

Foster Care

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[0 : 00] So I'm just going to jump into just an overall general what is foster care. Basically, essentially, foster care is taking care of some of these kids who can't take care of them themselves.

What that looks like practically is you can get a phone call hours ahead of time. You can get a phone call a few days ahead of time. And a few days later, a few hours later, you get to know a little bit about their story in that first few moments.

Generally, they're aged, maybe where they're coming from. But generally, you don't know a lot about the story when they come into your home. And that kind of unfolds over the next few weeks.

What the next few weeks looks like, usually checkups, check-ins, getting to know your social worker, and getting to know your child or children that have come into your home.

Those first few weeks are incredibly scary. That first phone call is incredibly scary. It's also incredibly beautiful because you now have this child who was not safe the day before, and now they're safe and in your home.

[1 : 05] And getting to know them is just a really beautiful time. So that is kind of what it looks like for you as the parent. What it looks like for the child is very different.

For them, they have often very suddenly been taken away from everything that they've known. And their parents and their family, usually siblings, aunts, uncles, grandparents, that kind of thing.

And that if they're young enough, they usually don't understand why because they don't know what's wrong. And so that is what these children are going through at that time.

What they quickly understand is that unlike a financial need or like if you're hungry, you eat. If you need clothes, you buy clothes.

Family is a commodity that you cannot buy or purchase or barter for. What they quickly understand is that family is something very precious, that the only way you can get family is to be invited into it.

[2 : 06] And so that is what they are going through in those first few weeks and potentially for the rest of their life. Though every single human being needs some kind of family or community, it is children in particular who need the family because they are so young and vulnerable.

They don't have any ability to take care of themselves. And that is why this is so important. In fact, if you are a child, then the stability of a home is arguably one of your most physical needs.

According to the National Foster Youth Institute, one in 10 children who are placed in foster care will never have a permanent home or permanent family. Some of the consequences of the 23,000-plus children who age out of foster care every year, just some of them, 20% will instantly be homeless.

Nearly half of them will end up in jail within two years. Only half will be employed by the age of 24. Less than 3% will ever earn a college degree.

And 70% of girls who age out of foster care will become pregnant before turning 21. And I could go on. That's just the statistics, let alone what's going on inside of them.

[3 : 28] The point is that there's nothing that shapes a person more than the family and home that they are raised in, which is what makes it so important.

And yet it is the most difficult thing to come across, like I said. If you are waiting to be adopted, there is no transaction you can initiate by which you choose your family.

They literally choose you. The fact that there are 126 million homes in America doesn't mean anything because there's such a small amount of homes that actually open their door to you if you're in that position.

So what we can establish is that there are many children that are in need of a home, yet there is a small amount of families and homes that are willing to open up their door to these children.

So what does God think about foster care? The very essence, the very purpose of Jesus' mission on earth is to reunite us into his family, to come and adopt us as sons and daughters of his father, to be brothers and sisters with him.

[4 : 43] That is his very purpose in coming to earth, which makes me think that he is a big supporter of families. Because the one day our little six-year-old foster child, our little girl, was just crying, and her father is in jail, and she was just crying, like, I never get to see my father.

Like, I don't get to be with him even when he gets out of jail. Like, I won't get to see him because he won't live with us. And just in that moment, I had nothing to relate to her because I have my father, and I haven't had that happen to me.

I didn't understand what that felt like. And I just felt like God spoke to me and to her through these words. And he just said, I just told her, look, Jesus knows what you're going through.

I said, he didn't get to be with his dad either. He came to earth, and he had to leave his family, and he had to be separated from his family. Like, he knows what you're going through.

And I don't know, but I just imagine that is why Jesus spoke about the orphans so many times, because he knew what it was to not be able to be with his family.

[5 : 54] And he knows the heart of foster care, and I just believe that his heart for adoption is something fierce because of that. And so it just kind of changed perspective of when we come into foster care or adoption, like us being the heroes and saving these children, like just remembering that we were once orphans.

Like we were once abandoned and alone without a family, and Jesus has adopted us into his family and came to save us, to rescue us.

We were invited in. And so instead of us coming in and being the hero and the savior, we're totally in the same boat. We were there, yet Jesus saved us.

And so that is what, in these situations, you say, come on into my home. And so I'm just going to read a couple scriptures. These are well-known scriptures.

We all have heard them and say them. I just want to read them over us in this moment to just take time to look at what God's word says. In Isaiah it says, Religion that God our Father accepts is pure and faultless is this, to look after orphans and widows in their distress, and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world.

[7 : 39] If anyone has material possessions and sees his brother in need but has no pity on him, how can the love of God be in him? Dear children, let us not love with words or tongue, but with actions and truth.

So what we see here is that God, I think everyone in this room could say God has blessed us, right? So God has blessed us, not just to bless us, but to be a blessing.

So he gives us things to be a blessing to use for the gospel. So whereas Joe and I may not be the financially wealthiest, where we can give millions of dollars away to charities, God has blessed us with a stable family and a loving home, and that is what we use for the gospel.

He hasn't given us to make us feel good. He's given it to us to use for him. So the pain and the privilege.

Is foster care scary? Yes, it is. Does it hurt? Yes, it does. Is it hard? Yes. Is it worth it? Absolutely. In our society, we are taught to run from pain in order to self-preserve.

[8 : 51] I think we all learned that when we were children. It makes sense. When something hurts, when something's hard, you get out of there, so that you don't hurt yourself.

And yet, unfortunately, that is not what we see in Scripture. Scripture shows us the model, the very opposite of taking up our cross, bearing each other's burdens, and laying our life down.

Sure. I think so. Thank you. Thank you. And laying our life down. And so Kimberly has often said this. When we pray, God, break our heart for what breaks yours.

I feel like we've all prayed that. I feel like we've seen that in church. Do we really mean that we want our hearts to be broken? Or do we just mean that we want to feel sad for the person sitting next to us?

Because if you guys have ever had your heart broken, it really hurts. And it changes you forever.

And so just, yeah, are we asking, like, when we carry somebody else's burdens, do we want to just feel bad for them, or do we want to take on their burden and live with it?

[9 : 58] There is something so unique about foster care. Because a lot of other ministries, not all, but a lot of other ministries, you kind of go out for maybe a Saturday morning, and you serve from 9

to 12, and then you go home again.

And you get to go home and be with your safety. With foster care, the burden in the ministry, not that there are burdens, that's what I'm saying, carrying that weight is coming into your home. You go to sleep with it, and you wake up to it. And most of the time, you wake up in the middle of the night to it. And that is something very different. It is literally changing the, not just making somebody's day better, you're literally changing the trajectory of a child's life.

You are literally changing their entire life. Not just making them better, making them safe for a while, you are changing their life. And have that in mind.

It is moving into your home. You are living with it, which is a blessing. And the pain and the privilege. A huge privilege. So I just want to quickly end with just saying a lot of the feedback that I think we get from people who are wanting to foster, or just people who are talking about it.

[11 : 28] I could never do that. I just want to let you know, like, Joe and I are not super Christians. We are not particularly sacrificial or selfless. We are not particularly holy.

We are just normal. I didn't even want to be a mom. I didn't particularly want children. But what we do have is a family and a home.

And there are children who don't have that. And we put that together. And it was a simple equation for us. I don't want to play down the decision for becoming a foster parent.

Because I don't think that all people are called to be foster parents. But I think that all people can.

And if you are feeling those fears and doubts, just know that I am with you.

Whenever I get a call, I'm like, I'm not a good mom. Like, I can't do this. I want my own space. I want my own life. I don't want to do this. If you're having those thoughts, that is totally normal.

[12 : 34] And it's okay. What's not okay is to make those thoughts and those insecurities and doubts to become the decision maker for you taking the step. What is the decision maker is God's word, God's scripture, and what God has spoken to you and your family.

And that's what makes the decision in becoming a foster family. Or not that I can't do it. Because I certainly can't. But Jesus can. So that is just a very quick, broad overview of some of the heart behind foster care.

Why we do it. What we do. And I'm sure you guys have questions of what the heck does that look like. So, yeah. So I'm going to stop talking and just open it up to any questions that you may have.