

*Malachi 1:6-7*

*"A son honors his father, and a servant his master. Then if I am a father, where is My honor? And if I am a master, where is My respect?" says the LORD of hosts to you, O priests who despise My name. But you say, "How have we despised Your name?" "You are presenting defiled food upon My altar. But you say, "How have we defiled You?" In that you say, "The table of the LORD is to be despised."*

Who is your Heavenly Father? We can all agree that being a child of God is the result of His calling. Each one of us has heard the call of God on our lives — but what is our response to the call of God? We may feel remorse for sins past or joy for a future with Him. When God reveals Himself to us as Father, when He adopts us as children into His family, what does He intend for us to feel? What is the appropriate response of children to fatherhood of God?

I think the biblical response is twofold. I think God wants a child-like reverence for His power and strength and wisdom coupled with peace and security in His gracious provision for His children. When we put these two together, reverence and trust, we honor our heavenly Father in the same way God said we were to honor our earthly father in Exodus 20:12 *"Honor your father and your mother, so that you may live long in the land the LORD your God is giving you."* And yet how many of us ~~who~~ say the fatherhood of God should motivate us to honor and hold Him in sacred respect?

I see our passage in Malachi as a proper balancing of our response to God for the honor and worship He deserves for His gracious care. The fatherhood of God is brought before the priests to humble them because they have despised the Lord's altar. The fatherhood of God in our passage is not for the comfort or the security of the priests. The majestic fatherhood of God requires His children to honor and respect Him in reverence and fear.

In our relationship with our Heavenly Father we should always entwine reverence and awe with security and tenderness. When we respond to God properly we see these attitudes dependent on the presence of the other. The psalmist knew this when he wrote Psalm 103:13 *"As a father has compassion on his children, so the LORD has compassion on those who fear Him."* Who will rest in the mercy of God? The Scriptures teach us it is the person who bows with reverential fear and honors his majestic Father in heaven.