

A Chip Off the Old Block

Don't all of us have one Father? Didn't one God create us? Why then do we act treacherously against one another, profaning the covenant of our fathers? – Malachi 2:10 HCSB

A righteous man had many children. He loved each for their unique approach to life. One child was quiet and reserved. The next was outgoing and brash. One floated through life blissfully unaware of nearly anything going on, while another was intellectually and emotionally involved in everything. Each was beautiful; each was wonderful.

The man and his wife taught the children to express their love. The kids would come and kiss their parents goodnight and say, "I love you." They would periodically give cards, notes or pictures to their parents expressing their appreciation for different things. They would even put on shows, singing, dancing and juggling (or at least trying their hardest) to entertain the parents who had dedicated their lives to their good.

The children were also taught to love and serve others through times of service directed toward the elderly and weak-minded. They took part in church ministry and learned to practice hospitality toward the many guests their father invited into their home.

One day, however, one of the children gave the parents a wonderful gift. One child said to another, "Thank you very much for helping me. I love you." This, more than anything else, gave the parents joy for it meant the child had internalized the message of gratitude and love and was now capable of expressing it to others.

Elohim is our Father in Heaven. He has dedicated Himself to our advancement and has loved us for millennia with a deep, passionate, abiding and sacrificial love.¹ He has told us over and over that He loves us. He has also taught us to express our gratitude and love to Him. Like any parent He wants us to learn to politely say "thank you" when we receive something.

But our Father wants us to also express our love toward one another.² He feels that it is just as important that we love each other as it is to love Him.³ In fact, He says that not loving each other demonstrates that we have not fully grown to love Him either.⁴ A person who does not love and serve his brother may not even be one of God's children!⁵

[Elohim Tzaddik](#) values ethical behavior more than ritual behavior because it demonstrates that we have internalized His character and have come to the point where we can express it to others. To truly please Him we must practice honest speech that is compassionately spoken. We must learn to serve truly, doing what is best for others and regarding their needs as equally important as ours. We must love without hypocrisy, abhorring what is evil and clinging to what is good in others. In other words, we must become just like our Father – a chip off the old block.

¹ Psalm 100:5; Jeremiah 31:3

² 1 John 3:23

³ Matthew 22:35-40

⁴ 1 John 3:7-8

⁵ 1 John 3:10, 14