

*American Family*  
**The Hearts of the Fathers**

**Mal. 4:5-6**

<sup>5</sup> Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet Before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD. <sup>6</sup> And he will turn The hearts of the fathers to the children, And the hearts of the children to their fathers, Lest I come and strike the earth with a curse.

This verse is not highlighted enough in today's culture.

**"Strike the earth with a curse"?**

- 40% of children growing up in America are being raised without their fathers.
  - Children of have significantly higher rates of health problems, psychological problems, exposure to violence, and dropping out of school.
- [www.marriage-success-secrets.com/statistics-about-children-and-divorce.html](http://www.marriage-success-secrets.com/statistics-about-children-and-divorce.html)

**Fathers?**

Four roles of a father

- (1) Protection
  - Includes provision
- (2) Training
- (3) Discipline (*Eph. 6:4*)
- (4) Affirmation
  - Matt. 3:17 - *"This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."*

The mother assists in these areas but should never have to do them on her own.

- Parents impart who they are not just what they say.
- Because of the Fall of man, many people have father deficits.

**"I will send you Elijah"?**

*v. 6 - His preaching will turn the hearts of fathers to their children, and the hearts of children to their fathers. (NLT)*

**Hope from failure**

The antidote to father deficits – rejection, abandonment, neglect is adoption.

- Eph. 1:5-6 - <sup>5</sup> *having predestined us to **adoption** as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will,* <sup>6</sup> *to the praise of the glory of His grace, by which He made us **accepted in the Beloved**.*
- This passage not only tells us that we're accepted, but *why*.
- Rom. 8:15-17 <sup>15</sup> *For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you received the **Spirit of adoption** by whom we cry out, "Abba, Father."* <sup>16</sup> *The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God,* <sup>17</sup> *and if children, then heirs— heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together.*
- You have to move into an intimate relationship with God to break the curse.