

MARY & JOSEPH

Lesson Focus: Out of all of the people who have ever lived, God chose Mary and Joseph to raise his son, Jesus. Let's look at their character, and see what qualities we can apply to our own lives as we seek to be people who please God.

Opening Question: *If you were unable to raise your children, what characteristics would you look for in the people you chose to take care of them?*

Mary and Joseph

They heard (recognized) and obeyed God

→ **Heard and Recognized:** *In order to hear and KNOW that it's God's voice they would have to be practitioners of the spiritual disciplines. What did that look like in their lives?*

-They were knowledgeable of Scripture:

"Mary's Song" in Luke 1 makes it evident that Mary was knowledgeable of God's word. Lots of references to Scriptures (read it if you have time). And speaking of spiritual disciplines, this is a beautiful expression of worship, as well.

-They followed the Law (God's law)—which means they knew it:

Here are two examples from Scripture:

READ LUKE 2:39

39When Joseph and Mary had done everything required by the Law of the Lord, they returned to Galilee to their own town of Nazareth.

READ LUKE 2:41

41Every year Jesus' parents went to Jerusalem for the Festival of the Passover.

What do these two passages show us about Joseph and Mary's knowledge of and response to with God's law?

→ **Obedied:** When they heard God, they obeyed.

Some examples include Joseph marrying Mary after the angel appeared to him, the couple giving Jesus the name they'd been instructed to, Joseph taking them to Egypt to protect them after being warned by the angel. *Can you think of any other examples?*

Here's one that we may miss:

Their obedience included how they parented

Joseph raised Jesus in the instruction of Scripture, according to Jewish tradition (and also taught him his trade)

READ DEUT. 6:6-9

6These commandments that I give you today are to be on your hearts. **7**Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. **8**Tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. **9**Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates.

How do we know they did this?

READ LUKE 2:52

52*And Jesus grew in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man.*

Certainly he was blessed by God innately, but what role might his parents have had in this too? (See Deuteronomy verses above).

→ Some additional character qualities we see in Mary:

From Luke 2 - -

19But Mary treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart.

51 Then he went down to Nazareth with them and was obedient to them. But his mother treasured all these things in her heart.

What does this tell us about Mary? (spiritual discipline of mediation?)

From the Wedding at Cana (John 2: 1-5)

1 On the third day a wedding took place at Cana in Galilee. Jesus' mother was there, **2** and Jesus and his disciples had also been invited to the wedding. **3** When the wine was gone, Jesus' mother said to him, "They have no more wine."

4 "Woman, why do you involve me?" Jesus replied. "My hour has not yet come."

5 His mother said to the servants, "Do whatever he tells you."

What can we learn about Mary through this story? (She was attentive to needs, she clearly knew her son well)

She was wrong sometimes (READ MARK 3:21, 31 – 34)

21 When his family heard about this, they went to take charge of him, for they said, "He is out of his mind." (NOTE: "they" seems to be referring to the people at large, not his family)

31 Then Jesus' mother and brothers arrived. Standing outside, they sent someone in to call him. **32** A crowd was sitting around him, and they told him, "Your mother and brothers are outside looking for you."

33 "Who are my mother and my brothers?" he asked.

34 Then he looked at those seated in a circle around him and said, "Here are my mother and my brothers! **35** Whoever does God's will is my brother and sister and mother."

Discuss any thoughts on this passage.

→What happened to Mary and Joseph?

-Joseph seems to have died sometime between when Jesus was 12 (re: the account of the temple) and the wedding in Cana.

What do we know? He lived long enough to have children with Mary and to teach Jesus his trade and for people to know Jesus as his son, even as an adult (READ JOHN 6:42)

READ LUKE 2:34-35 ... *Is there evidence here that Joseph would not be alive to see Jesus crucified?*

34Then Simeon blessed them and said to Mary, his mother: "This child is destined to cause the falling and rising of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be spoken against, **35**so that the thoughts of many hearts will be revealed. And a sword will pierce ***your*** own soul too."

Mary was at Jesus' crucifixion, here are the instructions that Jesus gives to his disciple, John:

READ JOHN 19:25-27

25Near the cross of Jesus stood his mother, his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. **26**When Jesus saw his mother there, and the disciple whom he loved standing nearby, he said to her, "Woman, here is your son," **27**and to the disciple, "Here is your mother." From that time on, this disciple took her into his home.

(NOTE: This is additional evidence that Joseph had died)

-The last mention of Mary in the Bible is in Acts. She's in the upper room with the disciples after Jesus ascends. READ ACTS 1:12-14

12Then the apostles returned to Jerusalem from the hill called the Mount of Olives, a Sabbath day's walk from the city. **13**When they arrived, they went upstairs to the room where they were staying. Those present were Peter, John, James and Andrew; Philip and Thomas, Bartholomew and Matthew; James son of

Alphaeus and Simon the Zealot, and Judas son of James. **14**They all joined together constantly in prayer, along with the women and **Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brothers.**

What does this tell us?

Closing Thoughts: *We can see in Mary and Joseph qualities that God values. What are some of them? (Knowledge of Scripture, obedience to God's word, being intentional in raising children to love the Lord, worshipping, meditating [pondering], etc.)*

Choose one (or two) to focus on this week, asking God to grow that quality in you.