# "He shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children"

**Malachi 4:6 and selected Scriptures**

6-16-2019

INTRODUCTION: Malachi 4:1-6

*Too many fathers today have no time for their children.*
*(too pre-occupied with careers, money, houses, pleasures, etc.)*
*Examples of dads who neglected their sons:*
*David neglected Absolam when he needed attention. (II Sam. 14:23,24; 28)*
*Eli neglected Hophni and Phineas when they needed discipline. (I Sam. 2:12; 3:13)*
*Isaac neglected Jacob by showing favoritism to Esau. (Gen. 25:28)*
*(Note: Jacob would later follow suit and favor Joseph and Benjamin)*
*Samuel neglected his sons perhaps by being overly busy in the ministry.*
*(I Sam. 8:3, 5)*
*Manoah neglected Samson's need for self-control by catering to his unbiblical wants. (Jud. 14:1-3)*

***Dad, please pay attention to your family!**

Observe three examples of fathers who had a heart for their families.

**I.** **Job** **SACRIFICED** **for his family to** **BE RIGHT** **with God** (Job 1:1-5)

**II.** **Abraham** **TAUGHT** **his family to** **OBEY** **God** (Gen. 18:19)

**III.** **Joshua** **LED** **his family to** **SERVE** **God** (Josh. 24:15)

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INTRODUCTION:

***Malachi 4:1-6***

For, behold, the day cometh, that shall burn as an oven; and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble: and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the LORD of hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch. But unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings; and ye shall go forth, and grow up as calves of the stall. And ye shall tread down the wicked; for they shall be ashes under the soles of your feet in the day that I shall do *this*, saith the LORD of hosts. Remember ye the law of Moses my servant, which I commanded unto him in Horeb for all Israel, *with* the statutes and judgments. Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD: And ***he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers***, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse.

v.5- John the Baptist would eventually come in the "spirit and power" of Elijah to prepare the way for Christ's first coming. He would also "turn the heart of the fathers to the children" (Luke 1:17) Evidently, God will also send Elijah or someone like him to do the same thing prior to Christ's second coming, before the Day of the Lord.

In the last days, God predicted that Children would be disobedient to parents and that people would be without natural affection (toward their children), lovers of pleasure... (II Tim. 3:1-4).

How quickly time flies; How quickly our children grow up.

Too many fathers today have no time for their children.

(too pre-occupied with careers (climbing the corporate ladder), money (a cheap substitute for your presence in your home), houses (a beautiful mansion but no one to enjoy it with), pleasures, etc.)

Examples of dads who neglected their sons:

David neglected Absalom when he needed attention. (II Sam. 14:23,24; 28 - *"So Absalom dwelt two full years in Jerusalem, and saw not the king's face"*)

Eli neglected Hophni and Phineas when they needed discipline. (I Sam. 2:12; 3:13 - *"For I have told him that I will judge his house for ever for the iniquity which he knoweth; because his sons made themselves vile, and he restrained them not"*)

Isaac neglected Jacob by showing favoritism to Esau. (Gen. 25:28 - *"And Isaac loved Esau, because he did eat of his venison; but Rebekah loved Jacob"*)
(Note: Jacob would later follow suit and favor Joseph and Benjamin)

Samuel neglected his sons perhaps by being overly busy in the ministry.
(I Sam. 9:15-17; 8:3, 5 - *"And Samuel judged Israel all the days of his life. And he went from year to year in circuit to Bethel, and Gilgal, and Mizpeh, and judged Israel in all those places. And his return was to Ramah; for there was his house. . . And his sons walked not in his ways, but turned aside after lucre, and took bribes, and perverted judgment"*)

Manoah neglected Samson's need for self-control by catering to his unbiblical wants.
(Jud. 14:1-3 - *"And he came up, and told his father and his mother, and said, I have seen a woman in Timnath of the daughters of the Philistines: now therefore get her for me to wife. Then his father and his mother said unto him, Is there never a woman among the daughters of thy brethren, or among all my people, that thou goest to take a wife of the uncircumcised Philistines? And Samson said unto his father, Get her for me, for she pleaseth me well"*)

***Dad, please pay attention to your family!**

Observe three examples of fathers who had a heart for their families.

## I. Job SACRIFICED for his family to BE RIGHT with God (Job 1:1-5)

Job was one of three notable righteous men.
Job's righteousness is compared to that of Noah and Daniel (Ezek. 14:14, 20).

Note: v.3 - Job had the greatest business in the land (much that could preoccupy him), yet he did not abandon his family.

One of Job's primary concerns was that his kids be right with God. So acting as the priest for his family, he would seek that they be sanctified (set apart and be holy), and would offer sacrifices on their behalf.

Are we willing to take the time to see that our children come to benefit in God's sacrifice for their sins?

Are you willing to arise out of bed early to act as an intercessor for your family?
If so would you do it "continually"

Are you willing to sacrifice the time to bring your kids to church; to have family devotions;

What should concern us most is the spiritual development of our children; Their character

***What concerns you the most. . .***

*--Your daughter's physical beauty and attractiveness, or her personal Godliness?*
*--Your son's athletic ability, or his dependability (you can count on him to do right)?*
*--Your child's academic achievement or his/her knowledge and submissiveness to God's Word?*
*--Your child's wit and charm or his/her love and thoughtfulness toward others?*
*--Your child's giftedness or his/her servant's heart?*
*--Your child's artistic ability or his/her availability to be used by God?*
*--Your child's popularity or his/her trustworthiness and integrity?*
*--Your child's financial future or his/her love for God?*

As parents, our primary goal for our children should be that they have a character like that of Jesus Christ. A child with good character has good character because he/she has internalized some of the moral "characteristics" (or attributes) of God. Therefore, someone with "character" has the essential inner qualities of integrity, honesty, strength, "backbone" or fortitude, uprightness, goodness, truthfulness, sincerity, conscientiousness, graciousness, holiness, patience, etc.

## II. Abraham TAUGHT his family to OBEY God (Gen. 18:19)

In 2,165 B.C. there was born one of the most famous men to ever live. He was to grow up in a wealthy, populated, and sophisticated pagan city - called Ur of the Chaldees (220 miles south of Baghdad in southern Mesopotamia). He obeyed God by faith, by leaving Ur and going to Canaan land. He was to become the father of the Jewish nation, an example to all people, and a friend of God. His name was Abraham. Abraham had a nephew named Lot who would go to live in the pagan cities of Sodom & Gomorrah. Because of the unrepentant wickedness of these cities, God was about to destroy those twin cities. He now says that he would not withhold His plans from righteous Abraham (v.17).

God could trust Abraham with special revelation because Abraham was trustworthy. Abraham's influential and righteous character qualified him for a close communion with God.

**v. 19**
**"Command his children" =** discipline/training
(He would teach his household the right way of living)

**"After him" =** example
(He would model a righteous life)

**"They shall keep the way" =** Obedience
(He would require obedience to God's ways)

**"He will command his children" –**

The Lord had confidence that Abraham would guide his family in the ways of God.

One way to see how righteous a man is, is to see how he directs his family. Abraham (in contrast to Priest Eli in the time of young Samuel) would discipline his children, require obedience from them; he no doubt would teach them God's Word (as revealed to him) and set the right example.

Although Abraham lived in a pagan society, he, like Joshua, would say, "As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord."

The Lord knew that He could entrust to Abraham revelation about His righteousness because Abraham would pass it on to his descendents.

"*command*" - God's ways are not suggestions for us to follow, but Divine imperatives.

It takes time & effort to discipline and teach your kids.

As the head of his home, Abraham with authority given by God, would give God's righteous standards of conduct to his children and other family members.

Abraham was not a "passive" father. (Don't let things happen, make them happen for God!)

*"After him"* - He would not command his kids to do something, he wasn't doing.

*"Keep the way of the Lord"* - implies retention of truth and obedience to it.

"*to do justice and judgment*" - Abraham would not be satisfied if his children merely knew the facts of truth; Obedience was the goal.

*"that the Lord may bring upon Abraham"* - We should want our families to reap God's blessing due to their obedience to Him.

**Genesis 22:1-19** – Abraham's offering up his son, Isaac and Isaac's submission to his father is a great testament to the respect Isaac had for his father.

Abraham had such a trust in God and such a consistent testimony lived out in front of Isaac his son, that he had his son's <u>complete trust</u> (real faith is <u>respected</u>).

Isaac's confidence in Abraham is amazing. Without giving a fight or argument, Isaac submits to his authority and allows his dad to bind him and place him on the altar.

**III. Joshua LED his family to SERVE God** (Josh. 24:15)

Joshua who has witnessed the paganism the people of the Land

*"choose you"* - You will either serve self, sin, or Satan or you will serve God. Everyone serves something.

*"this day"* - Now is the best time to make your choice to serve God.

*"But"* - Irregardless of who you choose to serve, Joshua implies, I'm serving God. Are you willing to stand alone?

"*As for me*" - Joshua would lead by example.

Joshua didn't just say, "My house will serve the Lord." He didn't just send the wife and kids off to church. He said, "As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord." (Josh. 24:15)

Fundamental, eternal principle: Like produces like.
If you sow potatoes, you don't reap tomatoes.

Beware: Your Children will not merely tend to copy your faults, but will magnify them!
Whatever you do, will be exaggerated in your children.

Deut. 6:5 - Half-hearted devotion is unacceptable. Verse 6 - Love must come from the inner self

It is only after personally appropriating truth, after internalizing it ourselves , that we can teach our children.

Do you have a ministry that you can do as a family?