

Joseph Did It – You Should, Too!

By Moe & Paige Becnel

Well, if you are reading this that means you made it through the Christmas and New Years festivities!

We hope that during Christmas you and your family spent some time focusing on the manger scene
a family in unity,
a mother and father focused on the birth of a first-born child,
a pregnant teenage mom having to deliver her baby in a barn,
a star in the heavens symbolizing a supernatural event,
angels appearing to shepherds,
three wise men bowing down to a new-born baby king,
--- and a new stepfather named Joseph!

Did you remember Joseph this Christmas and the role he had in Mary's life, at the birth, and in Jesus' life? Probably not, because he is pretty much a "sideline" character in most Christmas plays and stories. But we think Joseph's life speaks loudly to the lives of today's stepparents, so we wanted to share a few thoughts about his life, and the responsibilities he undertook.

Many of us have married a spouse with children, and we find ourselves faced with not knowing our role, our responsibilities, or our boundaries regarding the children in the newfound covenant relationship. We often did not anticipate or bargain for the stepparent role – we just wanted a beautiful/ handsome, loving spouse.

No one prepared us for what was to come – as if someone could have!

Joseph had a very similar experience. Matthew 1: 18-19 reads, *"Now the birth of Jesus Christ took place under these circumstances: When His mother Mary had been promised in marriage to Joseph, before they came together, she was found to be pregnant [through the power] of the Holy Spirit. And her [promised] husband Joseph, being a just and upright man and not willing to expose her publicly and to shame and disgrace her, decided to repudiate and dismiss (divorce) her quietly and secretly."*

Joseph was not prepared for what happened to Mary. How could he have been? In this unusual situation Joseph's 1st thought was, "this is not my child. This is not what I had planned." But then, Joseph had a supernatural visit. Matthew 1:20-21 says, *"But as he was thinking this over, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, Joseph, descendant of David, do not be afraid to take Mary [as] your wife, for that which is conceived in her is of (from, out of) the Holy Spirit. She will bear a Son, and you shall call His name Jesus."*

Joseph gained understanding, direction, and instruction as to how he should respond to the situation, his role and responsibility. Joseph was given responsibility to name the child Jesus.

Even though God could have empowered Mary to raise Jesus in a single-parent home, God hand-picked Joseph to fill an earthly father role in Jesus' life.

Read the next verses from the book of Luke →

Luke 3: 23b says, *"He(Jesus) was the son, so it was thought, of Joseph."*

Luke 2: 27 states, *"When the parents brought in the child Jesus to do for him what the custom of the Law required, ..."*

Luke 2: 33 reads, *"The child's father and mother marveled at what was said about him."*

Luke 2: 41 says, "Every year his parents went to Jerusalem for the Feast of the Passover."
Luke 2: 48 states, "When his parents saw him, they were astonished. His mother said to him, "Son, why have you treated us like this? Your father and I have been anxiously searching for you."

People in that day did not know that Jesus was not Joseph's natural born son. Joseph took on a "spirit of adoption" toward his wife's son. Joseph treated Jesus as his own.

You may be thinking, "But that is different - Jesus was God's Son."

Well, what about this scripture? Psalm 127:3 reads, "Children are a gift from the LORD; they are a reward from him."

All children are gifts from God.

And there are times that God puts other people in our path of life to love, nurture, and care for, as He did with Joseph --- and as He has done with you if you married a spouse with children (regardless of their age).

You Have A Responsibility:

Have you gained any insight from Joseph as to your role as a stepparent?

What could you be doing better, or differently?

How can you have more of a positive impact on the "new" (step) children you now have?

Just as Joseph was responsible for Jesus, you are responsible for the well being of each member of your new family. You are not taking the place of your new children's birth father, but you have just as much influence over them.

You will have an **impact** on your family members based on how you treat them.

Loving them will have a positive impact on them, even if they show no response at first.

Tolerating them, or basically ignoring them will have a negative impact on them, even if you did not intend to harm them. Any lack of accepting them will cause them to not feel a part of your new home life, and your home will be divided.

Some children have a hard time accepting a new father or mother figure. Understand that they did not choose you; you chose their mother or father and they chose you. Continue to be the adult, and do not respond negatively to their negative responses. Keeping a positive attitude is difficult, but necessary for reaching resistant children.

Stepparent Roles:

We believe Joseph played an important part in Jesus' life, completing the father/ mother responsibilities for him and his siblings.

Stepparents can fill a gap in a home where the child's other natural parent is not present.

Fathers provide three things to a child:

1. Provision – both spiritual and physical needs
2. Identity – a sense of belonging; importance and significance {our home became the Becnel/ Morriz family – no longer just the Becnel home}
3. Security – a safe, peaceful and loving environment produces courage

Mothers provide three things to a child:

1. A "nesting" instinct that turns a house into a home.
2. Intuition – a sense about things that serves as a warning for the family.
3. Spiritual sensitivity – women tend to be more spiritually connected than men.

Consider the following two facts about Joseph:

1. Joseph is listed in the genealogy of Jesus, who was to come from the lineage of David. Matthew 1: 16 reads, "Jacob begat Joseph, the husband of Mary, and of her was born Jesus who is called Christ. (Also in Luke Chapter 3)
2. Joseph's recorded legacy (what we read about him today) is based on his role and responsibility toward Jesus his stepson, not his natural children.
What legacy are you leaving? How will your family members remember you?

Follow Joseph's example, and embrace the children in your life regardless if you birthed them or not. You have enough love to spread around, so start spreading!

Have a BLESSED 2004!

If your family needs change, you change first!

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