

Raising Your Stepchildren With Holy Spirit's Love

A few years after my husband and I married, our two youngest children (not my biological children but I refuse to call them "stepchildren") confessed that when their dad and I decided to marry, they were a little apprehensive. Like most of us, they had heard the tale of Cinderella and her mean, ugly stepmother.

Thankfully they added, "But then you were so nice ..." How relieved I was to hear them say that! I was present with the kids much more than their dad was when we first married, so I did a lot of the disciplining. I tried to be loving and kind, but having had their share of caregivers during their first mom's illness and passing, they needed boundaries and consistency.

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Stepparents understand what it is like to go through the hard process of raising children knowing that on Facebook it is often the absent parent who gets the homage. We don't do it for the accolades.

I can only imagine how Joseph felt as he raised Jesus. He provided physically for his "stepson." He watched over him. He provided spiritual training and taught him life skills. It had to be intimidating, knowing Jesus' biological Father watched his every move. Most of all, he lived a steady, godly, exemplary life.

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No mention is made of Joseph after Jesus began His public ministry. Most likely he had passed. Yet think of his legacy.

God picked *him* to help raise His Son.

Maybe God wants to use you in someone's life—an orphan, a child who just needs some parental guidance, or that person who seems to have lost his or her moorings. What makes Cinderella's story so treasured is that in the end she found love; she found a home. Look around. Maybe there is a Cinderella near you. {eoa}

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