

Traction
Growing Forward – Luke 2:52
Crosspoint – Dave Spooner – Sept. 5th, 2021

Intro:

- The message this morning is primarily aimed at two groups of people. Those who are between the ages of zero and thirty and those who have children or grandchildren or mentor anyone between the ages of zero and thirty. The verse we will focus on today has been the blueprint of our parenting and the underlying philosophy of our youth ministry (when I was a youth pastor). This message will help you to know where to focus in building a life that will go the distance and make a difference.
- We know a lot about the start and the finish of Jesus's life, and we have one story from Jesus's "growing up" years (the boy Jesus at the temple Luke 41-51), but we only have *one verse* that sums up His life during His "growing up" years.

Luke 3:2 NIV

And Jesus grew in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men.

- We have two primary choices in our parenting philosophy. One is to prepare the path, to make sure everything is smooth and safe. The other option is to prepare our children to handle any terrain they may face. I think the better of these two choices is to prepare the person, and to do so you must choose to raise your child with a focus on the same four areas that are mentioned in this verse about Jesus as He was "growing up."

Focus on growth

- The first focus during the years of zero to thirty is a focus on growth. These are the years when you will grow, develop, and mature. Growth requires grace, and growth allows for failure, which should free you from fear and perfectionism. The expectation is progress, not perfection. It is okay to fall down, but it is not okay to stay down. Try new things, encourage new things, explore and experiment. Be patient and persistent. Focus on growing and learning and expanding the horizons.
- Next, I will use an illustration to help you understand and remember the four areas in which you are to grow. Just like a car, if you don't have four wheels on the ground and functioning the way they should be, you will end up in one ditch or another. You could end up hurting yourself or others, and you are not going to go very far.

Focus on growing in wisdom

- Wisdom is the capacity to understand and function.
- Show and tell with your children. Show them and tell them how to do things. Bring them along with you to what you are doing, and teach them as you go. Don't just tell them what to do, but also why to do it, from how to tie their shoes, to keeping and maintaining a house, to how to handle money.
- Create in them a hunger to learn and a process for learning. Invest in education. (Use educational board games, books, watch a good movie and then talk about it. Get and audible account.)

- Expand their mind and their horizons. Talk to people and shadow them. Take your children to see things both stateside and internationally. Keep sharp as you go along.

Prov 4:7b-9 ESV

Get wisdom, and whatever you get, get insight. 8 Prize her highly, and she will exalt you; she will honor you if you embrace her. 9 She will place on your head a graceful garland; she will bestow on you a beautiful crown."

Focus on growing in stature

- This is physically growing and taking care of their bodies. Tell them how their body works, how to take care of it with sleep, exercise, diet, and medical care (for younger families, keep a consistent schedule).

1 Tim 4:8 NIV

For physical training is of some value, but godliness has value for all things, holding promise for both the present life and the life to come.

Focus on growing in favor with God

- Favor - a winning quality or attractiveness that invites a favorable reaction, the state of being approved or held in regard.
- Do what pleases Him, which means getting to know Him (by reading, praying, participating in the life of the church) and doing what He says because you love Him. Honor Him through service and giving). God's love language is obedience. **"If you love me, you will keep my commandments."** (John 14:15 ESV)

Focus on growing in favor with people

- Tell them *why* we love people not just *to* love people.
- Show and tell them how to interact with people and how to be a good friend. Teach them ways to show and receive love (love languages), the power of a smile, to look someone in the eyes. Teach them verbal and non-verbal communication. Teach them to be on time and to keep their word. (A helpful book is "How to win friends and influence people" by Dale Carnegie.)

Prov 17:17 ESV

A friend loves at all times, and a brother is born for adversity.

Conclusion

- What happens when the wheels are not working well.
- Help your children and grandchildren with this. Ask them how they are doing in these four areas Mental / Physical / Spiritual / Social or the Mind / Body / Spirit / Soul.
- Pay attention to yourself.
- Keep rolling.

Phil 3:14

I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus.