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.









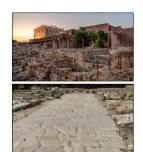


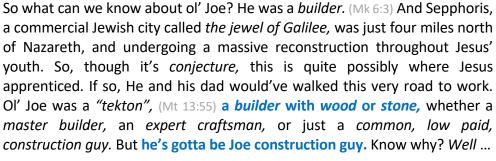




I love C.S. Lewis' balancing act in a line relating to Aslan the lion, saying: They were terribly afraid it would turn and look at them, yet in some [strange] way they wished it would. (The Magician's Nephew) Because, though He is fierce, He's much more than a force. And when Jesus was teaching us to pray to God as our Father, He wasn't trying to find a warmfuzzy 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!







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" s 28:16 as "the Living Stone" Pet 2:4 who came to "[build] a spiritual house" with "[us] ... like living stones". For YAH ... is the eternal Rock" of ages; s 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 <u>quietly</u>. – 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'.

Father God, thank You for loving me in spite of my sin; forgive me and cleanse me by the sacrifice of Your Son, my Savior; and free me and lead me by Your Spirit and Word, as I seek to trust and follow Jesus Christ, as the Lord of my life. Amen.