

DAY 01

advocate training

God's heart for the vulnerable

Hello again, friend.

I am so glad you are here! I am especially excited to begin sharing with you about the character of God and His heart for the vulnerable. This topic is so meaningful to me because there was a season of my life, not so long ago, when I questioned my calling and passion for this ministry.

My journey in missions started as a little girl in a small Assemblies of God church in Milford, Ohio. I had such a deep love for Jesus, His people, and His Church and I was especially fascinated by the missionaries who came to share stories about all they were doing in His name. I hung on every word of their testimonies of the lives that were impacted, and the risks they took to share His word in places that felt so mysterious, distant, and adventurous to this girl who had rarely ventured out of the borders of Clermont County. I admired their deep trust in the God who provided their every need, protected them, and showed up for them in such captivating ways.

I believed that would be me one day, braving a new life in a Third World country all in the name of the God I serve, and I envisioned myself embracing every orphaned child I would inevitably come to know and love in such a role. I had set my hopes and sights on doing just that, but I instead had to make difficult decisions in my life that seemed to close the doors to those possibilities.

At a time when I felt so lost in purpose and direction, God placed me in this very ministry. Yet still, I had the belief that this was just temporary for me, and I questioned my calling and my passion in this specific mission. I had believed that someone who would lead in this role would be someone who had the experiences of welcoming children, and that I couldn't possibly draw others into a journey that I had not walked through myself. I felt hesitant to advocate for others to engage in a system that is so very broken, and heartbreaking, and I was less enthused to partner with churches who often feel disengaged, distracted, and disinterested in anything related to foster care. I admit, I was a little salty about working with God's children.

While initially saying "yes" to serving in this ministry was easy, continuing to say yes to staying was incredibly hard. I had to have many conversations with God and I told Him plainly, "God if you want me here, I need you to grow my passion for this work". And He heard my request.

While I was so focused on everything I felt I wasn't doing, I didn't realize that God had

been shaping something specific in me all along. He was forming in me, His heart for the vulnerable. What I love, is that this isn't something unique to my story. This is what God does in all of His children. He shapes our hearts to reflect His... because that's who He is.

My passion for this work doesn't come from doing the work itself, it comes from knowing God more deeply. Because if this really is His heart, we don't have to manufacture anything. We don't have to force passion or convince ourselves (and others) that this really matters. We simply need to see Him more clearly and invite others into seeing Him too.

Let's take a look at what scripture reveals about our God in Psalm 68:4-6:

*"Sing to God, sing in praise of his name,
extol him who rides on the clouds[a];
rejoice before him—his name is the Lord.
A father to the fatherless, a defender of widows,
is God in his holy dwelling.
God sets the lonely in families..."*

This passage doesn't just tell us what God does, it reveals who He is. He is a Father to the fatherless, a defender of widows, and One who sets the lonely in families. This is His heart.

Take a moment to sit with what stands out most to you (a word, character, or phrase).

Why do you feel it stands out to you most?

What do you notice about how God relates to the vulnerable?

How might your understanding of His heart shape the way you lead others in this ministry?

There is no right answer, just observations. Over the next few days, we're going to keep building on this, and you'll begin to see this same heart show up again and again... and you may start to notice what God is forming in you as you lead.

But for today, we pause here: God is a Father to the fatherless, and everything we do in this mission flows from that truth.

Prayer

Lord,

Thank You for showing me who You are.

You are a Father to the fatherless, One who sees, draws near, and restores.

Help me to see Your heart more clearly.

Shape the way I think, the way I see others, and the way I lead.

Let everything I do flow from who You are.

Amen.