



## Approaching God

### Begin your time with an opening prayer

Take a moment to quiet your heart and ask God to help you experience his presence today. Ask Him to free you from any distractions as you begin to read and meditate on today's passages.

## Bible Reading, Study & Meditation - Slowly Read the Following Passages

**Start with Engaging the Text: Take a few minutes to highlight, circle, or underline key words.**

### Isaiah 1:17

**17** Learn to do right; seek justice. Defend the oppressed. Take up the cause of the fatherless; plead the case of the widow.

### Psalm 68:4-6

**4** Sing to God, sing in praise of his name, extol him who rides on the clouds; rejoice before him—his name is the LORD. **5** A father to the fatherless, a defender of widows, is God in his holy dwelling. **6** God sets the lonely in families, he leads out the prisoners with singing; but the rebellious live in a sun-scorched land.

### John 14:15-18

**15** "If you love me, keep my commands. **16** And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another advocate to help you and be with you forever— **17** the Spirit of truth. The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him, for he lives with you and will be in you. **18** I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you.

### James 1:27

**27** 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.

### 1 Timothy 5:3-16

**3** Give proper recognition to those widows who are really in need. **4** But if a widow has children or grandchildren, these should learn first of all to put their religion into practice by caring for their own family and so repaying their parents and grandparents, for this is pleasing to God. **5** The widow who is really in need and left all alone puts her hope in God and continues night and day to pray and to ask God for help. **6** But the widow who lives for pleasure is dead even while she lives. **7** Give the people these instructions, so that no one may be open to blame. **8** Anyone who does not provide for their relatives, and especially for their own household, has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.

**9** No widow may be put on the list of widows unless she is over sixty, has been faithful to her husband, **10** and is well known for her good deeds, such as bringing up children, showing hospitality, washing the feet of the Lord's people, helping those in trouble and devoting herself to all kinds of good deeds. **11** As for younger widows, do not put them on such a list. For when their sensual desires overcome their dedication to Christ, they want to marry. **12** Thus they bring judgment on themselves, because they have broken their first pledge. **13** Besides, they get into the habit of being idle and going about from house to house. And not only do they become idlers, but also busybodies who talk nonsense, saying things they ought not to. **14** So I counsel younger widows to marry, to have children, to manage their homes and to give the enemy no opportunity for slander. **15** Some have in fact already turned away to follow Satan. **16** If any woman who is a believer has widows in her care, she should continue to help them and not let the church be burdened with them, so that the church can help those widows who are really in need.

## Thoughts to Ponder - Making Room for Widows & Orphans

Read the short essay from Rebecca Faires - <https://shereadstruth.com/making-room-for-widows-and-orphans/>

The first day I met Gus, he screamed at me. I had lived a quiet life up until that point, and I had never heard screaming like this before. I myself have screamed at swim meets, at being tickled, while riding on roller coasters—but never like this. Gus’s screams terrified me. His eyes were far away and unreasoning. It was like all the unknown in him rushed out of his mouth and straight at me. I wanted to run away from him and back to my quiet life. But I couldn’t run because Gus was going to be my son, and the paperwork was already at the Embassy in Ethiopia. What was I going to do—chicken out because he’s loud? If we were together and you cared to hear, I would tell you about our adoption of two baby boys from Africa, and how they scared the curse words out of me. (They still scare the horse apples out of me sometimes.) And I would tell you that God has been so gracious and redemptive in our lives. But that’s a long story. So let’s just talk about loving people we are afraid to love, people who maybe scare us because they come from a different place. Honestly, it scares me to love people who are not like me, but it turns out, gospel love isn’t about me anyway. It’s about Jesus and how He loves.

Hospitality is uncomfortable. There are people who make me want to run. To a certain degree, we all like a quiet, settled life. I mean, it’s easier to remain comfy and contented with the people we’re used to, rather than to engage with those we don’t know anything about. It can feel awkward, even risky, reaching out to people who are different, whose lives seem so dissimilar to our own. This is the heart of hospitality: finding people on the margins and bringing them in. Remember in Psalm 68, David praises the Lord because He “provides homes for those who are deserted” (v.6). “He defends the rights of the fatherless” ([Isaiah 1:17](#)). But this hospitality extends well beyond adoption or caring for widows. God has given us so many ways to reach out to the solitary, those who’ve been deserted. The first step to hospitality is one of obedience: we must bring people in. This obedience helps us form soup kitchens, deliver casseroles, care for widows and orphans, and welcome people into our homes. But this is only the first step. Because once we have invited people in, we are called to love them the way Christ loved us. In the book of Zephaniah we see this exquisite mystery:

***The LORD your God is among you,  
a warrior who saves.  
He will rejoice over you with gladness.  
He will be quiet in his love.  
He will delight in you with singing ([Zephaniah 3:17](#)).***

Our heavenly Father rejoices over us with singing! And because we are called to imitate Christ, we can’t just stop at going through the motions and serving folks soup once a year or when convenient. We are called to rejoice over others with singing; to love them. Making this jump on our own is impossible. The only way to change our hearts is to submit them to Christ. Pray with me today that God would teach us hospitality toward widows and orphans and all those on the margins—and not only hospitality, but love.

### Daily Reflection Questions

1. Why do today’s passages tell us about making room for orphans and widows?
2. How can we make room for both widows and orphans?

### Close in Prayer:

Pray that God would teach you what hospitality looks like towards widows, orphans, and those on the margins. Ask that God would allow hospitality to flow out of a heart of love.