

that he could do better. Fear told Joseph to hide. But God told Joseph not to be afraid to take Mary as his wife.

Joseph did what the angel of the Lord commanded. He covered Mary, his rib, and the unborn Child whose heart beat under her own. And after the Baby was born in the most humble of circumstances, Joseph named the Child Jesus. Through all the frightening days ahead, Joseph remembered the Word of the Lord. And the Lord did not forget Joseph. When danger was near, the angel of the Lord warned Joseph. When uncertainty abounded, the angel of the Lord directed Joseph.

It's true that life wasn't ever the same for Joseph. It certainly wasn't what he had planned. But Joseph remembered the Word of the Lord. And, in doing so, he received courage to do what was asked of him. Joseph was faithful to cover Mary, his rib. He raised her Son Jesus in a Godly home and accompanied Him to worship. Some 2000 years later, the Boy who grew to be a Man in the house of a carpenter is still changing lives.

Joseph made a difference.

## Joseph and His Rib



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When a man remembers  
the Word of the Lord,  
he is equipped to protect  
vulnerable and fragile lives.

Joseph, a young man from the house of David, was probably like every other soon-to-be husband – nervous, but excited all the same. That is until his fiancée came to him with shocking news. Mary was pregnant, but Joseph was not the father. The world, as Joseph knew it, had collapsed around him. He felt betrayed, hurt, angry. Break the engagement and walk away from this woman, whispered his pride.

Everything had changed. Plans were ruined. Reputation was at stake. Uncharted territory lay ahead. At this precarious moment in his life, Joseph had nothing to hang on to ... nothing, that is, except the Word of the Lord.

The Word gave Joseph courage. “Don’t be afraid!” It was the Word that showed Joseph how to be faithful. “Take Mary as your wife. She will give birth to a son, and you will name him Jesus” (Matthew 1:20-21).

Perhaps, in holding on to the Word, Joseph remembered the experience of another man named Adam. Perhaps, in a moment of truth, Joseph could picture Adam standing next to Eve, his wife. Perhaps, with wisdom only from the Holy Spirit, Joseph recognized the significance of Eve’s creation by God from man’s rib.

The rib is a strong bone, yet fragile. It supports and guards the heart and breath of man, yet is vulnerable to the blow of attack. Satan, who hates the life that God has made, is a master at sensing vulnerability. That day in the Garden, Satan set his target and went straight to Adam’s rib. Adam was

with Eve when she was attacked. He saw the blow coming but failed to cover his rib. It was only when Adam ate the fruit offered to him that sin entered the world. When both husband and wife ran to hide, it was to the man that the Lord spoke. It was Adam who was held accountable.

Perhaps, with discernment only from God, Joseph understood that he must not repeat the sin of his ancestor and do to his rib what Adam had done to his.

Perhaps, in remembering what Adam had failed to do, Joseph chose not to repeat the sin of his forefather by leaving his rib uncovered. Let the village talk! Adjust carefully-made plans! Trust the Lord! Although it meant leaving his zone of comfort, Joseph did what the angel of the Lord had commanded him to do. He covered his rib by taking Mary as his wife. And when



Mary’s child was born, Joseph named Him Jesus.

God wanted Joseph to make a difference – a difference that would impact the world. But such a difference could be made only by being faithful. Such faithfulness required that Joseph leave all that was familiar and put his life and the life of Mary into the hands of God.

Today when a young man pressures his girlfriend to have sex, he is leaving her physically, emotionally, and spiritually vulnerable. He has placed his “needs” before hers and, in so doing, left her open to attack. When a man does not promise to love, cherish, and cover a woman with his name, but simply share living quarters and a bed, he is leaving her open to attack. When a man fathers a child but does not accept the privilege and responsibility of being a daddy, he is leaving both mother and child uncovered and vulnerable to the world.

But when a man remembers God and His call to leadership, he is able to make a difference. A young man who guards his girlfriend’s virtue makes a difference. A husband who remains true to his wife makes a difference. A man who understands the privilege of fatherhood and accepts his responsibility as a daddy makes a difference. Men of faithfulness have a grand opportunity to defend against chaos and leave a legacy of hope.

Convenience told Joseph to walk away from Mary. Self-defense told Joseph to think of number one. Pride told Joseph