

THE MAN GOD CHOSE TO RAISE HIS SON

Intro: Since today is Father's Day I want to speak with you about the kind of fathers we should aspire to be. What is the measure of a man and a true father? Perhaps we could find the answer by taking a look at the man God chose to raise His Son—Joseph. Joseph was a Jew, a part of the covenant people of the venerated tribe of Judah, a descendant of the family of David. He was a carpenter by trade, making things like plows, tools, bowls, etc. in Nazareth which was a rather despised and unimportant city.

God did not choose Joseph to be the father of His Son because Joseph was well-to-do or of high station in life. Joseph was a poor man by the standards of the Law and the times, and worked as a common laborer. What was it about Joseph that God thought was so important!? Of all the men in the world, why pick Joseph to be entrusted with the care of God's Son? The answer is character! Let's see that character develop in the story of Jesus' birth.

Joseph's character is seen in his reaction to Mary's pregnancy

Read Mt. 1:18-25 and note these points:

He was righteous or just; not sinful and immoral

The first thing we learn about Joseph is that he was committed to the law of the Lord! He intended to do what God said! In this case, his moral indignation toward Mary for her "sin" would not allow him to marry her. He certainly would not be charged with begetting a child out of wedlock.

He was merciful and compassionate; not harsh and judgmental.

Joseph's zeal for what was right was tempered by mercy and compassion. In a way, he was caught in a terrible circumstance, wanting to believe Mary, wanting to do what was right. His proposal of secret divorce seems to be an attempt to live up to both aspects of his good nature.

He was unquestioning and obedient; not faithless and rebellious.

When God revealed to Him his purposes, Joseph acts immediately in obedience to God.

He was pure and self-controlled; not lustful and intemperant.

Joseph reveals remarkable power over his passions. Joseph spent not only his wedding night but many more afterward in abstinence. He was a man of real moral strength.

Sometimes men consider obedience to God and compassion toward others weak and unmanly. "Machosim" is often a disguise for a lack of spiritual self-control and strength. A real man governs his actions by truth even when it is difficult. That's why God selected Joseph to be the earthly father of His Son!

Joseph's character is further seen in the birth of Jesus

He honored the authority of government in obeying the law of land (Lk. 2:4-5)

Obedience to this law required for Joseph considerable inconvenience. But there was no rationalization or evasion. Joseph honored the authority of law.

He honored God's word in the naming of Jesus (Lk. 2:21)

This rite was carried out by the father. Joseph could have chosen another name; but he honored God's word by naming his child "Jesus".

He led his family in the worship of God (Lk. 2:22)

Joseph is an active participant in the dedication and purification ceremonies of the Law.

Later he leads in taking his family to Jerusalem for the Passover. He didn't send his children to worship; he took them!

Through the years I've noted that some men regard worship as a place for women and children; but a real father leads his family in worship. Manhood is not proven by rebellion against the "powers that be", but instead by humble submission to them, knowing that God is pleased when we are obedient to government.

Joseph's character is seen in the threat upon the family by Herod

He used a cautious and reasonable approach to danger; not egotistical and unreasonable challenging of reality.

For Joseph the best solution to this danger was to lead his family away from Bethlehem, just as the Lord instructed. Later when God instructed him to return and he learned that Herod's son Archaleus was reigning he was "afraid". No self-respecting man could ever admit that! Yet, it was fear that once again led Joseph to look to God for instruction.

He made decisions with the Lord's guidance; not by his own self-determination.

It's interesting that the angel of God said, "Go to Egypt and remain there until I tell you." Joseph did not make any attempt to act without God's instructions. Cf. v. 19.

Some confuse manhood with wreckless defiance of danger; but real man may be afraid of danger and flee rather than foolishly fight. In the world, to be a man is to always "be in charge"; with God real manhood is submission to the Lord, turning over all our decisions to His guidance.

Conclusion: So you can see, that Joseph was not what many people would associate with true manhood or fatherhood; but Joseph was God's man! By the world's standard he was not successful. He would not have been the world's pick for "man" of the year! But he was a great man in God's sight. He had all the spiritual strengths to lead and direct his family and to raise the Christ.

Young men, aspire to be a real man!

Women, if you have such a husband be grateful for him.

Children, respect and love you father if he seeks to protect you from moral danger and guide you in what is right.