

MKCC Devotional—Joseph of Nazareth as MK Caregiver

As you all know, the name of our MK Home Ministry is Joseph House Ministries. We derive our name from the O.T. Joseph whom Dave Pollock called “The Patron Saint of MKs” because of Joseph’s resiliency and maturity as a young adult Israelite growing up cross-culturally in Egypt.

But I think the N.T. Joseph is an equally good choice for a role model for MK ministry. The N.T. Joseph was called and then equipped by God to parent a child who was not his biological child. And if you think about it, Jesus was the ultimate MK— His missionary Father asked him to relocate to earth in order to partner with Him in His cross-cultural missionary enterprise!

With this in mind let’s take a look at how Joseph of Nazareth parented as an MK Caregiver. . .

Resilient (talk about bearing up well under stress!

- **Fiancée becomes pregnant** but angel appears to him in a dream and explains things, has to endure public gossip, ridicule, misunderstanding;
- has to **travel with very pregnant fiancée** to register for census and endure not only the difficult traveling conditions with pregnant Mary but also the crowds and then the **hassle of legal red-tape** to register;
- **can’t find lodging** and baby is born in a stable with animals all around;
- group of **scruffy strangers – shepherds**—show up to worship the child;
- 8 days later has to travel into Jerusalem for Jesus’ circumcision and two more complete **strangers prophesy hard things** over the baby and Mary;
- then angel appears in another of his dreams and they have to **flee with a newborn to another country** and start fresh to find work make a home etc;
- after a few years in Egypt angel appears yet again in one of his dreams and tells him to **return with a toddler** to home country and start fresh (wonder if Joseph was ever afraid to lay down at night!!) ☺ ;
- then 12 year old **son disappears** in Jerusalem during busy religious festival and takes a least 3-4 days of searching to find him then is publicly confronted by Jesus.

What other attributes did Joseph have as a successful MK Caregiver?

Righteous Matt 1:19 (Dikaios) his thinking, feeling, and acting is wholly conformed to the will of God

Merciful-- shows mercy and kindness to Mary though he must have felt humiliation and personal hurt.

Secure in Himself—able to withstand public misunderstanding, gossip, scorn.

Willing to not be the “Star” attraction—scripture never mentions Joseph speaking or taking “center” stage. He is always shown to be there, supportive, quiet, effectual, actively leading and faithful but not the focus of attention.

Protective—protects Mary by immediately taking her as his wife, protects her by taking her to Bethlehem with him and caring for her during childbirth, protects her and the child by fleeing to Egypt and also resettling in Nazareth.

Calm and Level-Headed—Matthew 1:18-19 “had in mind” “after he had considered this”—thoughtful and deliberate

Acts Decisively—after all 3 dreams he acts immediately: takes Mary as his wife, immediately flees to Egypt, returns from Egypt

Thoroughly Obedient—there is never any partial obedience with Joseph. He always responds with total obedience and apparently dies before seeing the fruit of his faithfulness.

Balanced—husband, blue-collar worker, step-father, biological father, church-member, provider, mentor, discipler, career trainer

Open to Others’ Spiritual Gifting—allows the shepherds, Simeon, Anna and the magi to speak into Jesus’ life Luke 2:25-36 While at the temple for the circumcision, Joseph allows Simeon and Anna, older godly believers, to hold Jesus in their arms and prophesy over him.

One of the things that continues to bless me in this ministry is how much faith MK parents exhibit when they entrust their children to us and invite us to help shape their lives, their beliefs, their crucial life choices!

How awesome is our responsibility and how aware we must be of other godly people who can participate with us in MK caregiving — church members, counselors, ethnically diverse people in our community, etc.

Other Attributes of Joseph as MK Caregiver?

Application:

Think of yourself in your role as MK Caregiver now.
In what ways do you need to be----

More Resilient? Recognizing that God is sovereign and is molding and shaping you using difficult, stressful situations?

More Righteous (think, feel and act more like God)? What would that look like in your MK Caregiving situation?

More Merciful? Is there someone to whom you are not showing mercy?

More secure in yourself? Are you worrying too much about what others' think of you, your ministry, your methods, etc?

More a Background Player? Who do you need to support so that he/she can be in a starring role?

More Protective? Is there some specific thing that God is calling you to do in someone's life to protect him/her even if it means more trouble or misunderstanding from others?

More calm and level-headed? Is there an MK or situation that has you stressed out and unable to think clearly? How can you get clarity and peace in this?

More decisive acting? Has God told you to act on some situation that you are dragging your heels about?

Thoroughly obedient? Any partial obedience nagging at you?

More Balanced? Are you maxxing out in one role in your MK caregiving and neglecting other important roles?

More Open to Other's Spiritual Gifting? Who around you is God calling you to entrust with some aspects of MK caregiving?

Close in Prayer