in giving meaning and order to every teenager, and Jesus too!

'Wisdom' we'll call MENTAL, 'stature' we'll call PHYSICAL, 'favor with God' is SPIRITUAL, and 'man' is SOCIAL. Got it? Mental, physical, spiritual, and social. If we leave any of the quartet out, or shoved into a corner, the teenage life becomes mixed up and prime territory for Satan to plant his seeds of sin and doubt.

It may be a small point, but one that nags me to include here, my '3 dash 4 principle' I see in scripture so often. I find trios; sets of 3, quite often representing simple STRENGTH and STRUCTURE. Foremost is the divine Trinity; God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. The structure of each of us is also a trio: Body, Soul, and Spirit. You can also see the strength in structures like the triangle bracing of bridges. I suppose you could think of the structure of water as liquid, ice, and steam. Ask the teen you are ministering to, for other examples to add to the list. Help them to begin tagging their thinking to strength and structure, that their lives so desperately need.

The other part of my '3 dash 4 principle', is the large number of quartets; the sets of 4 in our Bible. For me, they seem to always be presenting PROGRESS and PRODUCTION. We've

already been getting glimpses of the 4 Gospels that produce the life and attitudes that please God and build up others. They have their own way to daily move us along toward greater challenges in serving our Lord; that's progress.

Some other quartets you might also discuss with your 'student' teenager, are the four purposes of scripture. Those were the rules, testing, discipline, and learning that are so vital to our progress in our following the Lord in trust and experiencing the FULL JOY we are promised, along the way.

Can you add some quartets from scripture?

God is not about just putting STRENGTH and STRUCTURE, PROGRESS and PRODUCTION in our lives. He wants to tie it all together with something the world and all its technology know nothing of. It's REAL JOY... even better than that, it's that FULL JOY we touched on earlier.

Next we'll take a look at each of the Luke 2:52 quartet.

## **#7 -A Flea Creates A Dog**

You can't do it, can you? With your imagination in high gear, you can't picture a tiny flea constructing a living, breathing, barking dog. The task is so far from possible; so unlikely, our human brains can't even dream of such a thing happening. But scientists live and die trying to invent a computer that can do the things our brain does every moment, and 'without a second thought'; without any real effort at all.

Libraries of big fat books and endless compact disks have been published about the indescribable gray matter between our ears. Scientists impress themselves with monstrous words that label parts of our brain, but only show us over and over, how futile; how impossible, to build anything that can even be compared to God's creations – that were spoken into existence. It's a clear bold example of that flea that is trying to create a dog.

We are looking at the journey of Jesus growing in the same journey that you and I have. Along this journey, the medical doctor Luke, is giving us a POWER LIST of attributes that Jesus makes a part of his humanity; his growing. This portion of that power list is grouped as a quartet; a set of four areas of every life that is healthy, God-honoring, full of joy, love, peace, and purpose. That quartet is Mental, Physical, Spiritual, and Social. We'll be seeing their value in producing and progress in our lives.

Our first one is WISDOM or mental. Wisdom is far different than knowledge and data. Our knowledge can tell us, “Oh yes, this is a pencil. It needs to be kept sharp. I need to always remember where I leave it, so I can use it again.” Computers do a pretty good job listing data and knowledge. But knowledge and wisdom are as different as that flea and the dog. Wisdom is knowing the way and when to use that pencil. Wisdom is the partnering of knowledge with love, compassion, preparation, and most importantly – a deep sense of what God's will is for me.

Look again, slowly, that partnership of wisdom, we just listed. None of the 'partners' with knowledge are used or understood by those digital computers we have all around us. It's crucial we keep a careful distinction between knowledge and wisdom, in our lives.

The WISDOM (mental) attribute in Jesus' Power List can be divided into its own quartet. That mental quartet becomes MY THOUGHTS, MY ATTITUDES/MOTIVES, MY MEDITATION, and MY STUDIES.

## MENTAL QUARTET

### **My Thoughts**

My Thoughts are the basic 'start here' foundation of the rest of this mental quartet. Our thoughts are the bricks with which we form our ideas. A good verse to tie this to scripture is Philippians 4:8.

### **My Attitudes / Motives**

These are a team themselves. Our attitudes are our value of something, “How much is it worth to me?” Our motives are our answer to why we do this or do that. Often we do things we know we are supposed to do, but we do it for the wrong reason; we don't have the right 'why'. Link this with God's Word, Proverbs 23:7 and Philippians 1:10.

### **My Meditation**

This is the process of digging deep with my thoughts. My meditation works hard at sorting out things and putting them in an order that pleases God. The book of Psalms opens with our reference that beautifully nails down what our meditation should be like. Psalm 1:2.

### **My Studies**

No one needs to explain to us that eating the right foods, at the right times and portions are critical to strong healthy bodies. The same thing is true with our minds; our thoughts, and the rest of the mental quartet. Someone once said, “GIGO. It stands for garbage in, garbage out.”

It's very simple and powerfully true. What we study, what we read, see and hear all must share the goal of our FULL JOY that is only possible through following and serving the Lord. Like enjoying a tasty food, I always enjoy meditating on the phrase in 1 Thessalonians 4:11, *“Study to be quiet.”*

Next time we'll see the next attribute – PHYSICAL, on the POWER LIST of Jesus as he grows into and through his teenage years.

(Note: adapted from “The Balanced Life – Youth For Christ (aka Campus Life)

## **#8 - Body Language Often Shouts**

“We Do It Better!” That might be a description of our communication superiority over anything else on Earth that breathes. Language researchers say there are almost 7,000 spoken living languages on Earth. But in my mind's eye, I see the most universal language is what I call body English. We instantly speak volumes about ourselves, just by our physical appearance, and then our physical gestures and posture as we converse with others. We use this skill to say a great deal, even with our appearance in a photo.

Our second attribute on the Power List of teenager Jesus, that is part of the quartet we must adhere to, is the Physical portion of our daily living and maturing. Remember? There was Mental, Physical, Spiritual, and Social. OK. Back to our Physical attribute. The physical portion of us, can better be understood and given attention to, by dividing it into its own quartet. That quartet is made up of Our Cleanliness & Appearance, Control of Sex, Our Health, and Discipline.

God has made us in His image, with a body so complex, it defies adequate description in any language. Our heart alone, is a blood pump so durable, it pumps 100,000 times EACH DAY of our lives. It never stops, and never takes a coffee break. Actually, our heart is TWO two-stage pumps. It even has its own speed regulator pumping our 5 quarts of blood all through us. Our blood and blood pump feeds every cell in our body and even takes out the garbage.

### **Our Cleanliness and Appearance**

This attribute on Jesus' Power List makes a huge impression to others that knew him and watched him grow up. His mission on this earth was to become our flesh and blood sacrifice on the Cross to pay for our sins – because there was no other way. But He firstly taught all who would listen, about Heaven, Hell, and our God-honoring actions and appearance here on Earth. A great verse to ground this attribute in scripture is found in 1 Corinthians 6:19-20.

### **Our Control of Sex**

Besides our cleanliness and appearance, we also teach others how much we value ourselves and those we are around, by our control of sex. This may be one of the most powerful motivators in our lives. But it is also an incredibly dangerous way to make bad choices and do irreparable damage to our futures and those of others. Check out 1 Corinthians 9:27.

## **Our Health**

We've already seen how incredibly important our blood circulation is to our whole body. Every cell has to 'eat right' and 'get rest' otherwise ugly unfixable things can happen. If our blood flow stops feeding oxygen to the brain, in only 4 minutes the brain is 'dead'. Our daily agenda of eating nourishing meals at proper times and getting effective regular rest shows how much we care about our bodies and how we'll function in the future. Eating junk food continually, playing loud music, and staying up all night texting will destroy a rich future, and so often make for very unhappy families. Check out 1 Timothy 4:8 and Philippians 4:5.

## **Discipline**

Every athlete or person wishing to do their best with their God-given gift(s) must train. He/she must decide and carry out a schedule of exercise related to that gift. But discipline goes even farther. It includes recognizing our weak points and 'deciding to get them under control' and God-honoring. This is a big respect builder as others see you working on training yourself like you'd do with a powerful valuable horse. 1 Corinthians 9:26-27 also works well here.

Our next attribute on Jesus' Power List is Spiritual.

(Note: adapted from "The Balanced Life – Youth For Christ (aka Campus Life)

## **#9 - Reaching Beyond The Stars**

"What's out there?" This question is asked by elementary school children, teenagers, and even reaches the lips of astrophysicists – the people that send deep space satellites out to investigate other planets for us.

So far we've been looking at the quartet of attributes at the end of what we call the POWER LIST that all played a part in the growth into and through the teenage years of Jesus. It follows that since we were created in his image, as scripture tells us, that we should understand this power list and follow its principles in our lives and share them with teenagers we feel burdened

to minister to.

In the MENTAL and PHYSICAL parts of our quartet, we learned how to reach, and just what that reaching results in. In this SPIRITUAL part we learn the crucial need to first REACH UP (to Heaven's leading), and next time we'll learn how we can best REACH OUT in God-honoring love and order to others around us.

As with the other parts of the quartet, SPIRITUAL is best understood and applied by dividing it into its own quartet of four parts – Faith, Love, Obedience, and Prayer. Because we are presently humans with a spiritual awareness; a mind that reminds us there is a God that designed us and all that is around us. That spiritual part of us, if allowed, will draw us to know and accept that we have a responsibility to that true God and an obedience to Him.

### **Faith**

As evidence that God doesn't want us to obey Him as robots, Faith is the partner of trust. We must accept Bible statements describing God Who is so much higher and majestic that our puny human minds can grasp. We have to walk in faith, trusting His written promises and fulfilled prophecies listed in scripture, that these will lead us to a life full of real joy, peace, and the purpose of life to magnify Him. Jesus certainly exercised faith growing into those teenage years. It wouldn't be much later before evil people would be trying to destroy Him and His mission here on Earth.

Great verses to lock our thinking into scripture would be, Romans 5:1, Romans 8:24a, 26.

### **Love**

This aspect of the SPIRITUAL attribute has been so diluted; so misused by the world, its deep value has been all but erased. Jesus grew with a deep love, first for God and His gifts to man, but as Jesus saw all the lies and deceitful teaching about the one true God; His heavenly Father, his compassion overflowed onto others that took up His mission in reaching out to others. Love finds its only true definition and appearance, in scripture and those who spread the teachings of God. Love finds its greatest picture on the Cross of Calvary; the full and final blood sacrifice for the sins of a world that still didn't understand verses like: John 15:13, Matthew 22:37-40, 1John 4:7-8.

### **Obedience**

Robots obey their programmed commands without feeling. Animals obey because they'll be rewarded with food. Soldiers obey because they'll be put in the stockade or jeopardize the safety of their team. To me, our obedience to God, isn't so much the kind that makes us obey God's directions out of fear. He wants us to obey Him out of love and trust. We obey, when we ask ourselves, "What would my life be like if God just walked away from me and left me totally on my own?" We obey knowing that someone obeyed God in telling me about Salvation

and my horrible eternal destiny without that Salvation.

Some great verses Jesus would share with you, if He stood before us, in the flesh: 1John 5:3-4, Acts 5:29 and 32.

## **Prayer**

Prayer is not letting God know what we need or what is making us hurt, inside. He already knows all that, and even more, about us. Prayer is far more for our benefit. When we pray we show ourselves that we can't do things on our own, that we desperately need His leading, love, and provisions. We demonstrate that time spent personally privately praising Him is more important to us than any other activity in our day. Prayer is also a rich passionate time to invite others to join our devotion to Him and seeking His Will for us each day. Slowly read Jesus' prayer to His Heavenly Father, in John 17. Other great verses to use, are: 1John 5:14-15.

Next time we'll take a look at the final Power List attribute applied to Jesus as a teenager. It's SOCIAL. You may be surprised at its details.

(Note: adapted from "The Balanced Life – Youth For Christ (aka Campus Life)

## **#10 -That Social Net Villain**

Getting connected is what started the Internet. Scientists wanted to share research results. Farmers wanted to get up-to-the-minute crop prices. That provided the basic computer hardware. Beyond that, the World Wide Web took the Internet to a whole new level, with browsers, shared computer programs, news, graphics, sound, video etc. But the third, and current, stage of computer connectivity is the SOCIAL networks, that moves remote socializing far beyond what the telephone, or even the video telephone could do.

In the deep shadows of the on-line social networks is a silent hungry lion, always on the prowl for anyone not on their guard, while on-line, at a desktop keyboard or a mobile device. At first glance, those click-spots appear quite innocent-looking. But they're an accumulative thing, their presence starts building a road to a dead end.

Everywhere you look, you're told the opinions and additional choices of others, regarding what now appears on your screen. Along with that, you're bombarded with snap-surveys of your own opinions that are recorded on lots of hidden computers and then posted for others to read, rather than forming their own opinion. This certainly peaks our thoughts that others pay attention to what we think and do. We call that our testimony, which the Bible also calls that our

conversation; our manner of living.

The problem is that all of the Bible reminds us we are to seek HIS DESIRES and principles. We are to often each day, ask Him to survey our attitudes and actions, that our lives will be examples of loving obedience to His "FOLLOW ME".

This last Power List attribute that Jesus followed is called SOCIAL. It's the "and man." of Luke 2:52. As we did with the other three attributes in this Luke 2:52 quartet, we'll divide it into its own quartet. We'll make a quartet within a quartet. Our SOCIAL quartet gets divided into My Associations and Witness, My Activities, My Abilities, and My Actions.

### **My Associations and Witness**

Almost without exception, who we group with, becomes a statement to others, about our principles and character. Who we associate with, is more-so our first impression in the eyes of others. But far more critical is that we humans adapt; we absorb, we change to fit in; often just to be accepted, to feel secure, like 'safety in numbers'.

But what happens, over time is that we either become more like those we socialize with, or we make an influence on those around us. Not many youth have the strength of character to influence others rather than being influenced. As a teenager, Jesus was a wonderful role model for us to be that God-honoring influence in the lives of others. Luke chapter 2 even gives a great example of this, in the temple. Check out 1John 4:4, and 1Peter 3:15.

### **My Activities**

Teenagers today saturate themselves with activities whether on-line or not. It seems they are trying to muffle the reoccurring questions, "Where is this all leading?", "Is there no real joy and peace for me?", "How can I know if anyone really loves me, just as I am?" One of the ugly outcomes of living your days and nights like this, is you will never be able to achieve anything to be proud of. No one will be deeply sincerely grateful for your 'help'. Your activities should be planned and played out with prayer by asking God what He wants you to do today. Then trust Him to lead and give you the strength and courage to follow through.

### **My Abilities**

Someone once said, "God don't make no junk!" With God's gifts of love and leading, He also gives us tools; abilities and talents to serve Him and share His love and compassion with others. The Bible gives examples of most every kind of talent, and how these talents were used. A beginning list would easily fill this page, and more. The big question is HOW can I use my abilities that will magnify Him and help the church. Sometimes even asking our pastor or leader to pray with us about using our skills, is a powerful way to build teamwork in our teenage lives. Check out Luke 16:1-10.

## Your Actions

“Your actions speak far louder than your words!” This is a statement we've all heard, and place a lot of value in. Another is, “Talk's cheap!” Our actions often give real evidence to our inner desires and character. Luke chapter 2 gives us powerful evidence by the actions of Jesus in the temple, responding to Mary and Joseph's sorrowful questions, and also in his obedience to follow and be subject to them, during the return trip to Mary's home in Nazareth. Because our actions are observed by others, with their own eyes, they are remembered far longer.

“Christian” means Christ-like. My actions in word AND deed must agree with each other, and with scripture. Read 1Samuel 2:3 scripture slowly.

(Note: adapted from “The Balanced Life – Youth For Christ (aka Campus Life)

## #11 - Get Comfortable!

With all my silver hair and Arthritis, getting comfortable, is not an easy thing to do.

(1) I try to imagine a shipwreck survivor bobbing in a prison of water, cold, dark, with no communicator devices with him. There certainly is no hope of any air rescue search planes flying overhead, or any other rescue procedures likely to be happening. Thoughts come to the survivor's mind, “Why am I here? What have I done wrong? Doesn't God in Heaven love me? What will become of me?” The words of a Bible verse prompt the command within him, “Get Comfortable!”

(2) The group of travelers circle closely to the warm fire. It comforts and leads the mind to wander on events of the day and one's future. One man adds more sticks to the fire. Suddenly, without warning, a poisonous snake jumps up and sinks its deadly fangs into the man. Others watch in utter disbelief, suggesting this is God's punishment for something the man has done to offend God. The man pulls the poisonous snake off his arm and casts it into the fire. All those who watch the terrible event, expect the man to die a wretched horrible death of poison. But words come to the heart of the man, “Get Comfortable!” Scripture states, the man was not harmed in any way, and his campfire witnesses began thinking of the man as a god.

(3) The trip is a short one; one-way straight down. In the most secrecy, the men carefully lower the basket down the wall, knowing they are saving the man in the basket from certain murder. Praying along every few inches, the thoughts of the basket traveler may be thinking of another

basket traveler, still a baby. The baby floating in a basket in the bulrushes, hundreds of years earlier, was an event stranger than fiction; but at the same time, another example of God's protection and provision to those that trust Him.

But probably even more amazing is the same man experienced all three events above, and a whole lot more. Now if that wasn't enough, in one of his many letters of love and leadership to several struggling churches, this man includes a powerful recipe. This recipe for joyful victorious life in Jesus Christ is expressed in his letter to the church at Rome. The man, the Apostle Paul, details this wonderful recipe in chapter 15 and verse 4, as follows:

*“For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope.”*

In a precious way, God's word is referred to, twice in this verse. *“For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning,”* tells us the purpose of scripture – “for our learning.” The second reference to God's word is “comfort of the scriptures.” If we are truly learning and FEEDING on God's word, and not just reading it according to someone's schedule, we'll gain real comfort from the scriptures. This DAILY process is so important, God has even given us a 'live-in' teacher; the Holy Spirit.

Among other things, the word 'patience' reminds us that God has created us into a time world. He is not bound by time, but we are. Learning and comfort depend upon time and our CONTINUALLY looking to God with a loving “Watcha want me to do now, God?” on our lips.

“Hope” here in Romans 15:4 carries far more weight than our present day meaning of the word. The meaning God inspired, in the scripture, should read “might have assurance.”

The Bible is filled with so many promises that also apply to teens, you'll want to dig out those diamonds yourself; make them yours.

A favorite one of mine that reaches from my heart of tears to teenagers is in Psalm 126:6

*“He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him.”*

This is the end of the Teenage Jesus Blog, but should be a new beginning for you and your harvesting of the teenage souls that God has placed in your field of service.

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