



Like Father, Like Son: How We Come to Care for Orphans

James 1:16-27

Discussion 1: The Primary text & Sermon Review. Read James 1:16-27

- *Summarize the gist of each of these*

We come to care for orphans when...

1. The gospel changes our identity (1:16-18, 27)

“As the people of God, one of those things that should come naturally for us is caring for orphans.”

2. The gospel changes our view of humanity (1:27)

3. The gospel changes what we are capable of (1:21-25)

4. The gospel changes what makes us happy (1:25)

^{ESV} Luke 11:28 But he said, "Blessed rather are those who hear the word of God and keep it!"

5. The gospel changes our horizon (1:18 + other forward looking verses in James)

Discussion 2: Orphan Care as Worship (or other vulnerable/helpless/afflicted category)

- *God's heart for the vulnerable, helpless, and afflicted*

^{ESV} **Deuteronomy 10:16** Circumcise therefore ^athe foreskin of your heart, and be no longer ^bstubborn. ¹⁷ For the LORD your God is ^aGod of gods and ^bLord of lords, ^cthe great, the mighty, and the awesome God, who is ^dnot partial and takes no bribe. ¹⁸ ^aHe executes justice for the fatherless and the widow, and loves the sojourner, giving him food and clothing.

^{ESV} **Deuteronomy 24:17** ^a"You shall not pervert the justice due to the sojourner or to the fatherless, ^bor take a widow's garment in pledge

^{ESV} **Psalms 68:5** ^aFather of the fatherless and ^bprotector of widows is God in his holy habitation.

^{ESV} **Isaiah 1:16** ^aWash yourselves; make yourselves clean; remove the evil of your deeds from before my eyes; ^bcease to do evil, ¹⁷ learn to do good; ^aseek justice, correct oppression; ^bbring justice to the fatherless, plead the widow's cause.

^{ESV} **Psalms 9:12** For he who ^aavenges blood is mindful of them; he ^bdoes not forget the cry of the afflicted.

^{ESV} **Psalms 10:12** ^aArise, O LORD; O God, ^blift up your hand; ^cforget not the afflicted.

^{ESV} **Psalms 10:17** O LORD, you hear the desire of the afflicted; you will ^astrengthen their heart; you will incline your ear

^{ESV} **Psalms 140:12** I know that the LORD will ^amaintain the cause of the afflicted, and ^bwill execute justice for the needy.

“What we do does not define us, but it does identify us. Our religion is more than the sum of what we believe, but our religion is also more than the sum of what we do. The things we believe make us do things and do things naturally.”

[*We do what we are.* This basic truth underlies the Scriptural call to be fruit inspectors (of ourselves and in “one anothering”). As we are being transformed (Rom 12:2), our priorities, desires, sources of satisfaction etc. are growing more in line with Christ’s (sanctification). *Are we becoming more concerned for the helpless and afflicted?]*

- *In what way is such care an act of worship?*

[Good opportunity to continue deprogramming the “worship=music” idea. What is worship?

Worship is the believer’s response of all that they are – mind, emotions, will, body – to what God is and says and does. (Warren Wiersbe, *Real Worship*, p. 26)

Of course singing praises to God is an act of worship, but we should be thinking more broadly in terms of God glorifying expressions of a changed heart. Caring for the vulnerable, helpless, and afflicted is such an expression.]

- *Discuss proper/improper motivations for adoption and orphan/widow care.*

[proper: a transformed character/identity... (loving what God loves) ...
improper: moralism, idolized social justice, over-realized eschatology ...]

Discussion 3: Orphan Care as Mission

- *In what way is such care missional? [as in Great Commission]*

“Parentlessness is not ultimately any orphans problem, but Christlessness. This is why adoption is so strategic and it is why we think of it in mission categories at DSC.”

Discussion 4: Orphan Care in Community

- ♥ *What are some specific ways we can minister to and support one another?*

[Discuss adoption/foster care possibility for your families--challenge outright dismissals of the idea. Do you harbor racism¹ in your hearts? Acknowledge and encourage where you see this kind of ministry being done (e.g. crisis pregnancy centers, Thailand, ...). *Discuss other ways you can support adoptive parents etc. “Adopting the adopters” ...]*

¹ Consider getting together and watching or listening to Thabiti Anyabwile’s outstanding message *Bearing the Image: Identity, the Work of Christ, and the Church* available here:

<http://t4g.org/2000/04/bearing-the-image-identity-the-work-of-christ-and-the-church-session-ii/>
It will radically challenge your understanding of “race.”



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Deuteronomy 10:16-18; 24:17, Isaiah 1:16-17, Psalm 9:12; 10:12; 10:17; 40:12; 68:5

“What we do does not define us, but it does identify us. Our religion is more than the sum of what we believe, but our religion is also more than the sum of what we do. The things we believe make us do things and do things naturally.”

- *In what way is such care an act of worship?*
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