

Like a Father

The Human Dad God Had

June 19, 2022

Today we're taking a lesson from Jesus' foster-father who, as I'll show, was no ordinary Joe!



So, **how is the dad you had like God?** And how are they *different*? How often do you suppose we unconsciously project our imperfect earthly father's traits onto our perfectly righteous heavenly Father?



Some say that Jesus transformed the OT image of a harsh, condemning God into a kind and loving NT Father. Not true. **Jesus didn't come to save God's image ... He is God's image!** (Col 1:15) And He didn't come to *remake* His Word, but to *restore* and *reveal* and *fulfill* it. Because, Isaiah's OT perspective of God as "our Father" in "heaven" (Is 63:15-16; 64:1, 8) had been all but *lost*. So Jesus *fleshed* it out to help us *find the balance of God's intimacy and authority*, and to *avoid* the *extremes* of seeing our Father as either **tame and indulgent**, or **rabid and intolerant**.



I love C.S. Lewis' balancing act in a line relating to Aslan the lion, saying: **They were terribly afraid it would turn and look at them, yet in some [strange] way they wished it would.** (The Magician's Nephew) Because, **though He is fierce, He's much more than a force.** And when Jesus was teaching us to pray to God as *our Father*, He wasn't trying to find a warm-fuzzy metaphor to humanize a horrifying *force*. He didn't look back on happy childhood memories of *Joseph*, and think, "Yeah, we should think of God more like ol' Joe." Because, **God isn't like a father ... He is the Father!** Ol' Joe was *like* a Father, because **everything good about fatherhood is a mere reflection of our Everlasting Father!** But, know why I think the Lord chose ol' Joseph for Jesus? Because *he* came the *closest*.



And I can *prove* it, even though little is said *about* him and *nothing* is said *by* him. But I love uncovering Scripture's *hidden* stories *forensically*, and **building solid deductions from the information we're given**, as opposed to *flimsy conjectures* based on *vain imaginations*. For instance, we can *know*, by *deduction*, that ol' Joe was *afraid* to *marry* Mary (*after* she told him *God* got her *pregnant*), because the angel said, "Don't be afraid to marry Mary." (Mt 1:20) Now, I'd be afraid *too*! That she's *nuts*! Not to mention what everyone's gonna think and say behind his back – or to his face for that matter. There's only one thing crazier than your bride-to-be telling you that God just got her pregnant ... **the Everlasting Father wants you to be His dad!** Do you get how insane that sounds just to say? The God of all creation created himself like one *us* and had a human dad!



So what can we know about ol' Joe? He was a *builder*. (Mk 6:3) And Sepphoris, a commercial Jewish city called *the jewel of Galilee*, was just four miles north of Nazareth, and undergoing a massive reconstruction throughout Jesus' youth. So, though it's *conjecture*, this is quite possibly where Jesus apprenticed. If so, He and his dad would've walked this very road to work. Ol' Joe was a "*tekton*", (Mt 13:55) **a builder with wood or stone**, whether a *master builder*, an *expert craftsman*, or just a *common, low paid, construction guy*. But **he's gotta be Joe construction guy**. Know why? Well ...

Joseph and Mary took [Jesus] to Jerusalem ... to offer a sacrifice in keeping with what is said in the Law of the Lord: **[regarding a new mother (Lev 12:6-8)]** "a pair of doves or two young pigeons." – Luke 2:22-24 NIV

[Now, the Law actually required a lamb; but] If she *cannot afford* a lamb, she is to bring two doves or two young pigeons – Leviticus 12:6-8 NIV

It's *perfectly poetic*: **the dad of the Lamb-of-God couldn't afford a lamb of his own**. Joe's *poor*. There's more than one reason Jesus was born in a barn. Those "two birds" took the *last* of Joe's money. Know how we know? If he had any *more* he would've bought *the lamb*. And the Magi haven't arrived with their gold. Know how we know? If Joseph had a *box of gold*, Mary would've had a little lamb! You see, **first God gives the opportunity to act in faith, and then He gives the gold**.

I'm gonna *suggest* – *you* decide if it's *deduction* or *conjecture* – that ol' Joe was a mason, because 1) He was poor; and 2) It was common; and 3) His step-son is "the Rock of our Salvation", Ps 95:1 "the Stone the builders rejected", "the Chief Cornerstone", Mk 12:10 a "tried stone", a "precious cornerstone", a "sure foundation" that "[God] lays" Is 28:16 as "the Living Stone" 1 Pet 2:4 who came to "[build] a spiritual house" with "[us] ... like living stones". 1 Pet 2:4-5 **"For YAH ... is the eternal Rock"** of ages; Is 26:4 "and that Rock was Christ." And wouldn't He want a *skillset* regarding the *chief* Biblical symbols of His *nature, mission, and work*. And get this: **Jesus never used a single reference to carpentry, but tons about masonry!** Noah built with wood, Gen 6:14 the foolish with straw, 1 Cor 3:12-15 and the Lord with *the Rock*! Knowing what we know about *Joe*, know who I'd *cast* to play the *role*?



The *Rock*. Who *else*?! No power tools back then. Just the muscle you build on the job. Look how that picture changes your perception. A lot of believers have a lot of problems relating to our *heavenly* Father, because of our *earthly* fathers, because **bad dads give God a bad rap**, because **we project their faults and flaws onto our true Father**. But Jesus' *most* used term for himself is "Son of *man*," and ol' Joe's literally *the man*!

You dads play such a crucial role in crafting our perception of our true Father. And *that's* why we *all* need to be *aware* of how our Father-God *differs* from all our step-dads'. *Because, only ...*

He is the *Rock* ... a God of *truth* ... *Righteous* and *upright* is He. – Deuteronomy 32:4 NKJ



The Lord **[not only]** *is righteous*, He *loves* righteousness; – Psalm 11:7 NKJ

[Oh, and] [Joseph] was a *righteous man* – Matthew 1:19 NIV

The single *greatest* commendation God can offer a human. Only one man received it in the *entire* Old Testament: “Noah was a righteous man” and “blameless”. (Gen 6:9) And, **not to diss Noah, but God taught him how to build – not the other way ‘round!** This *one word* is all we need to *know*, to *really know* ol’ Joe. Know why? **Cuz the Lord defines, in Scripture, exactly what He means when He uses the word.**

The righteous man *leads* a *blameless life*; blessed are his children – Proverbs 20:7 NIV

The heart of the righteous *studies* how to *answer*, – Proverbs 15:28 NKJ

A righteous man *hates lying*, – Proverbs 13:5 NKJ

The righteous *care* about *justice* for the *poor*, – Proverbs 29:7 NIV

The righteous are *gracious* and *giving*. – Psalm 37:21 BSB

But the righteous are as *bold* as a *lion*. – Proverbs 28:1 NIV

[And even though ol’ Joe was righteous, he wasn’t perfect] Surely there is *not* a righteous man on *earth* who does good and *never sins*. **[That’d be the Son]** – Ecclesiastes 7:20 ESV

[For] Light is *sown* like *seed* for the *righteous* – Psalm 97:11 NAS

And one thing “the *Seed*” (Gal 3:19) saw while growing up with ol’ Joe, was **toughness tempered with tenderness**, reflecting the “kindness and sternness of [our Father] God”. (Rom 11:22) Know how we *know* that that’s *true* of ol’ Joe? Cuz when the love of his life appeared *unhinged and unfaithful*, **he didn’t allow a broken heart or wounded pride to direct his actions.** Incredibly ...

[He] did not *want* to expose *her* to *public disgrace*, **[so, after studying how to respond]** he had *in mind* to divorce her *quietly*. – Matthew 1:19 NIV

Quietly righteous. That’s just Joe’s way. Know why they didn’t record a single word? Didn’t *need* to. **His actions speak much louder. The way ours do.** Now, *Gabriel appeared* to Mary *and* to John the Baptist’s dad, Zechariah. (Lk 1:11-28) And the *shepherds* got a whole *show!* (Lk 2:13) But ol’ Joe?

An angel of the Lord appeared to *him* in a dream and *said*, “Joseph son of David ... what is conceived in [Mary] *is* from the Holy Spirit. **[A dream angel? Why would he trust a dream? He didn’t. He trusted God’s Word that came via his dream]** ... and you are to give Him the name Jesus, [lit. *Salvation*] because He will *save* His people from their *sins*. All this took place to *fulfill* what the Lord had *said* through the *prophet*: **[Isaiah (7:14)]** ‘The virgin *will* be with child *and* **[the virgin]** *will give birth* to a son, and they will call Him Immanuel’—which means, ‘God with us.’” **[So]** When Joseph woke up, he *did* what the angel of the Lord had *commanded* him and ... had no union with [Mary] *until* she **[the virgin]** *gave birth* to a son. And he gave Him the name *Jesus*. – Matthew 1:20-25 NIV

Now, *back before* his heart was *broken*, **he anticipated three big marriage blessings: public honor, that “union”, and a son to carry his name.** So please, recognize what it took for ol’ Joe to wake up and say, “Okay. Wedding’s *on*. Sex is *off*. And I got’a make it clear that God’s the father ... and *I’m not* ... and we’re naming Him *Salvation* – branding Him as *illegitimate* and *me* as an *idiot*. All *right* then!” **When it’s clear that life, as you’d dreamed, is done and gone, go for the gold** by giving it all you’ve got, **and act in heartfelt faith, and above all else, trust our Father.**

Know why the Lord only spoke to ol’ Joe in a dream? It’s all he *needed*! Know how we know? Cuz it’s all he got and he did the right thing. **God will always choose to use the softest tool.** Cuz, **He’d much rather whisper than shout.** He’ll *do* whatever it *takes*; but, **less is always more, because God always requires a step of faith.** And He knew just what to do to get everyone out of their comfort zone *and* onboard; and **with Joe He only had to whisper His Word in his ear in a dream.**

[So, take a lesson from Father Joe, and] Do not be like the *horse* or the *mule*, which have no *understanding* but must be *controlled* by *bit* and *bridle* – Psalm 32:9 NIV

For we walk by *faith*, not by *sight*. – 2 Corinthians 5:7 NKJ

Jesus [later] said to [Thomas], “Have you believed *because* you have *seen* Me? Blessed are those who *have not* seen and yet *have believed*.” – John 20:29 ESV



Sadly, ol’ Joe seems to have died *before* Jesus’ ministry *began*. And we can only imagine the profound heartache that loss caused young Jesus. But, *this* might’ve been **ol’ Joe’s greatest contribution and mission: to be an inconspicuously incredible dad,** in order to *crystalize* in little Yeshua’s very human *heart*, the agony and tragedy that comes with the curse of death ... and to *galvanize* Him, as He prepared to *conquer* it on the cross. You see, **God gives ordinary Joes extraordinary assignments. It’s just hard to recognize ‘em when they’re first offered.** But you *have* to wonder just *how* much *inspiration* Jesus received from His *earthly* father. James writes that:



The prayer of a *righteous* man is *powerful* – James 5:16 NIV

He’d know. Because, Jesus was his brother, and ol’ Joe was his father. And in the end, when Jesus finished *His* mission and breathed *His* last:

[The centurion] said, “Surely *this* was a *righteous* man.” – Luke 23:47 NIV

Like Fathers like Son. **He’s the One who covers us with His robe of righteousness.** (Is 61:10)

Our *Creator* is the *One* and only *genuine* definition of “Father”. But, *what’s* the *One* and only *genuine* *definition* of *Him*? Well, that’d be the *One*, raised by ol’ Joe. And Jesus himself said:

If you *really* *knew* Me, you would *know* My *Father* as *well*. – John 14:7 NIV

The perfect, omnipotent, ultimate ‘Joe’.