



DAY 9

Monday, December 10
(Candle of Love)

MATTHEW 1:19–20

“Because Joseph her husband was a righteous man and did not want to expose her to public disgrace, he had in mind to divorce her quietly. But after he had considered this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, ‘Joseph son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit.’”

Rogue Elephants

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I read somewhere about orphaned adolescent elephants causing enormous destruction in Africa. Experts, unable to stop the rampage, were at their wit’s end until someone suggested foster fathers. It worked. The adult male elephants disciplined the errant adolescents, brought them in line, and taught them to be good elephants.

We live in a time that devalues both our heavenly Father and our earthly fathers. The bestseller list is populated with books excoriating God, while popular culture proclaims a woman needs a man as much as a fish needs a bicycle. Despite millennia of history to the contrary, fathers, we are told, are not essential to raising responsible, productive parents, spouses, and citizens.

Joseph is the good father. Joseph quietly rose to the occasion. He’s the “aw shucks” Jimmy Stuart hero who claims, “It was nothing.”

Marry a woman pregnant with another man’s child? Raise that child as his own?

“It’s the right thing to do,” I hear Joseph say. “God needs me. Mary needs me. The child needs me. I couldn’t walk away. You’d do the same thing.”

Christ must have seen His heavenly Father’s love when He looked into Joseph’s eyes, felt His Father’s power when Joseph held His hand, recognized God’s patience and wisdom as Joseph taught Him how to turn raw wood into a masterpiece.

There is a reason the triune God is Father, Son and Holy Ghost. Good fathers are strong. They are an abiding presence who raise us up when we fall

and push us out of the nest when it’s time to spread our wings. When we stray, they wait patiently for our return to the fold. Christmas too often is about expecting big things: the most expensive present, the tallest tree, the fattest goose. But God is often in the things we take for granted. He is in our quiet, strong, unassuming fathers who watch over us night and day, who lead by example.

This Christmas, let us be thankful for our heavenly Father’s gift of the Christ child and to the Josephs in our lives, the men who serve because it is the right thing to do.

RESPOND:

DO: Recall a time when were you called to act like Joseph. How is the Joseph in your life Christ-like? Thank this person.

PRAY: Thank God for the Josephs in our lives and ask Him to increase their patience, wisdom and love.

