

### WARM-UP

- What is the importance of children in the family or a society? How have you seen or experienced the value of placing children in a family?
- How do you react when you see a vulnerable child or woman? How do others around you react?
- Why is it important to help travelers, children without families, or women without empowerment or protection? What happens when they are not helped or supported?

**WORD** *<sup>19</sup>“When you reap your harvest in your field and forget a sheaf in the field, you shall not go back to get it. It shall be for the sojourner, the fatherless, and the widow, that the LORD your God may bless you in all the work of your hands. . . . <sup>22</sup>You shall remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt; therefore I command you to do this.”*

**DEUTERONOMY 24:19, 22**

(Read also **DEUTERONOMY 24:20–21.**)

God especially commanded the Israelites to provide for the traveler, the fatherless children, and disempowered women. These three were particularly vulnerable in society. They do not belong to the state they are in or have no providers or protectors.

Before we became part of God’s family, we experienced oppression to sin and vulnerability to fear. As people of God, we know how it feels when God steps in on our behalf, giving us a sense of belonging, protection, and provision. Of all people, then, how should we respond and serve children and the vulnerable?

## 1 | God's heart is for the sojourner, the fatherless, and the widow.

*"When you beat your olive trees, you shall not go over them again. It shall be for the sojourner, the fatherless, and the widow."*

**DEUTERONOMY 24:20**

Vulnerable people are unable to change their situations by their own power. Such vulnerability may be due to poverty, disability, displacement, unfamiliarity, or absence of someone to speak or act on their behalf. God's word is clear: His people are to share what they have left over with those who are vulnerable. Who would you say are vulnerable persons around you?

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## 2 | We are to give to those in need and not take advantage of them.

*"When you gather the grapes of your vineyard, you shall not strip it afterward. It shall be for the sojourner, the fatherless, and the widow."* **DEUTERONOMY 24:21**

We are not to ignore the presence of the vulnerable in our society. Especially if we have enough to provide for ourselves, our families, and to make a continued living. God told His people that after they had gathered the harvest, they were not to go back for every last piece of fruit. This is so that there would be food left for those who are in need. Likewise, we should deliberately set aside part of our resources to help the desperate. Share a time you were in need and someone extended generosity to you. What happened? How was that experience for you?

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## We are both recipients and conduits of God's blessings.

*<sup>19</sup>When you reap your harvest in your field and forget a sheaf in the field, you shall not go back to get it. It shall be for the sojourner, the fatherless, and the widow, that the LORD your God may bless you in all the work of your hands. . . . <sup>22</sup>You shall remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt; therefore I command you to do this.* **DEUTERONOMY 24:19, 22**

God does not expect our compassion to come out of nowhere. In Deuteronomy, He reminded the Israelites that they had also experienced oppression and vulnerability as slaves in Egypt. Of all people, they should know how it feels to have no possessions or protection. In the same way, as former slaves to sin and present children of God, we too should show compassion.

At the same time, God promises blessings when we step out in compassion for the vulnerable. He promises to bless us in all the work of our hands. God does not only provide for the vulnerable, He provides for us as we share His blessings with others. What extra resources do you have that you can share?

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When we use the material blessings God has given us to help those in need, it produces a harvest of righteousness—people thanking and praising God for providing for them through us. People are drawn to God because of our submission to God in being generous. Together, we look forward to an inheritance of an eternal home and a forever Father.

## APPLICATION

- God loved us first and freed us from oppression. Do you remember the feeling of vulnerability? How did it feel when you experienced God's freedom, and how can you be a conduit for others to experience this as well?
- Are there any organizations you are familiar with who support vulnerable people? What can you do to support them?
- Consider the idea of setting aside an amount regularly that you can give to those in need. What will it take for you to do this, and how can you make steps towards this?

## PRAYER

- Thank God for His compassion on you and His salvation freely given to you.
- Ask God to give you a heart for marginalized people, especially children with no fathers and disempowered women.
- Pray and ask God for opportunities and open doors to reach out to people who have been marginalized by society. Pray for empowerment by the Holy Spirit, courage, wisdom and boldness to step out of your comfort zone to help and support others.



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