Luke 2:41-52 (NKJV)

41 His parents went to Jerusalem every year at the Feast of the Passover.
42 And when He was twelve years old, they went up to Jerusalem according to the custom of the feast.
43 When they had finished the days, as they returned, the Boy Jesus lingered behind in Jerusalem. And Joseph and His mother did not know it;
44 but supposing Him to have been in the company, they went a day's journey, and sought Him among their relatives and acquaintances.
45 So when they did not find Him, they returned to Jerusalem, seeking Him.
46 Now so it was that after three days they found Him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the teachers, both listening to them and asking them questions.
47 And all who heard Him were astonished at His understanding and answers.

a Males were required to attend the Passover (Ex 13:7); but women were not. The great rabbi, Hillel (born about b.c. 110; died a.d. 10), recommended that they should do so, and the practice was esteemed an act of admirable piety.
b The Passover, one of the three great Jewish feasts, commemorated the mercy of God in causing his angel to “pass over” the houses in Israel on the night that he slew all the firstborn of Egypt. It took place at the full moon which occurred next after the vernal equinox. At it the firstfruits of the harvest were offered (Lev 23:10–15). The second feast, Pentecost, occurred fifty days later, and commemorated the giving of the law. At it the firstfruits of the wheat harvest, in the form of bread (Lev 23:17), were offered. The third feast, or Tabernacles, occurred near the end of September, or beginning of October, and commemorated the days when Israel dwelt in tents in the wilderness. It was observed as a thanksgiving for the blessings of the year. Every adult male Jews dwelling in Judaea was required to attend these three feasts. Josephus tells us that the members assembled at them in Jerusalem often exceeded two millions.
c the altitude of Jerusalem is higher than that of Nazareth, and the distance between the two places is about seventy miles
d eight days in all; one day for killing the passover, and seven for observing the feast of unleavened bread which followed it—Ex 12:15; Lev 23:5-6

e to take advantage of the opportunity to hear the great teachers in the schools

f We see here the confidence of the parents, and the independence of the child. The sinlessness of Jesus was not due to any exceptional care on the part of his parents. Jews going to and from their festivals traveled in caravans for pleasure and safety. In the daytime the young folks mingled freely among the travelers, and sought out whatever companionship they wished. But in the evening, when the camp was formed, and the tents were pitched, the members of each family came together.

g these teachers had schools in which they taught for the fees of their pupils.
h He was not teaching: the God of order does not expect childhood to teach. He was among them as a modest scholar, and not as a forward child. The rabbinical method of instruction was to state cases, or problems, bearing upon the interpretation or application of the law, which cases or problems were to be solved by the pupils.
So when they [his parents] saw Him, they were amazed; and His mother said to Him, “Son, why have You done this to us? Look, Your father and I have sought You anxiously.”

And He said to them, “Why did you seek Me? Did you not know that I must be about My Father’s business?”

But they did not understand the statement which He spoke to them.

Then He went down with them and came to Nazareth, and was subject to them, but His mother kept all these things in her heart.

And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men.

Mary’s two statements:

1) “Why have you treated me like this?”
   If she were talking today, she might say, “After all I’ve done to you, and this is the thanks I get!?!?”

2) “Your father and I have been looking for you with great distress.” You’ve caused us turmoil.

- Luke is not afraid of telling us that Jesus matured. When he was twelve, he was twelve. Twelve year olds don’t act like forty year olds.

- There is an age-appropriate immaturity that requires grace. Rebellion requires law and discipline.

- Just because they didn’t understand one another doesn’t mean that Jesus sinned.

APPLICATION:

1. Just because you see an apparent contradiction in Scripture, remember you don’t understand perfectly. Have humility, and realize that God is the Author.

2. Your job as a parent is to take immature people and help them mature, not simply punish them for immaturity, or to let them off the hook for rebellion.

FUNNY: Jerry Vines, imagines Jesus Christ going into the temple and having a conversation with the teachers, when he was a 12-year-old boy. And, one of the learned doctors there strokes his beard, and says, “Son, how old are You?” “Well,” He says, “On My mother’s side, I’m 12-years-old, but on My Father’s side, I’m older than My mother and as old as My Father.” You see, He was both God and man.

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1 Mary and Joseph stood as much in awe of these renowned national teachers as peasants do of kings, and were therefore astonished that their youthful son presumed to speak to them.
2 Mary, knowing all that had been divinely revealed to her concerning Jesus, should have expected to find him in the temple.
“Look, Mary!” Joseph called to his wife. “I always get a thrill when I first see the Eternal City set high on Mount Zion.” Mary and Joseph had left home three days earlier from Nazareth with a caravan of family and friends. The annual pilgrimage to Jerusalem for the Passover was a festive occasion. **Joseph and Mary were taking their 12-year-old son, Jesus, for his first visit to the temple. Jesus was now of an age to observe the requirements of Jewish law, and the Law required that Jewish men attend the feasts of Passover, Pentecost, and Tabernacles in Jerusalem.**

Jesus scooted up the path ahead of his parents toward Jerusalem. He seemed pulled to the city. The next day, they hastened through the crowded corridors of the city, the family entered the temple. The clamor of the streets died away and the sweet peace of the psalms rippled through the courtyard of the temple. Suddenly Jesus dropped to his knees beside Joseph. This experience had been a long time coming, and Jesus wanted to drink deeply from it.

Without coaxing, his childlike voice blended with the resonant sounds of mature priests as they repeated, “Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God is one Lord! You shall love the Lord with all your heart, with all your soul and strength.”

The family had left Jerusalem at noon for the return home to Nazareth. Walking half a day, they reached El Birech, an oasis north of Jerusalem. “We’ll set up camp over there,” Joseph pointed to a grassy place. He nodded to his son James. “Find your brother Jesus and gather some sticks for a fire.” When James returned he said, “I can’t find Jesus.” Mary’s heart jumped. “Run up ahead and check the campsites,” Joseph commanded James. “Ask if they have seen Jesus.”

Joseph left the oasis and began retracing their route back toward Jerusalem, asking anyone he met along the way about Jesus. James returned and reported that no one had seen Jesus all day. Evening was darkening when Joseph returned to camp. He had not found his son. “Pack up everything,” he barked to the younger children, “Jesus must still be in Jerusalem.” Within minutes, the family was back on the road. By the next day, the parents were frantic. Joseph and Mary knew that Jesus could take care of himself in Nazareth, but this was a metropolitan city. They were at their wits’ end.

Then Joseph remembered the strange look on his son’s face when they worshiped at the temple. “Let’s look in the temple,” Joseph said. They hurried to the temple. Joseph managed to ask the first priest he saw, “Have you seen a young boy here? Beautiful olive skin? A child’s white tunic, well-washed but worn?” “All the children here look like that,” the kindly priest laughed. “But there is a child sitting with the teachers of the Law; he’s causing quite a commotion...”

Joseph and Mary didn’t wait for him to elaborate. Dashing into a courtyard, they saw a tightly grouped crowd of people. There at the center was Jesus, standing in the midst of several bearded teachers and scholars. They were sitting at his feet! Mary could not contain herself any longer. With a voice of concern mixed with relief, she called out, “Son! Why have you worried us?” The crowd was silent. No one dared speak. “We have searched all of Jerusalem for you...” Mary said. Twelve-year-old Jesus sensed anguish in his mother’s voice. “Why didn’t you look first in my Father’s house?” he asked. “Didn’t you know that I would be about my Father’s business?”

**RESPONSE:**
1) Lord, give me a deeper desire to attend Your house and to join others to worship You there.  
2) Teach me the value of Your presence in my life. Help me to be diligent to get children into Your house to learn of You and worship You.

\* Written by Elmer Towns in “Praying the New Testament”