

a resource for
orphan
sunday

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An Initiative of
**The Christian Alliance for Orphans
& The Cry of the Orphan**

Fields of the Fatherless by Tom Davis

Deuteronomy 24:17-21

Questions to consider in the study:

1. What would it mean for your family, church, or community to implement the biblical command of “The Fields of the Fatherless” by providing for widows, orphans and strangers?
2. Why was God so serious about this principle being a part of the Jewish community?
3. If God is so passionate about orphans, how can we make adjustments in our everyday lives, so we share this passion with Him?

The scriptures speak of a God who cares for the alien, orphan, and widow. When you look at these passages, like Psalm 68:5 and James 1:27, the truth comes jumping off the page. Read both of those passages.

4. Why do you think, “pure and undefiled religion” is only used in the context of taking care of widows and orphans?

In Deuteronomy 24:17 it says, “You shall not pervert the justice due an alien or an orphan, nor take a widow's garment in pledge.”

5. What does it mean to not pervert justice?

Justice is important to God.

He promises to ensure justice:

“He administers justice for the fatherless and the widow, and loves the stranger, giving him food and clothing.” Deut. 10:17-18

Edmund Burke, an 18th century philosopher said, “The definition of evil in the world is when good men and women see injustice and do nothing.”

6. Do you agree with this statement? Why or why not?
7. What does it have to do with Deuteronomy 17:24?

What are the Fields of the Fatherless?

God’s people were to set aside a portion of their “field” and dedicate it to feeding the orphan, alien, and widow. The boundary of those “fields of the fatherless” were places where any orphan, widow, or stranger could find provision. Here was God’s plan:

“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 stranger, the fatherless, and the widow, that the Lord your God may bless you in all the work of your hands. When you beat the olive trees, you shall not go over the boughs again; it shall be for the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow. When you gather the grapes of your vineyard, you shall not glean it afterward; it shall be for the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow.”

Deut. 24:19-21

This boundary was so important, if you violated it, you transgressed against God.

“Do not move an ancient boundary stone, or encroach on the fields of the fatherless. For their Defender is strong; He will take up their case against you.” Proverbs 23:10-11

Today’s Fields

8. What is the church of today supposed to look like?
9. If you could see a picture of the church implementing this important truth, what would you see?

Every Christian and every church needs to dedicate a portion of their “field” for ministry toward the orphan, widow, and alien.

A picture of the field of the fatherless is found in the book of Ruth.

In the fields of Boaz, Ruth finds her “kinsman redeemer,” and we find a perfect picture of how God’s people are to respond to the fatherless.

10. How do you see the “Fields of the Fatherless” principle working in the book of Ruth?

God promises blessing, satisfaction, and fulfillment are waiting for those who obey Him in this area. Remember Deut 24?

“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 stranger, the fatherless, and the widow, that the Lord may *bless* you in all the work of your hand.”

The blessing of the Lord was not something Jewish people took lightly. God’s blessing meant the difference between success and failure, prosperity and poverty, abundance and want. This blessing affected “all the works of their hands.”

11. Discuss the blessings you have personally encountered from ministering to orphans or other people who were struggling.
12. How did that change you? How did you see God differently?
13. What specific changes will you make in your life to practice the “Fields of the Fatherless,” and share in God’s burden to help the widow and orphan?