

Luke 2: 51 Then he went down with them and came to Nazareth, and was obedient to them. His mother treasured all these things in her heart.

52 And Jesus increased in wisdom and in years,<sup>l</sup> and in divine and human favour.  
Und Jesus nahm zu an Weisheit, Alter und Gnade bei Gott und den Menschen.

## **Gauging Our Growth: A Year End Challenge**

### **How do we mature in Discipleship?**

At the end of the year it is quite natural that several people spend time in self-evaluation. How did the year go. What did I achieve. What did I lose. What are the things I would treasure in my heart as memories for the future. What are the things I would continue to cherish doing. What are the things I would rather not do again. What are the new horizons that I would want to set my eyes on.

Of the many indices that would define this evaluation for a Christian one crucial element would be the Discipleship score!

Did we mature in our walk with Jesus? Was it a static? Did we walk backwards?

An year in interregnum. How did it affect us as a church. Did we grow in maturity. Did we strengthen our core team.

Luke 2:52 presents before us four aspects of Growth.

### **Growing in Wisdom**

What is Wisdom? The Greek Word used is Sophia and its Hebrew equivalent is Hokma. German texts use Weisheit. (vaishait)

Wisdom is the ability to interpret life, the ability to read the signs of the times, ethical moral framework that helps you navigate the course of life.

It is your response to instruction, criticism struggles and challenges of life

It is your ability to understand what is being revealed unto you, comprehending the dynamic unfolding of the mysteries of God.

It is righteousness, justice and uprightness in a world where the market defines policies of governance

It is the fear of God, the awe and wonder before God that helps you see beyond the temporary into the meaning and realms of eternity.

Wisdom is the realisation that the quieter you become the more you are able to listen and hear.

The story of the speeding wheel that never heard the sounds it would have cherished to hear until it was broken down one day and was forced to slow down. Wisdom is not the mad rush with life. Wisdom is not about the money you earn. It is about how you invest your life for posterity to cherish.

### **Growing in Maturity** (helika, age, alter)

The Mayor of my city is a 21 year old young friend of ours. Right from the day she was elected critics started shouting that she was not mature to be the Mayor of Thiruvananthapuram and the question was raised- is maturity only about numbers, years and age.

Malala Yousuf Sai was 17 when she became the youngest recipient of the Nobel Peace Prize. Greta Thunberg at 12 rocked the nations with her ambassadorial engagement with Climate questions. Maturity is not always gauged by age.

Then what is maturity. Here is a 12 year old boy amidst the festival sitting with the rabbis and asking them questions. When the mother who sought the lost child, found him and chided he asked- Did you not know I must be in my father's house.

They prove the point that maturity begins when one starts to live for others. When the I, Me, Mine Paradigm makes Way to Us and More So the YOU.

Its more like the Ubuntu- Maturity is a social construct. A group of young children shown a bag and mangoes and told the one who rushes there first gets all of it. But they happily walked to the basket and shared the mango among themselves making sure everyone else got a good piece. That is the maturity of the community we are talking about when we talk of a kingdom.

### **Growing in Divine Favour** (Gnade bei Gott)

As a community of Grace we would have quite often discussed this word- what does mean it grow in the Grace of God.

Charis- growing the way pleasing to God, the way where you in the centre of God's plan and purpose in life. Where you realise- He is still working on me, to make me what I ought to be and In His Time He makes all things beautiful.

Grace is being on target where God intend us to be.

Not like the archer who shot first and then drew the circle around his arrow making it at the bulls eye.

The desire to be in the house of the Lord is the deep desire to listen to God and shape your life as God originally intended it to be.

### **Growing in Human Favour** (Gnade bei Gott und den Menschen)

The most important question of all these is how do we grow in the favour of human beings.

A mother treasuring the maturing of a son, the rabbis amazed at the questions of a teenager. The text goes beyond that.

The Pandemic threw quite a few challenges specially with the quarantines in the first phases. Have we heard of young people who brought food to the positive people risking their own lives relentless. Having no way to thank them they waved with gratitude each time they came- that is growing in grace.

Have we seen young people resolving that they would not disturb the equilibrium of creation by being eco- insensitive. That is growing in grace of the generations yet to be.

Have we seen spouses resolving that the other half has to right to their quality time. Parents resolving that their quality time is the right of the children. Children resolving that taking care of their parents is their responsibility. That is growing in grace of the family.

Well we can go on.

But the question is- Are we growing as a community of Disciples and as Disciples. Growing in Wisdom, Growing in maturity, Growing in Divine Grace and Growing in Human Grace.

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