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Seminaries and Institutes

# LIKE THE SAVIOR:

## GROWING IN FOUR IMPORTANT AREAS

*We don't know much about how Jesus Christ grew up, but Luke 2:52 gives us a big clue.*

A woman with blonde hair, wearing a blue jacket, a red and grey backpack, and a harness, is rappelling down a grey rock cliff. She is looking up towards the sun, which is low in the sky, creating a bright, hazy background. The cliff face is textured and shows some orange lichen. A rope is attached to her harness and extends upwards out of the frame.

“So, I’m supposed to . . . what?”  
I had listened. Really, I had. The instructor had checked my harness, had shown me exactly how to release the rope, had even looked me right in the eyes and said, “I will NOT let you fall!”

But at that crucial moment, there I stood: shaking and sweating, as I looked over my shoulder and down . . . way down, knowing I had to take that first step.

Off a cliff.

Now, perhaps you haven't been in my shoes, about to literally step off a cliff, hoping that you're prepared enough to rappel safely down. But you've likely been there spiritually. You know, when you've studied the scriptures on your own and you've heard teachers testify of true doctrine and principles. You feel the Spirit inviting you to act in ways that will help you become more like the Savior. You're excited to take this step and show the Lord how committed you are to His gospel.

Then you think, "How do I do that?"

And what seemed so clear and doable just a moment ago drops away. There you are, standing at the edge of a spiritual cliff, not sure if you have the right equipment or preparation to act on the truth you've received.

To become like Jesus Christ: How do you *do* that?

## START AT THE BEGINNING

The Savior began His mortal life the same way you and I did: as an infant. And in time, like us, Jesus began to grow up (see Doctrine and Covenants 93:11–17). He learned how to walk, talk, and laugh. He learned how to work, read, and get along with people.

In fact, the way the Lord "grew up" is recorded in Luke 2:52: "And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man."

If we want to become like the Savior, we can follow His example.

So let's look at this pattern and see for ourselves how becoming like Jesus Christ *is* possible!



*There you are, standing at the edge of a spiritual cliff, not sure if you have the right equipment or preparation to act on the truth you've received.*

## "INCREASE IN WISDOM"

God created our minds to have an amazing capacity to evaluate, process, and implement knowledge. Facts, figures, skills, procedures—the amount of information we can accumulate is nearly limitless!

But like the Savior, we seek to increase in *wisdom*, not just information. Wisdom is being able to correctly use information, understand our choices, and make good decisions.

"The proper use of knowledge constitutes wisdom," taught Elder James E.

Talmage (1862–1933) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles.<sup>1</sup> He also explained how the Savior gained wisdom: "He garnered knowledge by study, and gained wisdom by prayer, thought, and effort."<sup>2</sup> Alma taught his son Helaman, "O, remember, my son, and learn *wisdom* in thy youth; yea, learn in thy youth to keep the commandments of God" (Alma 37:35; emphasis added). Think about it: Faith, study, and obedience enhance our ability to obtain knowledge and increase in wisdom!

## WISDOM

How could you apply the principles of faith and obedience to help you increase in wisdom?

In what ways can increasing in wisdom help you become more like the Savior?

### LEARN MORE:

See 2 Nephi 9:28–29; Doctrine and Covenants 130:18–19.



## “INCREASE IN STATURE”

Nephi was big and strong. He was what the scriptures call “large in stature” (1 Nephi 2:16). I am not. Nephi’s stature was designed to carry out very different activities than my stature because the Lord had different tasks for Nephi. Nephi had to build a ship, find food for his family, and help them travel through the wilderness.

Our physical bodies have what we

### STATURE

In what ways is caring for your physical body related to caring for your spirit?

What will you change or improve in how you care for your body?

#### LEARN MORE:

Read the April 2012 general conference talk “Thanks Be to God,” or watch the video “God’s Greatest Creation” by President Russell M. Nelson.

need in order to live in and enjoy mortal life. Because of God’s divine design, a newborn child increases in stature over time. We don’t have to develop additional organs or limbs as we age—those elements were already created as a part of our bodies. There is no additional assembly required! But in order for us to serve God and those around us, we must maintain the health of our bodies.

Our physical bodies are the perfectly designed temple, or house, for our spirits (see 1 Corinthians 3:16–17; 6:19–20). President Russell M. Nelson taught: “Your body, whatever its natural gifts, is a magnificent creation of God. It is a tabernacle of flesh—a temple for your spirit.”<sup>3</sup>

Our bodies might experience severe physical challenges, disabilities, and pain because we are having a mortal experience, but our Heavenly Father designed our bodies perfectly to successfully accomplish our opportunities in life.

## “INCREASE IN FAVOR WITH GOD”

Elder Jeffrey R. Holland of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles taught that “the first great *truth* of all eternity is that God loves *us* with all of *His* heart, might, mind, and strength.”<sup>4</sup>

God loves *you*. Even when you’re having a bad hair day, He loves *you*—with all of your strengths, weaknesses, questions, and hopes. So how do you “increase in favor with God”? You show Him that you love Him back!

Jesus once told His disciples, “If ye love me, keep my commandments” (John 14:15). Your obedience demonstrates your love for God. Your willing obedience in small, daily activities can prepare you to respond, as His invitations come in the future, and accomplish even greater things.

### FAVOR WITH GOD

How did the Savior demonstrate that He loved Heavenly Father?  
What does this teach you about Jesus?

What effective, righteous action could you take *today* to show your love for God?

#### LEARN MORE:

See Mosiah 2:22, 41.

“As we learn more about Jesus Christ, we develop greater faith in Him and we naturally want to follow His example.”

Jean B. Bingham, Oct. 2017 general conference.

## “INCREASE IN FAVOR WITH MAN”

Surprise! Having the most social media followers does *not* mean you have “favor with man.”

Jesus demonstrated a different way of influencing others—and who He allowed to influence Him. He “went about doing good, . . . for God was with him” (Acts 10:38).

### LEARN MORE:

Be a friend like Ammon was to King Lamoni. See Alma 17:19–18:41.

## FAVOR WITH MAN

What are some ways you can be a better friend to those around you?

How could following the Savior’s example of “going about doing good” increase your righteous influence with others?

President Henry B. Eyring, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, once said, “I can still remember, as if it were today, friends who touched my life for good long ago. They are gone, but the memory of their love, example, faith, and testimony still lifts me.”<sup>5</sup>

You can increase your influence by being a friend who touches lives for good! *For the Strength of Youth* teaches you how: “Show genuine interest in others; smile and let them know you care about them. Treat everyone with kindness and respect, and refrain from judging and criticizing those around you . . . Make a special effort to be a friend to those who are shy or lonely, have special needs, or do not feel included.”<sup>6</sup>

Think about the individuals you honestly admire and respect—the ones you *favor*. What characteristics have they developed that remind you of Jesus Christ? Because as good as our friends may be, our very best Friend is Jesus Christ, and His example is the one we want to follow!

## IT’S ALL CONNECTED

“And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man” (Luke 2:52). As you follow the Savior’s pattern of growth, you’ll find that the elements work together perfectly, and you *will* become more like Him. Your mind, body, and spirit will work together for your good, and you will be able to bless the lives of many others and “serve [God] with all your heart, might, mind and strength!” (Doctrine and Covenants 4:2). **NE**

### NOTES

1. James E. Talmage, *The Articles of Faith*, 12th ed. (1924), 90.
2. James E. Talmage, *Jesus the Christ* (1916), 112.
3. Russell M. Nelson, Oct. 1998 general conference.
4. Jeffrey R. Holland, Apr. 2016 general conference.
5. Henry B. Eyring, Apr. 2002 general conference.
6. *For the Strength of Youth* (2011), 16.

