

“LOVING THE FORSAKEN”

“Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world.” James 1:27

Bible scholar, John Stott, once wrote: *“There are only two possible attitudes which Christians can adopt towards the world. One is escape and the other is engagement.”* Thousands of verses in the Bible call Christ-followers to engage the needs of a broken world. Today, we examine six steps that enable us to help the “least of these” in our world.

1. **Open my heart** to orphans

“...You are the helper of the fatherless. You hear, O LORD, the desire of the afflicted; You encourage them, and You listen to their cry, defending the fatherless and the oppressed...” Psalm 10:14,17-18a

2. **Recognize** my responsibility

- To not care about orphans is sin!

“If you do not oppress the alien, the fatherless or the widow and do not shed innocent blood in this place, and if you do not follow other gods to your own harm, then I will let you live in this place, in the land I gave your forefathers for ever and ever.” Jeremiah 7:6-7

“A father to the fatherless, a defender of widows, is God in His holy dwelling. God sets the lonely in families, He leads forth the prisoners with singing.” Psalm 68:5-6

3. **Prevent** children from being orphaned

“Learn to do right! Seek justice, encourage the oppressed. Defend the cause of the fatherless, plead the case of the widow.” Isaiah 1:17

“Do not oppress the widow or the fatherless, the alien or the poor.” Zechariah 7:10

4. **Help** in practical ways

“Do not deprive the alien or the fatherless of justice, or take the cloak of the widow as a pledge. Remember that you were slaves in Egypt and the LORD your God redeemed you from there.” Deuteronomy 24:17,18

5. Acknowledge the concern of God Himself

“He defends the cause of the fatherless and the widow, and loves the alien, giving him food and clothing.” Deuteronomy 10:18

*“The LORD watches over the alien and sustains the fatherless and the widow.”
Psalm 146:9*

6. Never forget the Church!

*“So now you Gentiles are no longer strangers and foreigners. You are citizens along with all of God’s holy people. You are members of God’s family.”
Ephesians 2:19, NLT*

“Both the One who makes men holy and those who are made holy are of the same family. So Jesus is not ashamed to call them brothers.” Hebrews 2:11

*“For He chose us in Him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in His sight. In love He predestined us to be adopted as His sons through Jesus Christ, in accordance with His pleasure and will - to the praise of His glorious grace, which He has freely given us in the One He loves.”
Ephesians 1:4-6*

CONCLUSION

- How does God want me to respond?

PRIMARY RESOURCES USED FOR THIS SERMON INCLUDE:

The Hole In Our Gospel by Richard Stearns

“Visiting Orphans in a World of AIDS and Abortion” by John Piper

“Answer the Call to Care for Children” by Kay Warren and Elizabeth Styffe