

DAY 4

**ORPHAN
CARE
SOLUTIONS**

YOU'RE AMAZING, BUT YOU'RE NOT A HERO

SCRIPTURE FOCUS: 1 JOHN 4:19

In his book "Radical," David Platt writes, "It is important to realize we adopt not because we are rescuers. No. We adopt because we are rescued."

While Platt is writing specifically about adoption, this beautiful thought is true of all approaches to orphan care. Humility in love is central to living out the way of Jesus. As we seek to serve the most vulnerable among us, may we cling to the words from Philippians 2:3, "Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves."

We don't serve because we are somehow better than others or in an effort to attract attention to ourselves. No, we serve, give, and love because Jesus has abundantly done all of that and so much more for us: "For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many" (Mark 10:45). That should be our motivation, guiding principle, and strength.

THERE ARE MANY DIFFERENT SOLUTIONS

As our desire to reflect God's heart for vulnerable children grows, it is important to approach orphan care in a way that protects children's best interests. With the wide range of factors contributing to children becoming orphaned, there are several ways to get involved, and one helpful tool in better understanding these contributing factors is the P.R.A.Y. acronym:

P – PRESERVATION

R – REUNIFICATION

A – ADOPTION

Y – YOUTH SUPPORT

Preservation means doing everything possible to preserve the integrity and unity of a child's family of origin. Governments, organizations, and individuals can all do something to effectively address factors that undermine the security and stability families need to thrive.

Reunification, following preservation, is the process of placing a child in a temporary home with the goal of reuniting the family. Reunification efforts shape the model for foster care in the U.S. and sometimes include placement with extended family members. While reunification can be the best option for a child, it is important to seek timely solutions, so the child is able to find security and permanency sooner rather than later.

Adoption is the most familiar approach to orphan care. When a child is unable to stay in his or her family of origin, adoption is often the best solution available to preserve, protect, and meet the needs of that child. If possible, it is beneficial for a child to come into a family in his or her country of origin, but we must also affirm intercountry adoption when a domestic placement is unlikely.

Finally, *youth support* involves taking action for children who are unable to remain with their family of origin and/or enter into a family through adoption. It is vitally important to provide access to resources and services that help these children thrive and grow. One example of youth support would be mentorship programs that pair children with role models. Another example of youth support would be residential care, job training, and educational resources that help youth transition successfully into adulthood.

The P.R.A.Y. acronym is a helpful framework to begin building an understanding of orphan care solutions. Real, impactful, life-changing work is never easy and rarely happens quickly. It requires prayer and a willingness to step into the needs of others. It will certainly cost you something, but God has already given you everything you need to step into the places he calls you.

PRAYERFUL REFLECTION

In Jeremiah 1:4-10, God calls Jeremiah to boldness. In verse 7, he says to Jeremiah, "Do not say, 'I am only a youth'; for to all to whom I send you, you shall go, and whatever I command you, you shall speak." Being a student does not disqualify you from making a difference in the world or in the life of a child. You can make an incredible difference right now.

- ✦ How do God's words to Jeremiah encourage or challenge you today? What hinders you from believing God can use your gifts and talents right now to make a difference? Use the space below to share your thoughts. We encourage you to ask God to show you the depth of his love for you, praising him and thanking him for his grace and mercy and asking that he would open your heart to how he wants to use you to love others today.

ACTIVE REFLECTION

"Not everyone is called to adopt, but everyone is called to do something." — Mary Beth Chapman

- ✦ Caring for the needs of orphans is a much broader endeavor than simply advocating for adoption or adopting a child into your family. Take time to consider the various aspects covered in the P.R.A.Y. acronym. Think of how the needs of children can be met in your own community through preservation, reunification, adoption, and youth support. How can you, your youth group, campus ministry, or service club join in meeting those needs? We invite you or your group to make a video sharing three ideas you have for how to make a difference in your community. Email it to us at pause@showhope.org.