

Week 11 Day 1 | *New Testament Heroes: Joseph*

Joseph is the Job of the New Testament, in the sense that he gets little of the attention he deserves. At center stage we have the wonders of Mary's virgin birth. Or the mystery of a star leading the Magi. Or the excitement of angels appearing to shepherds. Joseph consistently gets overshadowed in the story of Jesus arrival. Yet Joseph is the essence of a servant of God. He's fully obedient and honorable, a consistent example for anyone called to be faithful in an uncertain time.

We don't know much about Joseph, really. He was a carpenter, the son of Jacob, and a descendant in the line of David. That's about it. What we lack in background details, however, we more than make up for with examples of strong character. Joseph is described as "righteous." The Amplified Bible uses the adjectives "just" and "upright." The New Living Translation describes him as "a good man." We see this on display immediately upon meeting Joseph. We're told that he plans to divorce a pregnant Mary in private, rather than shame her in the open. Keep in mind, he could have demanded her death, as allowed by Old Testament law:

"And Joseph her husband, being a righteous man, and not willing to make her a public example, was minded to put her away privily."

—Matthew 1:19 (ASV)

Not sure about you, but I like him already.

Soon after that, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream. The angel told him to take Mary as his wife and to name the baby Jesus. Matthew 1:24 says, "When Joseph woke up, he did what the angel of the Lord had commanded him and took Mary home as his wife."

You may be thinking, "Yeah, well, if an angel appeared to me, I'd do what it said too." Remember, though, the angel appeared to Joseph in a dream. It would be quite reasonable to question yourself and the validity of what went on in your sleep. Even if the impression was so strong that it couldn't be denied, the Bible is littered with stories of disobedience, not just from an angel's instructions, but from God Himself: Adam, Moses, Samson, and Jonah, to name a few. Not Joseph. There's no evidence of him faltering. No questioning the legitimacy of the virgin birth. No resentment for receiving this unrequested role as a stepfather.

We see this over and over again with Joseph. Escaping from Egypt, in Matthew 2, was an instruction from an angel of the Lord. Returning to Nazareth later in chapter 2, also an instruction from the Lord. In Luke 2, Joseph presented Jesus to the Lord at the Jerusalem temple, where Simeon anointed the infant King. This is Joseph's obedience to the Law of Moses. Then, later in Luke, we see Joseph's faithfulness to return annually to Jerusalem for the Passover.

Just plain . . . old . . . simple . . . obedience. One day at a time. One foot in front of the other. Consistency.

As with Joseph (and Job), consistency is underrated. It doesn't get the spotlight. Frankly, it sounds a little boring.

Spontaneity, now that's fun, right? New. Exciting. Different.

There is great power in consistency. In fact, without it, nothing can change. You can't get stronger in your workouts. You can't improve your race times. You can't progress in your efforts to drop some weight. You can't wake up renewed day after day. You just can't establish a healthy lifestyle without consistency. It doesn't stop with your fitness . . . you can't become a better parent or child or sibling without it. You can't become a better friend, employee, or citizen without it.

With consistency, good things can happen. With consistent obedience, amazing things happen. There is growth! Change is realized. Goals are achieved. Potential is reached. With consistency, your walk with Christ becomes the most exciting, fulfilling, purposeful, triumphant journey your life will ever know.

Stop trying to be clever in your walk with God. Don't look for fancy ways to bring God glory if you're not glorifying Him in the simplest of ways. Consistent obedience in matters great and small may not sound profound, but the results of it are. Just ask Joseph.

Prayer

Father, thank You for Your consistent availability. Will You forgive me when I don't consistently rely on the indwelling of the Holy Spirit? Please change me. Help me to trust You to accomplish Your purposes through me, just as Joseph did. Amen.

Meditation

To be consistently obedient, I will consistently rely on You.

Daily Spiritual Exercise

Pick a meal to fast from for the day. The hunger you feel is a reminder to be praying for a fully surrendered life. As you pray throughout the day, be sure to ask God what He'd like you to learn from this exercise. We don't just pray. We pray and we listen.