



ADOPTION, FOSTER & ORPHAN CARE

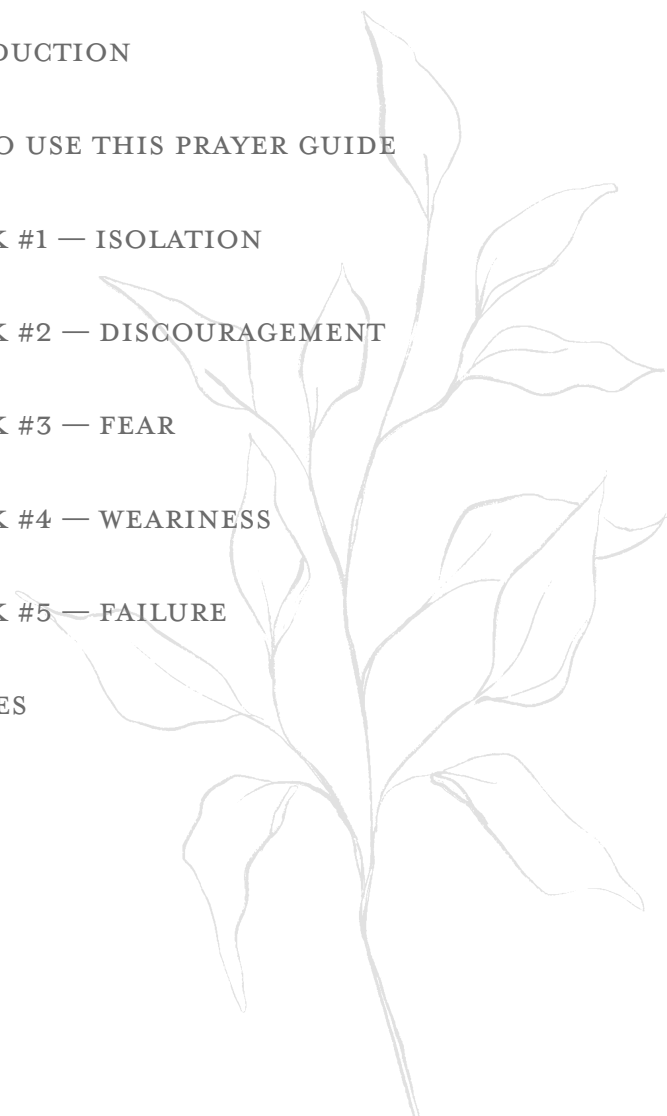
FAMILY

PRAYER GUIDE

*A war-time prayer guide for families
engaging in orphan care*



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While there are needs and brokenness all around us, there exists in our world a few giant needs—needs that are so great and so large they seem insurmountable. Orphan care is one of these needs. Furthering the challenge, orphan care is intrinsically interwoven with other giant needs including poverty, homelessness, mental health, and substance abuse, just to name a few, and bound together with a tight knot of sin and hopelessness.

In spite of this, we know as followers of the Almighty God that it was never God's intent for children to be without a family¹. The very name of our God is Redeemer, Restorer, Healer, Father, Provider, Shepherd, Peace, Friend, and Love. The enemy rages at these things. As Beth Gukenberger wrote, "I think people tend to think in terms of "extraordinary" when they think of the devil. And the New Testament pictures the devil not mainly as doing something extraordinary, but as doing the very ordinary, deadly, horrible "arrow-shooting" at our hearts. So lift up the shield of faith, quench the fiery darts of the devil—that's steady state, daily Christianity...We have an enemy who is everyday trying to destroy us." Make no mistake, the enemy loves to see families broken, and he is actively against the light of Christ coming into these hard situations.

Legacy 68:5 staff member Hannah Rodriguez shared this story: "Etched in my memory is the time when our own family was facing crisis after crisis as foster parents. We were overwhelmed and weary. We felt alone. Quite honestly, we were not equipped outside of the supernatural power of the Holy Spirit to move forward with any love or hope. In this place of desperation, the Lord brought Matthew 12:29 to my husband's mind. It says, "Or again, how can anyone enter a strong man's house and steal his possessions, unless he first ties up the strong man? Then he can plunder his house." The strong man is our enemy Satan. The orphan children are his possessions. Everyone who cares for the orphan, the neglected, the abused, and the broken must recognize that this brokenness delights the devil. Likewise, when Christ followers engage in this realm of darkness, we must be prepared for the attacks of the enemy and be vigilant to counter his attacks.

As Legacy 68:5 families, we invite you into the collective recognition that we cannot do this work alone. Every prayer that gains ground for the Kingdom of God is ground taken from the enemy². As John Piper said, "Focused, war-time prayer is an essential part of our assault on the strongholds of Satan."³ Truly the enemy is strong, and he cannot be bound up without the power accessed in prayer. Jennifer Dean wrote, "Prayer is how the will of God that is finished in heaven comes into the circumstances of earth. Prayer releases the power of God to accomplish the purposes of God."

When we recognize the spiritual warfare that is engaged in prayer, we should therefore recognize that our efforts to persevere in intentional prayer practices will also be opposed. As Henry Blackaby says, "Prayer will be exceedingly costly to you." You too will become weary and discouraged. You will hear accusations that your prayers do not matter, or that they are not enough. Take heart! Satan's only weapon against the intercessor is propaganda, for Satan is already defeated. While there will be resistance, the outcome is never in question². Luke 18:7 says, "And will not God bring about justice for his chosen ones, who cry out to him day and night? Will he keep putting them off?" Let there be no doubt of who holds the power and the victory. Let there be no doubt of His love, compassion, and justice. As Galatians 6:9 says, "Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up."



When Hezekiah received the letter from messengers, he first read it, and then he went up to the temple and spread it out before the Lord⁴. We invite you to see this prayer guide as your letter from families who have gone before you and alongside you in the everyday work of caregiving for children with trauma histories. As stated by the Christian Alliance For Orphans, “Sometimes prayer enables us to request things and receive them. More often and more importantly, it allows us to align our hearts with God’s and put ourselves in a position of wanting the things He wants and trusting that He is always faithful.” This prayer guide is focused not merely on the circumstantial changes that we might seek in the lives of orphan care, though they are many, but instead on the far more difficult and valuable work of holistic heart and mind change for each family member that is a part of orphan care ministry.

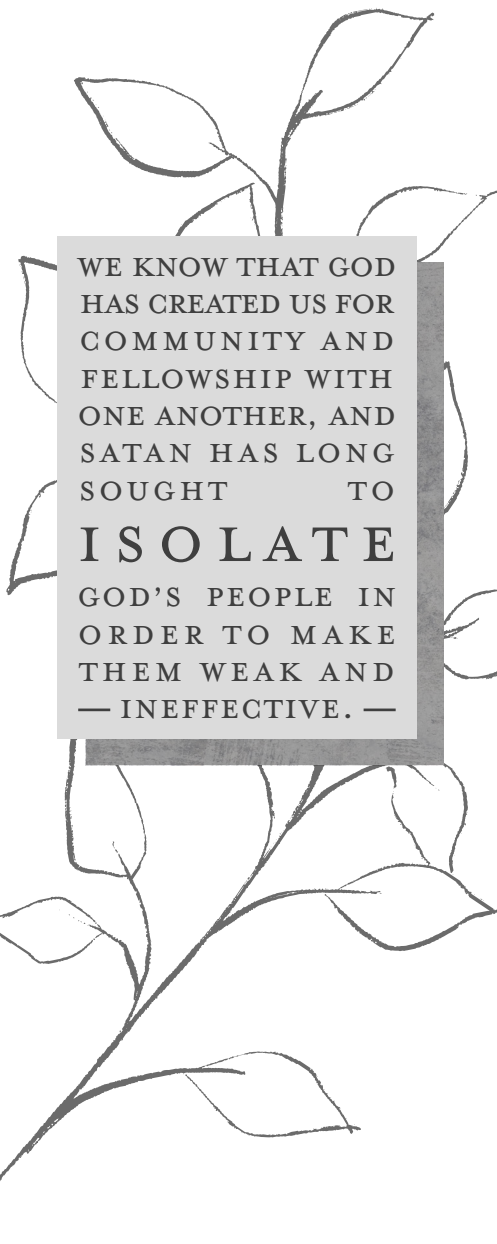
We invite you to read and consider the attacks facing families that are far, far too familiar. We invite you to meditate on the truth that God gives us in His word, and to fervently pray over these scriptures for your family. At times you may even be called to wake at night and pray, for needs certainly don’t stop after the sun sets. Lamentations 2:19 says, “Arise, cry out in the night, as the watches of the night begin; pour out your heart like water in the presence of the Lord. Lift up your hands to him for the lives of your children, who faint from hunger at the head of every street.” We invite you to place tangible reminders around you to keep the need ever before you. The Bible tells us that Aaron wore the names of the sons of Israel on his breastpiece over his heart as a continuing memorial before the Lord⁵. This prayer guide can be one reminder. Use it as a tool in spiritual warfare and as a reminder to remain sensitive to the Holy Spirit for this great need that is all around us.

ISOLATION

THE WHY

While loneliness and isolation are not feelings unique to the care of vulnerable children, there is a unique reality of loneliness and isolation that both caregivers and children experience in this ministry. It is estimated that 2% of all children are adopted, 0.005% of children in the US are currently in foster care, 2% of parents are adoptive parents and 0.001% are foster parents. So, on one hand, your families are actually a small minority of the communities you engage in. There are many challenges that are multiplied in the world of foster care and adoption due to adverse childhood experiences such as abuse and neglect, which can further isolate your families including developmental delays, medical problems, sleep disturbances, eating disorders, aggressive behaviors, lack of impulse control, learning difficulties, low self esteem, sensory processing issues, substance abuse, and more. The ability of neuroscience to map the neurological changes that occur as the result of trauma moves these findings beyond association into causation disorders⁶.

We know that God has created us for community and fellowship with one another, and Satan has long sought to isolate God's people in order to make them weak and ineffective. Compounding this, we know that there is no placement of a child without profound grief and loss-- emotionally, physically, spiritually and relationally. As families walking through this very real reality of isolation and grief, you need the powerful Holy Spirit reminding you again and again of the truths of God's Word.



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DEUTERONOMY 31:6

“Be strong and courageous. Do not fear or be in dread of them, for it is the Lord your God who goes with you. He will not leave you or forsake you.”

- *Pray that your family and children would be reminded of the presence of God.*
- *Pray that your family and children would receive God’s truth— that he will never leave you or forsake you.*
- *Pray that your family and children would have faith that God is for you and going with you.*
- *Pray for strength and courage for your family and children as they navigate the reality of being a minority in your experiences of adoption and foster care and in your unique needs resulting from trauma.*

GALATIANS 6:2

“Carry each other’s burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ.”

- *Pray that your family and children would have healthy, supportive, and understanding community surrounding you.*
- *Pray that each family member would be able to share burdens in a safe and encouraging environment.*
- *Pray that your family and children would be open and willing to ask for help as you have needs.*

HEBREWS 10:24–25

“And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another— and all the more as you see the day approaching.”

- *Pray for Legacy 68:5 staff, leaders, and volunteers, that they would be effective in spurring the community on towards love and good deeds in a manner that reflects the heart and truth of King Jesus.*
- *Pray for the gatherings of Legacy 68:5 families both in the church and with one another, that your family and others would value these interactions, and that families would not give up community when things are difficult.*
- *Pray for a spirit of grace, love, and truth to pervade all gatherings, that families would be an authentic encouragement to one another.*

DISCOURAGEMENT

THE WHY

Discouragement is the result of felt conflict between expectations and reality⁷. According to the Karyn Purvis Institute of Child Development, 1/3 of children make seamless transitions into their families, 1/3 have significant or ongoing challenges, and 1/3 have challenges and harm so great that the families collapse. The experiences of unmet expectations and the resulting effects can fall on a continuum from mild discouragement to severely shattered dreams⁸. Compounding discouragement and frustration are the very present realities of attachment challenges, increased rates of developmental delays, trauma-based behaviors and beliefs, mental health problems, medical needs, and more.

As stated by Pam Parrish in *Battle-Weary Parents* (2015), "Rejection, rebellion, and extreme behaviors hurt. It doesn't matter how ready you are to handle it. When it comes into your life and you find yourself in a position of crisis with your child, it hurts. Period. After you've given it your best and nothing seems to be working, you can find yourself withdrawing and becoming emotionally detached. Parenting children from hard places or crisis is a

marathon, not a sprint...In moments of exhaustion, it's tempting to give up and become apathetic or hopeless."

Discouragement can easily invade the home and minds of caregivers and children. Satan seeks to discourage us through disbelief in God's promises when our expectations are not met. Yet we serve a God who can redeem and restore even the darkest and most broken things of this world. In fact, it is His great delight to do so! Your family walking in the midst of these struggles needs the truth of Christ and the power of the Holy Spirit to fight against the evil spirits of discouragement and despair.

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ISAIAH 41:10

"Fear not, for I am with you; be not dismayed, for I am your God; I will strengthen you, I will help you, I will uphold you with my righteous right hand."

- *Pray that your family would be reminded right now of the very real presence of God with you in their challenges.*
- *Pray that your family would receive the supernatural strength and help of God at every moment of need.*
- *Pray that your family would be upheld in righteousness as you give care in trying circumstances.*

HEBREWS 10:23

"Let us hold unwaveringly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful."

- *Pray that your family would be surrounded by a community that holds unwaveringly to the hope and faithfulness of God who can do all things.*
- *Pray that your family would not waver in faith and hope in God: for the children in your homes, for the foster children reunited with biological families, for your own willingness to receive ongoing grace and forgiveness, and for the big and everyday needs in your lives.*

PHILIPPIANS 1:6

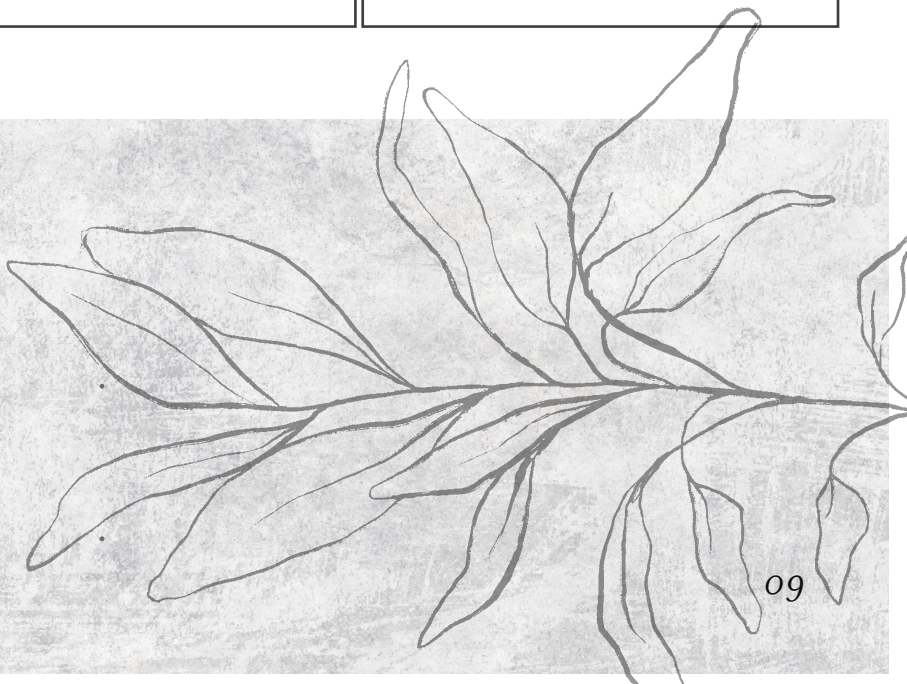
"Being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus."

- *Pray that your family would remain steadfast in your conviction and call to love well the children God has brought to you.*
- *Pray that you would trust God to do the work in your life and the lives of your children, rather than trying to produce outcomes with your own wisdom or strength.*

1 THESSALONIANS 5:18

"Give thanks in all circumstances, for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you."

- *Pray that your family would engage in regular practices of thanksgiving as a way to fight against the lies of discouragement.*



FEAR

THE WHY

Children who enter care have all experienced hard things. Research demonstrates that even if a child is adopted at birth, prenatal stress and the disruption of the biological attachment can bring disrupted neurodevelopment, social, emotional and cognitive impairment, high risk behaviors, disease and disability, and even early death. Trauma impacts the spiritual, physical, educational, emotional, and social development of the child. Fear for the child is often acted out through protective strategies of manipulation, triangulation, aggression, violence, and control⁹. Not only are the children often experiencing fear due to attachment interruptions and core beliefs, but you as caregivers are often parenting in unfamiliar and daunting situations. When you as a family do lift your eyes out of the everyday challenges to look towards the future, you may have great fears about what that future holds. By very nature, entering the world of orphan care means willingly wading into a number of things you have no control over.

God is sovereign even in the families with a prodigal child, severe health challenges, serious mental illnesses, and overwhelming educational needs. God sees how the behaviors and needs are impacting each family member, and he loves each of them more fully than we can even comprehend. Nothing surprises God. He is good, and his way is perfect. What he plans comes to pass. Ultimately we recognize that all fear can be traced back to gaps in faith and a failure to believe what the Bible declares to be true. We will not be surprised that the enemy uses difficult circumstances to attack our core beliefs about God himself. Let us cover families with the power of God through intentional and specific prayer.

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— ZEPHANIAH 3:17 —

“The Lord your God is in your midst, a mighty one who will save; he will rejoice over you with gladness; he will quiet you by his love; he will exult over you with loud singing.”

- *Pray that your family would be reminded of the mighty, saving presence of the Lord in your very midst.*
- *Pray that your family would be assured of the joyful love of the Lord which can quiet all fears.*
- *Pray for wise and true words of Christians around you to affirm the truth about God even in difficult situations.*

— PSALM 23:4 —

“Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me.”

- *Pray that God would remove the fears of your family, even as you face the valley of the shadow of death.*
- *Pray that each family member would experience the comfort of God’s guidance and leadership.*
- *Pray that your family would never feel alone in challenges.*

— ISAIAH 14:24 —

“The Lord of hosts has sworn: ‘As I have planned, so shall it be, and as I have purposed, so it shall stand.’”

- *Pray that your family would have faith in God’s plans and sovereignty.*
- *Pray for yourself and each family member, that each person would not seek to control circumstances in their own wisdom and abilities, but would surrender all to the Lord as they seek His will.*

— GENESIS 50:20 —

“As for you, you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good, to bring it about that many people should be kept alive, as they are today. So do not fear; I will provide for you and your little ones.’ Thus he comforted them and spoke kindly to them.”

- *Pray for faith to persevere through challenges as Joseph did.*
- *Pray that your family would not doubt the goodness of God.*
- *Pray that God’s plans for good, for life, and for the hope of future generations would come to pass.*
- *Pray for words of comfort and kindness to surround your family.*

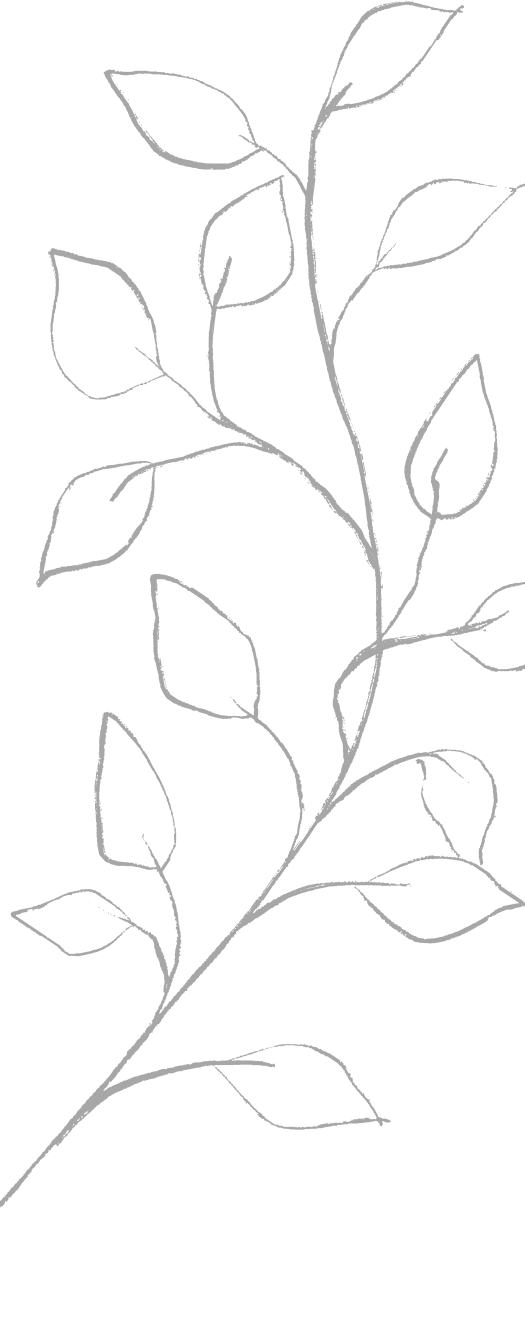
WEARINESS

THE WHY

When faced with the cumulative needs and stress that accompany children from hard places, caregivers often feel emotional, mental, spiritual, and physical exhaustion. Compassion fatigue often results in burnout, which may look like feelings of inadequacy, a loss of hope or joy, exhaustion, or a lack of boundaries.⁹ Not only are caregivers impacted, but their lost ability to connect and respond well to their children can cause further harm to the relationship and attachment they have been working to build.

God cares for our needs and intends for his people to both serve one another in community and experience the regular rhythm of sabbath rest. God himself is fully able to carry our burdens, mighty to save, always compassionate, and full of lovingkindness.

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MATTHEW 11:28–30

“Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.”

- *Pray for each family member by name, that they would find rest in bringing their burdens to the Lord. Pray also for yourself.*

PSALM 19:7

“The law of the Lord is perfect, reviving the soul; the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple.”

- *Pray for your family to be revived through the Word of God in your lives.*
- *Pray for wisdom as you pursue sabbath and a community of believers who cares for and serves your family generously.*

ROMANS 8:35–39

“Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword? ...No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

- *Pray that trauma, stress, needs, behaviors, or exhaustion would not cause anyone in your home to doubt the perfect love of Christ.*

FAILURE

THE WHY

As families engaged in foster care and adoption, you have entered this realm because you understand God's heart for the vulnerable, the lonely, and the broken. You are deeply sensitive to the needs of children and the responsibility you accept when you care for them in Jesus' name. Yet the reality is that all parents are imperfect and parent imperfectly. Add into the mix a large dose of trauma, big behaviors, developmental delays, and mental health issues, and caregivers are always learning to swim as they are thrown in the water, so to speak. It might look like a raised voice, a harsh glare, an uncompassionate response to a tantrum, harsh discipline, or even just difficulty attaching, but all foster and adoptive parents will encounter situations that can bring regret, shame, and feelings of failure. These feelings can cause you as caregivers to give up on connecting with the child, withdraw from community, disconnect from faith or community resources, or feel defensive and disconnected from other family members.

Satan is relentless in his accusations. Revelation tells us that he accuses the brothers and sisters day and night ¹⁰. Matthew 12 shows us that the process of restoring and redeeming what was once claimed by evil often results in circumstances of more pain and suffering than we observed at the beginning ¹¹. But we have good news! Thanks to Jesus, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Him ¹²! Indeed, Satan's forces were defeated at the cross, and nothing we do or don't do can take away from the freedom and victory we have in Jesus.

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1 JOHN 1:9

"If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

- *Pause now and confess your sins to the Father.*
- *Pray that your family would know the faithful forgiveness and cleansing of the Father.*
- *Pray for humility, courage, and strength from the Lord to be able to model confession by apologizing to your children and seeking to repair relationships that have experienced rupture.*

ROMANS 8:33, 37

"Who will bring any charge against those whom God has chosen? It is God who justifies."

"No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us."

- *Pray that your family members would reject the accusations and lies of the enemy.*
- *Pray for reminders of the truth of God's perfect justification while you seek to be obedient and sanctified in the challenges of today.*
- *Pray for victory over the attacks of the evil one.*
- *Pray that your family would see holistic healing and restoration.*

HEBREWS 10:22-23

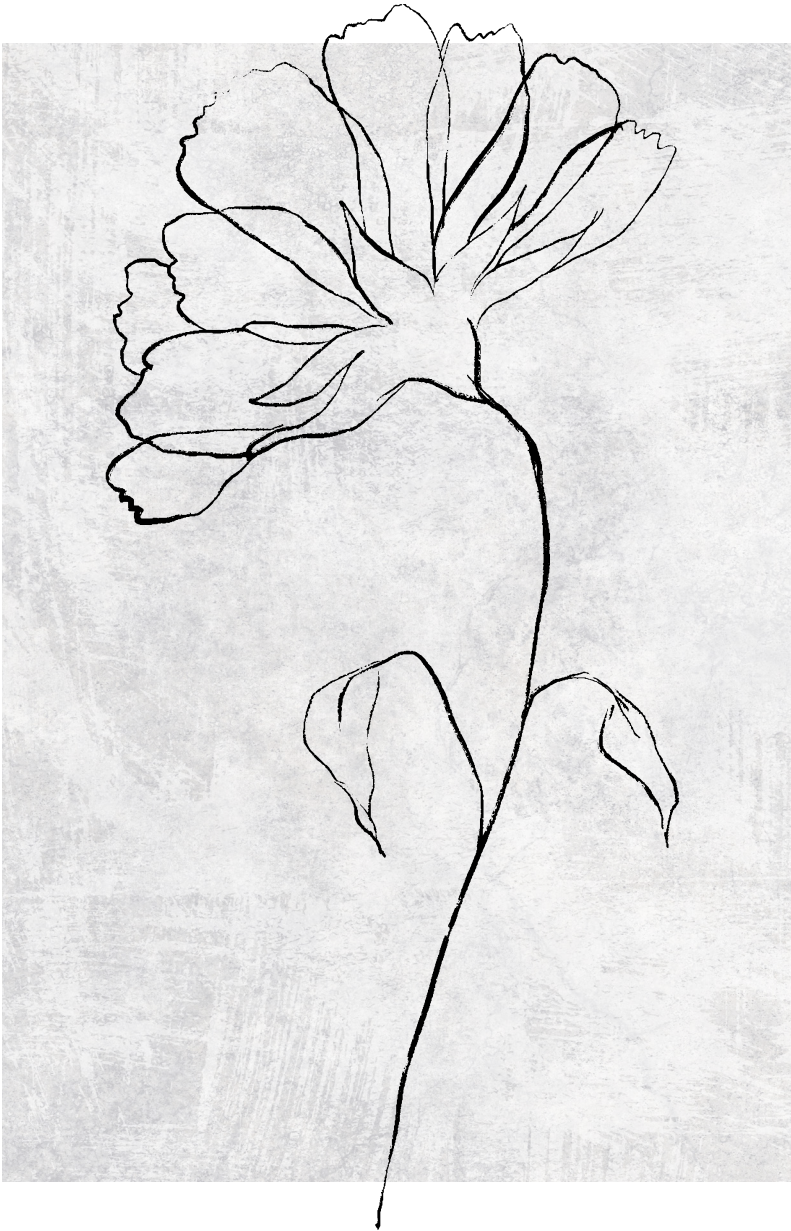
"Let us draw near to God with a sincere heart and with the full assurance that faith brings, having our hearts sprinkled to cleanse us from a guilty conscience and having our bodies washed with pure water. Let us hold unwaveringly to the hope we profess, for He who promised is faithful."

- *Pray that you and your children would be drawn to God through an understanding of His goodness, His kindness, and His faithfulness even in our unfaithfulness.*
- *Pray that your family would experience cleansing and freedom from shame and guilt from past sins.*
- *Pray that in difficulty, your family would hold fast to hope in God who brought you together.*

JAMES 4:7

"Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you."

- *Pray that each family member would submit to God rather than attempting to live in their own power and strength.*
- *Pray that your family would be surrounded by the truth of God's word, a supportive community full of faith and hope, and excellent professional resources so that you can effectively resist the devil and see him flee before you.*



One of our primary ministry goals is to equip families with resources and truth. If you would like more information, please contact us.

- 1 Jason Johnson, (2019). *All in Orphan Care*
- 2 Jennifer Kennedy Dean, (2010). *Live a Praying Life*
- 3 <https://www.desiringgod.org/messages/resist-the-devil>
- 4 Bethany Hoang, *Deepening the Soul for Justice, Isaiah 37:14*
- 5 *Exodus 28:29–30*
- 6 Perry, B., (2002). *Childhood experiences and the expression of genetic potential: What children can tell us about nature and nurture.*
- 7 <https://evolutioncounseling.com/bouncing-back-discouragement/>
- 8 Schooler, Smalle, & Callahan, (2009). *Wounded Children Healing Homes*
- 9 *Trauma Free World, Advanced Trauma Competent Care*
- 10 *Revelation 12:10*
- 11 *Matthew 12:43–45*
- 12 *Romans 8:1*







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HOUSTON'S FIRST
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