

BIBLE STUDY: The Hidden Years

Luke 2:39–40 —Study Guide

OPENING QUESTION (5 minutes)

What does it mean to you that Jesus spent thirty years in complete obscurity before beginning His public ministry?

SECTION 1: HEAD (Understanding the Text)

Read Luke 2:39–40: *"And when they had performed everything according to the Law of the Lord, they returned into Galilee, to their own town of Nazareth. And the child grew and became strong, filled with wisdom, and the favor of God was upon him."*

Key Greek Words

Performed — **πληρώω** (plēroō): "To fill" or "to complete." Joseph and Mary didn't do *most* of what the Law required—they filled it completely. Every requirement was satisfied.

Grew — **αύξάνω** (auxanō): Organic, biological growth. Not sudden or miraculous, but gradual, real, physical development. Luke emphasizes Jesus' genuine humanity.

Became strong — **κραταίωω** (krataioō): To grow strong or be strengthened. Increasing capability and maturity in every way.

Filled with wisdom — **σοφία** (sophia): Spiritual understanding and the capacity to know and apply God's truth. Not merely intellectual knowledge but spiritual maturity.

Favor — **χάρις** (charis): Grace. God's unmerited kindness and delight. "Was upon him" (ἐπ' αὐτόν) suggests God's active, continuous blessing resting upon Jesus.

Study Questions (10 minutes)

1. What does "performed everything according to the Law of the Lord" tell us about Joseph and Mary's approach to obedience?
2. Luke uses three verbs to describe Jesus' development: grew, became strong, and was filled with wisdom. Why use multiple words instead of one?

3. The favor of God rested upon Jesus before He did anything publicly. What does this tell us about the basis of God's favor—is it performance-based or identity-based?
 4. Read Luke 1:35. How does Luke 2:39–40 confirm what Gabriel said about Jesus' identity from birth?
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SECTION 2: HEART (Emotional and Spiritual Response)

The Gospel Truth: Jesus had not yet called a disciple, healed anyone, preached a sermon, or performed a miracle. And yet: The favor of God was upon Him.

The Father's pleasure was not based on performance. It was based on identity.

Reflection Questions (10 minutes)

1. Where in your life are you measuring your worth by accomplishment rather than by your identity in Christ? (Job, parenting, ministry, appearance, social media, etc.)
 2. The sermon says, "Never mistake obscurity for God's absence." Are you in an obscure season right now? How does Luke 2:39–40 speak to you?
 3. What would change in your life if you truly believed your worth was secure in Christ, apart from your performance?
 4. Read Ephesians 1:3–6. What does it mean to be "in the Beloved"?
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SECTION 3: HANDS (Practical Application)

Choose ONE to commit to this week:

1. Obey What God Has Already Said

Identify one area where you know what God's Word says but haven't fully obeyed it. Don't wait for more clarity. Take one concrete step of obedience this week.

2. Trust God's Placement

Stop comparing your Nazareth to someone else's Jerusalem. Write down: What is God doing in my hidden place? How is He forming me here?

3. Find Value in Gradual Growth

Stop comparing your chapter three to someone else's chapter twenty. Write down one area where you've grown spiritually in the past year. Celebrate it.

4. Recognize Your Ordinary Work Matters

Before work tomorrow, pray: "Lord, how are You forming me through this work today?" At day's end, reflect on one way you worked with excellence.

5. Rest in Your Identity

Each day this week, write one accomplishment (or failure) and one truth about your identity in Christ that remains the same regardless. Example: *My job performance doesn't determine my worth. I am loved as God's beloved child in Christ.*

Closing Prayer

Father, help us to trust that You're at work in our hidden places. Help us to obey Your Word without waiting for signs. Help us to embrace Your placement in our lives. Help us to rest in our identity as Your beloved children, valued not for what we accomplish but for whose we are. In Jesus name, amen.
