

# Our Father's Demand

by James Smith

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*The sermon emphasizes the importance of honoring God as our Father by loving, obeying, and submitting to Him, and recognizing His sovereignty and goodness in all things.*

**Scripture:** Psalm 16:11, Malachi 1:6, Matthew 7:21, Romans 8:15, Galatians 3:26, Ephesians 2:19, Philippians 4:6, James 1:22, 1 John 3:1

**Topics:** "Christian Living", "Holy Obedience"

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## Description

James Smith preaches on the importance of honoring God as our Father by living out our Christian profession with sincerity and obedience. He emphasizes the need for believers to exhibit Christ-like behavior, walk by faith, live heavenly lives, and act as holy temples of the Holy Spirit. Smith challenges listeners to honor God by trusting in His promises, loving Him fervently, acquiescing to His will, obeying His precepts, praying boldly, and valuing His presence above all else.

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## Transcript

"A son honors his father, and a servant his master. If I am a father--where is My honor? And if I am a master, where is your fear of Me?" Malachi 1:6

A profession of the Christian religion involves solemn obligations. The Lord expects us to be what we profess, and speaks to us accordingly in his Word.

Do we profess to be Christians? Then God expects us to be Christ-like.

Do we profess to be believers? Then the Lord expects us to walk by faith, and not by sight.

Do we profess to be saints? Then the Lord expects us to live heavenly lives.

Do we profess to be temples of the Holy Spirit? Then the Lord expects us to plan, purpose, and act as holy and consecrated people.

Do we profess to be born again--to be sons of God? Then the Lord expects from us filial feelings, and filial conduct.

"If I am a father--where is My honor?" Every believer professes to be a child of God. Yes, we say, "God is my father, I am born again; born from above; born, not of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man--but of

God." What a privilege, to be the child of God! What an honor, to be called the sons of God! But this privilege, this honor, have all the saints. For we are all the sons of God, by faith in Christ Jesus. May the Spirit of adoption dwell in our hearts, nourish our graces, aid us in our devotions, help our infirmities, and constrain us to live, not unto ourselves--but unto him who died for us, and rose again.

Beloved, do you call God, Father? Do you profess to be his child? If so, let me ask you for a little season to listen to his voice, he is speaking to you. He speaks in love. There is jealousy, if not grief, in his words. He asks you, "If I am a father--where is My honor?" The law says, "Honor your father;" nature says, "Honor your father;" grace says, "Honor your father;" and the God of grace promises, "Those who honor me--I will honor." God expects, therefore, to be honored by you. He expects you to keep an eye upon his honor always, and everywhere. He has honored you, he intends to honor you more highly yet; hence it is but reasonable that he should expect you to honor him. Perhaps you are ready to ask, "HOW does God, as my Father, expect me to honor him?"

By exercising confidence in his promises. He has given you many, exceeding great, and very precious promises. These promises include all the blessings of his providence, and all the riches of his grace. They anticipate all the circumstances of life. They provide both for body and soul. They are expressed in the plainest and most unequivocal terms. They are ratified and confirmed by the death of his most dear and well-beloved Son. They have been fulfilled in unnumbered instances. They were never trusted in vain. They were never violated or known to fail.

Having thus given you his Word, having thus pledged himself to you--he expects you to place confidence in him--to expect him to be as good as his Word--to do as he has said. But instead of this, many of his children give way to doubts, they are agitated with distressing fears, they are full of distrust. They doubt if he will make good his promises to them. They fear they shall be left unprovided and uncared for. They distrust his faithfulness and tender love. They do not say as much in words--but the spirit they breathe, the sighs and groans that escape them, the course of conduct they pursue, declare plainly that they do so.

Now the Lord asks the doubting, fearing, distrustful professor, "If I am a father--where is My honor? Does not the father naturally care for his children, provide for them, and interfere on their behalf? Is not the father's word law to the child, and ought not his plain and positive promise to silence every fear, and remove every doubt? Do you think that I shall do less for my children, than the father in nature will for his? Do you mean to say that my word is not to be taken and trusted, as soon, and as firmly as his? Where is my honor?" Poor, doubtful, distrustful professor, go upon your knees, and answer this question to the Lord himself!

By exercising filial love. The child naturally loves his parents, and the Christian professes to love his God. It appears very extraordinary when we think of it--but the sum of all that the Lord asks of his creatures is, "love Me!" And all that he asks of his children is, "love Me!" Strange, that God should so prize our love. But he does. Consider what he has done to win it. What he does to retain it. He loves us--that we may love him. He chose us in his beloved Son--that we may love him. He redeemed us by the sufferings and death of Immanuel--that we may love him. He called us by his grace, renewed us by his Holy Spirit, and has blessed us with all spiritual blessings--that we may love him. He asks us to give him a child's love--the love that confides in him, communes with him, and prefers him above all other.

But to how many cold-hearted, earthly-minded, self-loving professors, may he well say, "If I am a father--where is My honor? Where is the love I ask for--the love I prize--the love I have done so much to

win? Look at the love you have for earthly relatives, carnal objects, and temporal things. When do you love me with a love so strong, a love so ardent, a love so self-denying? Where is my honor? Mere words will not do. Profession is not enough. I want the heart. I wish to be loved as a Father, with the warm heart of a kind and affectionate child."

Cold-hearted professor, go to your closet, and there answer the question of your grieved and offended Father.

By acquiescing in his will. The father's will should rule the household; and the will of God, should rule the universe. Our Father is infinitely wise, infinitely kind, and wills nothing but what is for our real and everlasting welfare. He manages all the affairs of the world, he superintends the most minute affairs of his children. He has appointed our lot, he arranges all circumstances. He says, "Nothing shall by any means hurt you; all things shall work together for your good."

Now, if our Father's will is the offspring of his wisdom, and an expression of the deep and tender love of his heart--ought we not to acquiesce in his will; and with his beloved Son, amid the agonies of the garden, exclaim, "Not my will--but may your will be done." But, instead of this, many of his professed children fret, complain, and indirectly impeach his wisdom and his love. How very few are satisfied with the station appointed them, the talents given them, the lot assigned them! Each imagines he has something to complain of, or, that on some point--God deals harshly with him.

Now amidst the murmuring, complaining, fretting, and faultfinding of his professed children, the Lord steps forward and asks, "If I am a father--where is My honor? You confess that I am wiser than you, holier than you, more loving than you, and yet you do not acquiesce in my will? Where is my honor? Can I be a father, and not give rules to his own children! Can I be a father, and not dispose of his own property! Can I be a father, a father, and not appoint the situations to be filled, and the lessons to be learned by his own offspring! Either renounce my name, and give up your profession--or acquiesce in my will." In other words, "Allow me to do what I will with my own."

By obedience to his precepts. Filial obedience honors God. He prizes the least thing done by his child with a view to please him. He has prescribed nothing but what will be for our good, and his own glory. His precepts are to rule our life, while his promises are to comfort our hearts. There is a fullness treasured up in Jesus to supply us; there is grace to be used by us, and what we receive from the Savior's fullness, is to enable us to perform his precepts.

Some of his precepts are moral--these are of everlasting obligation, and extend to every day of our whole life. Some of them are particular--and are intended for special times and purposes. Every believer should do what the Lord commands--just because the Lord commands it. No other reason should ever be required.

But there are many who call God Father, who neglect to attend to his commands altogether; and who pay but little attention to some of his moral requirements. Now to such, the Lord appeals when he says, "If I am a father--where is My honor? Where is the obedience I have a right to expect--the prompt, hearty, unhesitating, steady obedience of filial love?"

If God is our father--surely he ought to be obeyed! And if my reader lives in the neglect of any New Testament ordinance, or violating any one of God's moral precepts, let him go in before the Lord, and tell him honestly why he neglects that ordinance, and why he violates that precept. Every one of us must give

account of himself to God, and the sooner such parties do it, the better. Reader, do you live practically disobeying any of God's precepts? If so, answer the Lord's question, "If I am a father--where is My honor?"

By asking for great things at his throne. He has bidden us come boldly, open our mouths wide, and ask what we need. Yet some seldom pray. Others go to God, as a servant would go to a hard master, to wring a favor from him. We should go in faith. We should ask with confidence. We should expect whatever we ask--if it is promised in his holy Word. Our heavenly Father considers himself honored if we go to him very often; if we go for all we need; if we fearlessly ask for the greatest blessings he has to bestow. But when we seldom pray, when our prayers are cold, when we have no confidence in God, when we do not expect to receive the blessing we ask; then the Lord may well ask, "If I am a father--where is My honor? Is this the way to treat a Father--a Father who has done so much for you--a Father who has given so many blessings unasked by you--a father who has made so many promises to you?"

Reader, if you seldom pray, if your prayers are mere forms, if you have no faith in God's love, if you are afraid to ask for great things at God's throne, or if you do not expect him to give you what you ask of him; then go and answer his question, "If I am a father--where is My honor?" and give him a reason for your conduct.

By valuing his presence. Every affectionate child loves and values the presence of its loving and kind-hearted parent; and everyone that professes to be a child of God, should love and value the presence of God. There should be the morning visit--for the morning blessing. The noon-day visit--for fellowship and communion. The evening visit--for confession, and the token of approbation. We should walk with our Father in the field of nature, in the garden of his ordinances, and in the paradise of his Word. The presence of God should be daily sought, constantly realized, and highly prized.

But some professors appear to value the world's smiles, the pleasures of time, or the accumulation of wealth--more than the presence of God! Reader, if anything is dearer to your heart, more precious to your soul, or more anxiously sought after than the presence of God--he may well come forth and ask you, "If I am a father--where is My honor? Is it an honor to me to have the world's smiles, or wealth, or pleasure--preferred to my presence? Is it an honor to me, to have my children so taken up with the world, as scarcely to have time to speak with me, or listen while I speak to them?"

If you prefer anything earthly to the presence of your God, my reader, go and inform him why. Go answer his question, so pointedly proposed to you, "If I am a father--where is My honor?"

But I must close. Is God indeed your father? Then feel for and pity the fatherless. There are many poor, fatherless, Christless souls around you. Pity them. Pray for them. Speak to them. Tell them of your heavenly father. Tell them of his nature, his character, his love, his compassion, and especially of his readiness to adopt poor fatherless children for his own. Try to induce them to accompany you to his throne and to his house, and seek by all means to introduce them to him.

Is God your father? Then admire the greatness of your privilege. What a mercy to have a father--and such a father! A father with such wealth, such love, such infinite condescension; a father who will never let you want, or suffer your enemies to triumph over you; a father whose eye follows you, whose arm encircles you, and whose heart ever sympathizes with you! Are you in doubt whether God is your Father? Desire it as the one thing needful, as the greatest blessing, as the highest privilege you can enjoy. Set your heart upon it. Seek it right earnestly. Seek it daily. Seek it at once. Seek it determined to possess and enjoy it. Jesus takes in all poor orphans who apply to him. God looks lovingly down on poor seeking sinners, and

says, "Will you not from this time cry unto me, My Father, you are the guide of youth."

Brethren in Christ, as God is our Father, let us be jealous of his honor; let us reverence his authority, and let us walk worthy of his holy name. If tempted to sin, repel the temptation with this, "I am God's child! I must not-for it will grieve my Father's heart, and will wound my Savior afresh!" If tried by providence, remember it is your Father's providence, and the darkest cloud may be charged with the greatest blessing. If harassed by Satan--go and tell your Father, crying as one of old did, "Deliver my soul from the sword; my darling from the power of the dog."

Are you afflicted? It is your Father's rod!

Are you happy in his ways? It is your Father's smile.

Are you drawing near to death? It is going home to your Father's house!

With God for your Father, you may brave any danger, face any foe, carry any cross, endure any trial, and rejoice in the greatest tribulation. Let the point be settled, let it be the one aim of your life to honor him who predestined you to the adoption of children by Jesus Christ unto himself, to the praise of his glorious grace, wherein he has made you accepted in the Beloved!

Great God, and will you condescend

To be my Father and my Friend?

I, a poor child, and you so high,

The Lord of earth, and air, and sky?

Are you my Father? can you bear

To hear my poor imperfect prayer?

Or will you listen to the praise

Which such a little one can raise?

Are you my Father? let me be

A meek obedient child to Thee;

And try in word, and deed, and thought

To serve and please you as I ought.

Are you my Father? Then I'll depend

Upon the care of such a Friend;

And only wish to do and be

Whatever seems good to Thee.

Are you my Father? then at last,

When all my days on earth are past,  
Send down and take me in your love  
To be your better child above!

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