

# What Can We Learn From Joseph, the Earthly Father of Jesus?

Joseph is one of the most overlooked figures in the Bible. There isn't a lot of scripture written about him, yet he carried one of the greatest responsibilities ever given to a man: being the earthly Father of Jesus Christ. His life offers a powerful picture of what it looks like to be a godly man, husband, and Father.

## Why Does Fatherhood Matter So Much?

Research from the National Fatherhood Initiative and the U.S. Census Bureau shows that when a Father is present in the home, children are 43% more likely to earn mostly A's, 80% less likely to spend time in jail, and 75% less likely to experience teen pregnancy. If an earthly Father has that kind of impact, how much more does a godly Father shape the lives of those around Him?

Joseph is a model worth studying closely.

## Joseph Was a Man of Godly Character

We are first introduced to Joseph in Matthew 1, where we learn He was from the tribe of Judah and engaged to Mary. But his character is revealed in verse 19.

"Then Joseph her husband, being a just man, and not wanting to make her a public example, was minded to put her away secretly." - Matthew 1:19

## What Does It Mean to Be a "Just" Man?

The word "just" here means upright, righteous, honest, and full of integrity. Joseph didn't want to embarrass Mary. Even in a painful situation, he was thinking about her needs before his own. That is the heart of a godly man.

"What does the Lord require of you but to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God?" - Micah 6:8

## Joseph Was Others-Oriented

Love is a sacrifice to bless others. Joseph's instinct was to protect Mary, not to protect his own reputation. Sin turns a sacrificial heart into a self-centered one, but Joseph's heart reflected something different. He was willing to absorb the cost for someone else's sake.

## Joseph Was a Spiritually Engaged Man

In Luke 2:22-24, we read that Joseph and Mary brought Jesus to the temple to present Him to the Lord and offer a sacrifice, as the Law of Moses required. Joseph didn't send his family to worship while he stayed home. He led them. He showed up. He honored God's Word even in His poverty, offering what little He had.

When the prophet Simeon spoke over Jesus and Mary at the temple, Joseph received those words as His own. He marveled. He owned what God was saying to His family. That is the posture of a man who leads spiritually. What God speaks to your wife and children is something a godly man takes into His own heart as well.

## **Joseph Was a Man Who Listened to God**

In Matthew 1 and 2, God spoke to Joseph in a dream four separate times. Each time, Joseph obeyed immediately.

- He was told to take Mary as his wife. He obeyed.
- He was told to flee to Egypt in the middle of the night. He left before sunrise.
- He was told to return to Israel after Herod died. He went.
- He was warned about Archelaus and redirected to Nazareth. He listened.

This is remarkable because it had been 400 years since God had spoken through a prophet. Four hundred years of silence. And yet here was a man whose heart was so open and attentive that when God spoke, He was ready to move.

## **How Can Men Hear From God Today?**

Be in His Word daily. Stay in prayer. Keep your heart soft and surrendered. Joseph's posture was essentially: "God, I'll follow where You lead, when You lead, how You lead." That kind of faith doesn't happen overnight. It is built through consistent time with God.

When God speaks to your heart, don't shrug it off. It may be urgent. And the steps of faith you take for your family may be the very thing that preserves them, even if you can't see the full picture yet.

## **Joseph Was a Man Who Led and Protected His Family**

### **He Led in Civic Responsibility**

When Caesar's decree went out requiring everyone to register, Joseph didn't look for a way out. His wife was nine months pregnant, the journey was long, and the timing was terrible. He went anyway. He submitted to governing authorities and led his family in doing the same.

"Let every soul be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and the authorities that exist are appointed by God." - Romans 13:1

## **He Led in His Marriage**

At the birth of Jesus, Joseph was by Mary's side. He wasn't checked out or absent. He was present, engaged, and ministering to her needs practically. When the shepherds arrived, Joseph welcomed them in. He was hospitable even in humble circumstances.

## **He Led in Fearful Times**

When Herod sought to kill Jesus, Joseph woke Mary in the middle of the night and they fled to Egypt. That took courage and trust. Mary followed because Joseph had already built a track record of faithfulness. She trusted his leading because he had already proven himself to be a man of godly character.

The choices you make now determine how much trust you will have when it matters most. If you are failing in the small things today, it will show up in the critical moments tomorrow. But if you repent and pursue godliness, God will begin building that track record in you.

Protecting your family doesn't always mean standing on a hill to fight. Sometimes it means fleeing in the middle of the night because God says so. Obedience is the point, not heroics.

## **Joseph Was a Man Who Worked Hard to Provide**

Joseph was a carpenter. Matthew 13:55 confirms this. Carpentry in that region was demanding, physical labor. Wood was scarce in Galilee, so a village carpenter functioned more like a general builder, crafting furniture, farming tools, and structural elements using wood, stone, and metal. Nothing came pre-cut. He chopped the trees himself.

Joseph was poor, but he worked. He didn't make excuses. He provided for his family with what he had.

## **What Does the Bible Say About Work?**

Work was part of God's design from the very beginning. Before sin entered the world, Adam was already working in the garden. It was worship, not burden. Sin changed the experience of work, but not its purpose.

"For even when we were with you, we commanded you this: If anyone will not work, neither shall he eat." - 2 Thessalonians 3:10

If you are capable of working and you have a family to provide for, work. Do it as an act of worship. Do it as a reflection of the God who made you to be productive and purposeful.

## **Life Application**

Joseph's life is a challenge to every man, and really to every believer. He was just, others-oriented, spiritually engaged, obedient, present, and hardworking. He wasn't perfect, but he was available to God. And God used Him for one of the most significant roles in all of human history.

God wants to make you into a person who reflects His heart to others. You may feel like you've made too many mistakes or that God has moved on from you. He hasn't. Your story is not over. When you submit to Him and allow His Holy Spirit to work in your life, He begins to shape you into the person He designed you to be.

This week's challenge: Identify one area where you have been passive or absent, whether in your faith, your family, your work, or your community, and take one concrete step toward showing up. Lead in that area this week, even if it feels small.

Ask yourself these questions as you reflect:

- Am I listening for God's voice, and am I willing to obey even when it's inconvenient or costly?
- Are the people closest to me building a track record of trust in my leadership, or am I giving them reasons to doubt?
- Am I showing up fully in my responsibilities, at home, at work, and in my faith, or am I looking for the easy way out?
- What would it look like for me to own what God is speaking to my family, not just leave it to others?