

Did Jesus Make Mistakes?

“Let this mind be in you all, which was also in Christ Jesus, who, being in the form of God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped. But He emptied Himself, taking upon Himself the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men. And being found in the form of a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to death, even death on a cross” (Phil. 2:5-8).

One day, my wife and I were sitting at a burger joint, surrounded by our kids. The next table was jammed with little kids too, and a drink showed up for the 2-year-old. The little guy picked it up and spilled the glass all over the table. What did his dad do? Barked at the kid and disciplined him.

One of our kids said, “Everybody makes mistakes. That kid didn’t do anything wrong. He’s just got little hands, and that was a big glass.”

As we discussed the scene with our kids, I asked, “What’s the difference between a sin and learning through trial and error?”

That scene inaugurated a saying at our house: “There’s a big difference between committing a sin and making a mistake.”

When as Christians we declare that Jesus is perfect, it seems to me that we acknowledge His sinlessness while giving lip service to His humanity. I want to be clear—Jesus never sinned. But I don’t think that means it was impossible for Jesus in His full humanity while on the earth to learn from trial and error. When Jesus was a little kid, did He ever spill a drop from a cup?

Jesus wasn’t sinful, yet He was entirely human, enjoying and coping with the fullness of human experience like the rest of

us. Jesus never sinned, but I don't think the Bible requires us to say He never learned through trial and error. When Luke 2:52 (NIV) says "Jesus grew in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man," it means He grew, learned, changed, progressed, hit His thumb with a hammer a few times on the job with His dad, and learned to write by messing up, messing up and messing up until His motor skills caught up with His brain.

God deals with our sins, but God doesn't discipline us for learning through our trial-and-error efforts. He is a Father who makes the most of mistakes to teach us. I believe that God invites you to stretch, grow, try and even fail as you experiment with doing difficult things for His glory. Spend your energy avoiding sins and learning through trial and error. {eoa}

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