

# What About the Widows?

by

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*“Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress.” James 1:27*

Most of you are familiar with the verse quoted above. This verse has captured the attention of many believers and prompted all sorts of great movements to help orphans. Churches have challenged their congregations to adopt and become foster parents, and missionaries have been moved to start orphanages all around the world, especially in impoverished, oppressed places. Deep inside of us, we all have a heart for children and cannot stand the thought of a child suffering.

But what about the Widows? It seems to me that the reference to “widows”, which is included in the same verse as a priority to God, has been largely overlooked. In the past 10 years, I’ve personally attended the funerals of many men, some even Journey brothers, and many, seemingly before their time. In each case, a widow was left behind, and my heart has gone out to her.

I fully believe men are integral to God’s work. As a ministry, Influencers believes that if we can help men learn to abide in Christ and Live It Out, they will influence their homes and communities for Him. We have seen this dynamic proved out many times over as we have seen men learn how to care for their wives and children. This is pleasing to our Lord, as emphasized by Paul, who said, *“Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave Himself up for her.” Ephesians 5:25*

If we believe this, we should also understand the void left behind when one of our brothers is called into Heavenly service. The man of God, the rock, the spiritual leader is suddenly missing. Now, we know that just as our Heavenly Father is the *“Father of the fatherless” Psalm 68:5*, He is also our Husband (*For your Maker is your Husband...Isaiah 54:5*). So, we know God intervenes to help the orphans and widows. However, as we give our lives to God and walk closely with Him, we also give ourselves to the “Father’s business.” We begin to care about the things He cares about.

God cares about Widows! Many scriptural examples exist where God is highlighting the needs of a widow:

- Consider Elisha's care for the widow who could not pay her husband's debts and feared losing her two sons to slavery for payment. Elisha got her neighbors involved as they shared jars with her, and he provided for her needs in a most miraculous way. (2 Kings 4:1-7)
- Consider Ruth and Naomi and the kindness Boaz showed them. Boaz was impressed by Ruth's care for her mother-in-law, Naomi, a widow. He says, *"May the Lord repay you for what you have done. May you be richly rewarded by the Lord, the God of Israel, under Whose wings you have come to take refuge."* Ruth 2:12. God used Boaz to be his wings of refuge for Ruth.
- Consider how Jesus drew the attention of His disciples to the poor widow who gave everything she had to the temple treasury. (Luke 21:1-4) Not only was he making a point about tithing, but he was also highlighting the needs of a widow.
- Consider Jesus, as He was dying on the cross and instructs John to care for Mary. Some scholars believe Joseph had died, since he is nowhere mentioned in the adult life of Jesus nor present at His crucifixion. (John 19:25-27)

It is clear that God gives special attention to Widows. Pray about this and ask God to open your eyes to widows within your sphere of influence. Ask Him how you might help in caring for them. They may need financial help, they may need help around the house or with their cars and they may just need some love and encouragement. I believe many women are very good at coming alongside widows, just as Ruth came alongside Naomi, but I also think God would have us men consider our role in standing in the gap where one of our brothers is absent.

This devotional is dedicated to Anne, Mildred, Patsy, Susan, Kay, Stacy, Kathy, Lisa, Leola, and Fernie.