

Losing His Presence

After the Feast was over, while his parents were returning home, the boy Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem, but they were unaware of it. ... When they did not find him, they went back to Jerusalem to look for him. **—Luke 2:43, 45**

In this story, we are looking at young Jesus while He lived here on earth with His earthly parents. Nevertheless, this illustration from the life of Jesus illustrates the way in which the sovereign Holy Spirit may test our sensitivity to Him by not moving with us when we choose to carry on with our plans.

The occasion was not only the observance of the Feast of Passover, but it was also the Bar Mitzvah of Jesus. Although from birth Jesus was God as though He were not man, and man as though He were not God, Jesus was now being truly authenticated as the God-man—especially by Joseph and Mary, who knew the facts.

But Joseph and Mary missed it. Apparently, the dialogue with Jesus and the teachers in the temple continued for three days—all without the knowledge of Joseph and Mary. Jesus was doing His Father's business.

What a pity that Joseph and Mary missed it. When the Feast was over, Joseph and Mary returned home. Jesus stayed behind, but “they were unaware of it” (v. 43). In other words, they sincerely thought Jesus was right there with them. Why? They presumed He would adjust to their thinking and plans. After all, it was—as far as they were concerned—time to go home. They did not see a need to adjust to Him. But He chose to stay behind.

Joseph and Mary moved on as if nothing had happened. Unaware that Jesus had stayed behind, they sincerely thought He was with them. If we discover that we have moved ahead of God and

have left Him behind, we must go looking for Him. That is what Joseph and Mary had to do.

Once we have lost God's special presence, we can only find Him by initially returning to the place where we lost Him.

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