



### Introduction

The following questions, prayers and comments are intended to assist you through a Bible study time this summer, especially if we are still practicing social distancing because of COVID-19. Pastor John Foss will continue to provide his sermon notes for each of his Sunday morning sermons. Watch on Facebook Live or [commhope.freeonlinechurch.com/live](http://commhope.freeonlinechurch.com/live) at 9 am on Sundays. This study and Pastor John's sermons will cover 15 men & women of the Bible. Weekly studies like these will be available each week. If you have any questions, please e-mail [koko@commhope.org](mailto:koko@commhope.org).

## **Week 9: Joseph**

### **A Short Story**

**Prayer of preparation:** For centuries now, you have given a written record of your relationship with people for our strengthening, wisdom, and comfort. Thank you, Jesus. Please, help me receive your message with humility and an abiding sense of being in good relationship with you. Amen.

**Comments and references:** Read: Luke chapters 1 & 2, Matthew 1:16 through chapter 2

Joseph had an extraordinary call to service from God! The Bible does not record anything Joseph had to say, and his is, definitely a "short story" in what it has to say about him. However, when put together the following verses give an important insight to the character of Joseph.

Please, read them:

Matthew 1:24, 2:14, 2:23    Luke 2:4, 2:22 & 23, 2:33, 2:41 & 42

As I tried to think more about the character of Joseph, I turned to some of the information that is tradition, not scripture. I came across this statement.

*Often people call someone a tzaddik simply because he is an exceptionally good person. Then there are times they come across a spiritual superhero, someone more like an angel than a human being, and they say, "Now that's a tzaddik!"*

*Yet the most special thing about a tzaddik is that he really is the most human of human beings.*

*Tzaddik צדיק is a form of the Hebrew verb צדק [TzDK], which carries the meaning of doing what is correct and just. Weights that are calibrated correctly are called moznei tzedek. The judge is urged, "Tzedek, tzedek you shall pursue!" Meaning: that which was wronged should be righted, that which was stolen should be returned to its owner, the innocent should not suffer, and those who have caused harm shall be corrected so that they will return to doing good. Tzedek is making everything the way it should be. Tzvi Freeman of the Chabad*

n Matthew 1:19, Joseph is described as a “righteous man”. When I pursued what that would have meant in Joseph’s time, I came across this description by, Mr. Tzvi Freeman, who went on to conjecture that Joseph was a Tzedek sort of person. When I read this, it made me wonder how strong a man of faith Joseph may have been. In Luke 2:22 he takes Jesus to the Temple to be presented as their first born in Jerusalem (remember they lived in Nazareth about 65 miles from Jerusalem); he is going way out of his way to do the right thing. And, again in 2:41 Joseph is identified as having taken his family to Jerusalem every year for Passover; still 65 miles one way. These things make me believe that Joseph was doing everything in his power to do right by Jesus and in his relationship with God.

These are some of the Biblical advice on parenting that would have been available to Joseph. Parenting is some of the most bewildering things I have ever tried to do. Have a look at these verses as you think about parenting:

Deut. 6:6-9   Ex. 20:12   Ps. 127:3   Josh. 4:20-24

Abigail and Esther have shown us how the Lord gave them grace and wisdom under extreme pressure. God’s friend, David, was used to show us how patiently our heavenly Father handles our most outrageous and persistent failures. Job showed us how wrestling with God, in our relationship with him, can restore our confidence and strength. Having read Joseph’s “short story”, think about the message God is sending to you; maybe about parenting, faithfulness, marriage, or a more specific message just for you.

When I was younger, I thought of all of these Bible characters as holy and set apart and capable of anything; super heroes. In this research time, I am reconsidering my initial assessment. These folks were quite ordinary, genuinely human and very much like all my friends and family and me. It is God who makes them extraordinary. He inspires them, sustains them, gives them dreams, prophets, family, and everything needed to be blessed, extraordinary and redeemed.

This verse about scripture makes me praise God every time I read it; whether I comprehend it in the moment or not: **2 Timothy 3:16**, NLT: *"All Scripture is inspired by God and is useful to teach us what is true and to make us realize what is wrong in our lives. It corrects us when we are wrong and teaches us to do what is right."* I think Joseph would recommend this one to us!

A paraphrase from The Message of Mt. 11:28-30, *"Are you tired? Worn out? Burned out on religion? Come to me. Get away with me and you'll recover your life. I'll show you how to take a real rest. Walk with me and work with me—watch how I do it. Learn the unforced rhythms of grace. I won't lay anything heavy or ill-fitting on you. Keep company with me and you'll learn to live freely and lightly."* Any calling from God to those of us who are exceedingly human comes with this reassurance. Praise God!

**Prayer:** Thank you, Jesus, for this “short story” from your blended family. Help me hear the message you have sent me and incorporate it into my living. You’re the best! Amen.