**The Loving Hands of a Father** (words: father, Jesus, discipline)

I have often wondered why Jesus didn’t give us men an example of how to be good father. Where can we observe the example of a loving, good father? There are many good biblical illustrations of godly mothers—but few fathers.

It certainly wasn’t Adam whose son became a murder nor Abraham nor Moses—they became God’s chosen, but their roles as fathers were questionable. Certainly, we can’t look to King David. His son, Amnon, fell in love with his sister, Tamar, raped her, then rejected her (2 Samuel 13). Son Absalom, using a festival celebration as an opportunity, ordered Amnon murdered. Later he usurped the authority of his father, David, and proclaimed himself king (2 Samuel 15).

Perhaps we should look to Joseph, Jesus’s father for our example. While the New Testament does not mention the virtues of Joseph as a father, he undoubtedly had a very difficult job. He was God’s choice to be the father of God’s only son. How difficult would that be? He also had other sons: James, Jose, Simon, and Jude (Matthew 15:33). In addition, he had daughters (Mark 6:3).

Did Joseph ever discipline Jesus or his brothers and sisters? Scriptures encourages discipline: “No discipline seems pleasant at the time, but painful. Later on, however, it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace for those who have been trained by it” (Matthew 12:11). “Whoever spares the rod hates their children, but the one who loves their children is careful to discipline them” (Proverbs 13:24).

Did Joseph ever apply the rod to Jesus? Why did Jesus’s family reject him? Did any of Joseph’s children become teenage rebels? We know from the Scriptures that Jesus was sinless “For we do not have a high priest who is unable to empathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are—yet he did not sin” (Hebrews 4:15).

Our imaginations feast on the possibilities as we let our minds flesh out the unrecorded years of Jesus’s youth. True, we have everything God wants us to know in the New Testament, but we wonder. *They Called Him Yeshua: The Story of the Young Jesus* peaks into Joseph’s complex life as Jesus’s (Yeshua) earthly father. What should Joseph do when Jesus appears to do something needing discipline? What constitutes “sin?” Is it misbehaving? Lying? Following peer groups in boyish mischievous acts? Read pages 131-132 in *They Called Him Yeshua* and let you imagination draw conclusions.

Local youths often hurled stones at soldiers to harass

them. The soldiers typically ignored the boys, but after

being hit too many times by stinging stones, guards sometimes

gave chase. They rarely caught troublemakers. Locals

helped the boys elude their pursuers by allowing them to

dive into homes, shops, or piles of merchandise so the hooligans

could disappear at any moment.

Mary shrunk in embarrassment the day a soldier came

to the door with Yeshi, who was struggling to get free, slung

over the soldier’s hip. The captain’s strong hand kept Yeshua

firmly in place.

“Woman,” he announced with a stern voice, “your boy

was throwing stones at soldiers. I will ignore his insolence

this time, but if he continues, I will take measures to punish

him.”

The rough, sun-darkened soldier compressed a grin

behind his forced scowl. Mary effusively thanked the captain

who had brought Yeshi home, rather than taking matters

into his own hands. She tried to explain that this behavior

was unlike her son, saying that he was well-behaved

and obedient.

*What in the world possessed him to throw stones at soldiers?*

She sighed, confused. Nothing like this had ever happened before.

*What shall I do? Punish him? Scold him?*

Mary looked at her wide-eyed son, whom the captain had

lowered gently to the ground. Yeshi, bewildered, rubbed a

red spot on his arm where he had been gripped.

*He’s not angry or ashamed but confused.*

Her son shook his head as he stared at the ground.

Mary promised the soldier that when Yeshua’s abba returned,

he would discuss the matter with the boy.

This Father’s Day let’s remember as fathers we are responsible for the godly raising of our children—let the Scriptures guide us.

