

Father's Day 2003 - Malachi 4:1-6

It would be very hard to overstate the role that God has given fathers in the Kingdom of God. By His eternal plan and decree, fathers are to be the ruling authority (or head) of the family government. And the family government is arguably the most important of the three human governments that God has ordained – the family, the church and the state.

Churches and states are comprised of various families. Families are not comprised of various churches or states. So, when you have a breakdown in the family government, you will necessarily see problems downstream in the church and state governments. So, we can see why Malachi can say that the Elijah (John the Baptist) will save the earth from a curse by turning the hearts of the fathers toward the children and the hearts of children toward their fathers.

Children

Honor (obedience) equals blessing – For children, the principle command of scripture with regard to your father is very straightforward. Honor your Father – Deuteronomy 5:16 – The Apostle Paul elaborates on this promise in Ephesians 6:1-3 – the first commandment with promise. For minor children who are still living with parents and under their authority - honor means obedience. Honoring your father begins with agreeable obedience to him.

Corollary – Dishonor equals an awful curse – Proverbs 30:17 There is a corollary here as well that should not be overlooked – if you do choose to scorn obedience to your father – the eagles and crows will pick the meat from the eyes of your dead body. This is not an empty warning – children die daily in the world due to foolish rebellion.

God commands to bless – All of God's commands are intended to bless, protect and generally cause us to live life fully. Proverbs 3:19 – God has infused His wisdom into creation. It is the essence of the created order. And blessings therefore flow to those who walk by that wisdom and trouble those who reject it. Honor your father by faith. To know the word of God and walk as though it were true is called faith.

Perfect Holiness – the Standard Your Father Must Prepare you for - Maybe you struggle with a sense that it is very hard to please your father. You want to honor him, but feel that you will never attain to the standard that your father has set for you. And when you do feel that it is important to remember several things. I - that when your father is urging you on to perfection, he is only preparing you for the same standard that you are ultimately accountable to before God and His word. (2 Corinthians 7:1)

II - Standard of Perfection is not Contempt For Your Life - The temptation on your part will be to misread your father's duty to urge you on to this standard with contempt, condemnation or absence of joy in you. But, by the Word of God, you must understand that this does not follow. Holding you to a standard of perfection before God is not contempt for your life but rather the cherishing of it. (Proverbs 3:11-12) The Apostle Paul cherished those to whom he required the standard. **III - Do Not Be Discouraged by Chastening** The third thing to remember (that is, to do) is to resist the urge to become discouraged. It is natural to be tempted to be discouraged by correction or chastening.

Hebrews 12:1-14 Chastening is never pleasant – it is always painful. The point is not to deny the reality of pain. The point of Hebrews 12 is to prevent you from missing the fruit that is the goal of chastening. If you allow yourself to go from the pain of the chastening to discouragement, then, in a figure, what is lame will become dislocated. **IV – Come to your father (your earthly one) through Jesus Christ** Finally, ultimately, if you want to please your father, you must do so by coming to him through your Lord Jesus Christ. John 14:1 Your father's duty is to train you up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. The only way you can come to your father in a manner that demonstrates that to him that he has discharged his duty before God is to come to your earthly father in the same fashion that you must approach your heavenly father – through Jesus Christ.

Wives

Sarah's Example – Helpmeet to Abraham (great father of all Christians and great man of faith) 1 Peter 3:1- The larger point is that her husband was Abraham, the great man of faith who is declared to be the father of all Christians. Sarah is the mother of all Christian women who share her faith and demeanor and Abraham was the father of all Christians who share his faith. Sarah's greatness was her role in the making of Abraham. She was (and is) a great woman because she did a great work. She made a great man. And in order to make a great man, she needed to submit graciously to him. She needed to honor him. What Did Sarah's Honor Look Like - The Honor of A Gracious and Quite Spirit. Sarah was one of the most beautiful women that ever lived. But her reverence for her husband (here stated as fear) manifested in her gentle and quiet spirit is the beauty she is commended for – it is the only *incorruptible* beauty she possesses. This is not a denigration of her physical beauty. It is an elevation of the greater beauty - what Peter calls the hidden person of the heart.

Without Terror - The second part of this text (1st Peter 3:1-6) is also important. Sarah's submission (or honor) of her husband was fearless. And this is possibly more important than her gentle and quiet spirit. Now think about Sarah again. Think of the tremendous fear and uncertainty she must have felt when she heard about Abraham's big idea. To leave everything to travel to a foreign land. How important do you think it was that Abraham had a wife who would submit graciously to him – even in the face of something as daunting as this must have been for them? How important do you think it was that she strengthen his faith and not flame his own doubts or fears? Moving Wasn't the Worst of It for Sarah. She was to endure something far more troubling before her works were completed (being taken in for a wife by the

Pharaoh in Egypt and the ruler in Gerar. Clear is Sarah's tremendous courage to submit to her husband even in the face of this very extraordinary request. And again I would ask you to consider how important it was that Sarah submit to her husband. How important was that she do her good work without any terror? Word to Wives – Recap Consider Sarah your mother. She honored her husband with a gentle and quiet spirit and submitted to him without any terror. Her submission to God on these points was an essential part of God's means for equipping Abraham for the great work he was called to – a great work that centered on his role as a father.

Father's

To the husbands and fathers here today, this is your day of honor in our culture. And this is a good thing that you should be grateful for. But everything that we can do on this day pales in comparison to the honor that the bible gives you. To the husbands and fathers here today, you have heard the charge to your children and to your wives and you should be deeply humbled the place that God has given you in your home and in His kingdom.

- Fathers, do not provoke your children, lest they become **discouraged**.
- (Fathers – love your wives (Malachi))
- Fathers – walk worthy of the honor that God has endowed your office

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