

Introduction:

- It's begun! Hallmark is on it. But let me give you some things you will never find inside a Hallmark card"
 - "Looking back over the years that we have been together, I cant help but wonder...What was I thinking!"
 - "As the days go by I think of how lucky I am...that you are not here to ruin it for me."
 - "As you grow older, Mom, I think of all the gifts you have given me...Like the need for therapy."
 - "You look great for your age...Almost life like!"
 - "I'm so miserable without you...Its almost like you are here."
- Two scriptures for today.
 - *"You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise."* (Deuteronomy 6:5-7, ESV)
 - Luke 1:26-31
 - *"And the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus."* (Luke 1:30-31, ESV)
- What does it take to raise the Son of God? I do not believe for a moment that God randomly chose Joseph and Mary to be the parents of Jesus.

I. Why Did God Choose Joseph and Mary? What was God's criteria for picking the parents of Jesus? (By the way, some of these are questions we should ask when choosing a mate.)**A. Are they believers?**

1. Yes! God is not going to let a Judas raise His Son.
2. They were righteous. Mt 1:19; Mary was a virgin and found favor (grace) before God.

B. What is in their family line?

1. Both were of the lineage of David. Luke 1:27 - Joseph; genealogy Mary.
2. They fulfilled the prophetic words of the Messiah coming from the line of David.
3. This is crucial to why God would pick them. The 'playing field is narrowed.'

C. What is their depth of walk with God?

1. They were the best in the land of Israel!
2. Mary found favor with God. She had great faith. And knew the Word (See her song)

D. How do they handle conflict?

1. Courage - Mary did not doubt but stood firm.
 2. Integrity - Joseph was going to divorce her quietly. He did not want to shame her.
- E. Can they be trusted?
1. Most definitely!
 2. If God chose them, they can be trusted. Can you be trusted to raise your children in the Lord?

II. Character Counts In God's Eyes

God chose Joseph and Mary because character counts.

A. Love

1. Love is the commodity of the kingdom. Kingdom parents must learn how operate effectively with the Kingdom commodity called love.
 - a) God wanted his fragile Son in the hands of top notch loving parents! How well are you doing in loving your family?
 - b) God wanted His Son to have an accurate earthly example of a kingdom atmosphere of love.
2. When we stand before God the question we will have to answer is "How well did you love?" And the family will be a big part of that equation.
3. Love is the driving theme of all the Gospels. John 3:16 *"For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son!"*
4. Paul stressed love: *"If I speak with human eloquence and angelic ecstasy but don't love, I'm nothing but the creaking of a rusty gate. If I speak God's Word with power, revealing all his mysteries and making everything plain as day, and if I have faith that says to a mountain, "Jump," and it jumps, but I don't love, I'm nothing. If I give everything I own to the poor and even go to the stake to be burned as a martyr, but I don't love, I've gotten nowhere. So, no matter what I say, what I believe, and what I do, I'm bankrupt without love. Love never gives up. Love cares more for others than for self. Love doesn't want what it doesn't have. Love doesn't strut, Doesn't have a swelled head, Doesn't force itself on others, Isn't always "me first," Doesn't fly off the handle, Doesn't keep score of the sins of others, Doesn't revel when others grovel, Takes pleasure in the flowering of truth, Puts up with anything, Trusts God always, Always looks for the best, Never looks back, But keeps going to the end."* (1 Corinthians 13:1-7, MSG)
5. Joseph loved Mary! He did not want hurt or shame her with divorce and wanted to do it quietly, when he found out she was pregnant. That is love. Even in his own pain he chose LOVE! He had rights in this situation but chose not his rights but to operate in love.
 - a) We choose to argue to often because we want to be right. Sometimes love is the better choice and most accurate path.

b) Anger is so divisive. But Love is the glue that keeps a marriage and a family together.

B. Purity

1. Purity demonstrates an operation of great grace in people's lives.

a) Gabriel was sent to Mary a virgin.: *"to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. And the virgin's name was Mary."* (Luke 1:27, ESV)

(1) This was prophesied. Isaiah. 7:14. She had to be a virgin or it would be assumed the Joseph was Jesus Father.

(2) Mary, being a virgin speaks of purity. And she is highly favored (grace). How do you get great grace? FAITH! (Eph 2:8-9).

(3) God is no respecter of persons. (Acts 10:34). He shows no partiality or favorites. Yet, Mary gets the prize...not because she earned it, she simply believes in God.

b) *"And her husband Joseph, being a just man and unwilling to put her to shame, resolved to divorce her quietly."* (Matthew 1:19, ESV)

(1) just - dikaios - Greek for righteous, virtuous.

(2) His relationship with God affects the way he thinks and the choices He makes. The closer you walk with God the more he shines through you and empowers you to do what is right.

c) The Son of God is pure without sin. God wants His Son in a pure household.

C. Humility

1. Joseph did not want to accuse Mary of infidelity and have her stoned.

2. Mary in Luke 1:48 declares that God has regarded her lowly state.

3. Mark 9:35-36 the greatest among us are servants of all. Joseph and Mary selflessly gave themselves to raise the Son of God. Carefully submitting to the Word of God.

D. Obedience

1. Obedience has to do with our character. It requires humility and change.

2. Obedience is a call to higher living. IE. Those who are called 'low life's' are people who have trouble with obedience.

E. Courage

1. Joseph had courage to lead his family to Egypt.

2. Mary had the courage to say Yes to God and have a baby.

3. The spirit of the overcomer is one of courage. Their ability to act accurately in the face of adversity.

F. Spirituality

1. Prayer: Both Joseph and Mary were people of prayer.

a) Mary's grandparents lived just out side the temples north side.

- b) Both were righteous. A righteous person has to have a prayer life.
- 2. Word
 - a) Mary's Father watched over the scrolls in the city of Sepphoris.
 - b) They loved the Word.
- 3. Angels - Mary visited by angel Gabriel. Joseph visited in his dreams by angels.
- 4. Faith - *Let it be unto me according to your word.* Luke 1:38

III. What Was God's Expectation Of Joseph and Mary?

- A. He expected His Son to be taught the Word.
- B. He expected His Son to live in a home filled with love.
- C. He expected His Son to be a man of prayer and to love the House of Prayer. Jesus parents went regularly to Jerusalem to celebrate the feasts.
- D. He expected His Son to know His heavenly Father.
- E. He expected His Son to be obedient. Ie. After getting left behind at the temple. Luke 2:51 *Jesus was submissive to them."*

Conclusion:

- There is much to consider when you are a parent. But when you look at Joseph and Mary and why God chose them there is much wisdom to be gleaned.
- Maybe you should start today by letting Jesus into your heart!