

You Can Be Free from an Orphan Spirit

Since the fall of man, the orphan spirit has been at the root of much of the chaos, division and destruction in the church and the world. Many of humanity's problems can be traced back to the orphan spirit. Cultural divides caused by a global pandemic, the charged political climate, wars, overthrown governments, human trafficking, divorce, fatherlessness and slavery are modern-day examples of the orphan spirit at work in our world.

I am convinced that much of the church is living as orphans and doing ministry from that perspective—not motivated by love but by fear. They serve not because of their significance as sons and daughters in the kingdom but in order to become someone significant in the kingdom. They work *for* God, not *from* Him. Hundreds of thousands of churches are filled with people who know about the Father but haven't found their identity in Him or made their home in His living room. These Christians join to function as spiritual orphanages.

The orphan spirit is an inferior spirit that strives to convince you that fear, shame, guilt and rejection are great leaders you can trust. Its chief pursuit is to separate you from our heavenly Father and allow fear to make deep roots in your soul, replacing perfect love. A true orphan knows what it means to live life without the security, stability and warmth of a physical home.

A spiritual orphan is no different. He is also well acquainted with the feelings of fear, rejection, anxiety and homelessness, even if he has a physical place to go home to at night. This is because the spiritual orphan has come face to face with the real meaning of homelessness—living life without a father. The inability to connect with a father can bring a

son to a place of desolation. In the spiritual realm, he is like a wanderer in a barren region, unable to find peace, satisfaction and purpose in life.

A spiritual orphan only thinks about one thing: self. Spiritual orphans *compete* with one another while sons and daughters *complete* one another. A spiritual orphan often asks, "Does anybody see me?" or "Does anybody care about me?"

Have you ever had these thoughts? The spirit of sonship lives *from* God while an orphan lives *for* God. The two operating systems are radically different. A son or daughter of God follows this pattern: be, have, do. Their significance is found in the place of "being" with their Father God. From that resting place, sons and daughters fully live and thrive. They wake up knowing they received an A-plus on their report card before completing any assignments.

In contrast, an orphan's operating system starts with "doing" before "being." An orphan's value comes from a title, position, academics or accomplishments. When preaching or speaking at conferences, I like to say, "It is not what you do that makes you who you are. It is who you are that makes you do what you do."

Aki's Journey to Sonship

Several years ago, on a mission trip to Cuba, one of my church leaders, Aki, shared how she had a difficult situation in her community. Aki loved going to the salon and needed a haircut; however, the best hairdresser in Havana was a witch. She was worried about what her church members would think and if the witch would curse her.

"Papa Leif, what should I do?" Aki asked. "I can support the Christian brothers and sisters here who share my same perspective, or I can go to the witch. But if I go to the witch, she might put a spell on me!"

“Aki, is the light in you greater than the darkness in the hairdresser?” I responded.

This is the difference between how an orphan thinks and how a spirit of sonship operates. What if you touch a leper? Would you become unclean? It depends. Are you an orphan, or do you have a spirit of sonship?

Aki repented and visited the hairdresser. She had the grace to walk into that environment, and she was able to represent a God who looked like Jesus, full of love and compassion.

After a year of building a relationship, Aki invited the witch hairdresser to attend a Christian conference where I was preaching. The hairdresser agreed to attend the meeting and was gloriously saved, healed and delivered. She is now the lead evangelist and worship pastor and continues her passionate pursuit of Jesus. When your identity in Christ is firmly established, the orphan world no longer affects you or determines your value.

The apostle Paul explains it well in Ephesians 1:4b-8: “In love he predestined us for adoption to himself as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will, to the praise of his glorious grace, with which he has blessed us in the Beloved. In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace, which he lavished upon us, in all wisdom and insight.”

From the beginning of time and throughout Scripture, we see the journey from rebellion to the spirit of sonship. It was through the hands of a loving Father that the first man and woman came forth. This is a tremendous revelation! Yet, regrettably, when we look around the world today, it is hard to believe the original spirit God gave to His children was a spirit of sonship and not the spirit of an orphan. Just watch the news. Every day it brings us another reality, showing man’s appetite for violence, greed and corruption. We look

like a world of orphans, a planet full of children without fathers—abandoned, abused, maltreated and forgotten. On top of that, many children are being trained by man-made religions, which are fatherless at the core.

Orphan thinking is one of the reasons there is a high crime rate and a psychosis that drives terrorists to blow up buildings and crash airplanes. It cannot be simply explained through the lack of parenting skills or the absence of biological fathers. It can only be fully understood through supernatural insight from the Holy Spirit that tells us the biggest root of our problems is the orphan spirit. The prodigal son's journey in Luke 15:11-32 is a key example of the spiritual orphan's journey. I can personally relate to the prodigal son and older brother.

My Baptism of Love

I received Jesus as my Lord and Savior when I was 13 years old, but fear had already been at work in me. When I was 12 years old, an abuse took place in my life. I could not talk to anybody about it, so I hid and covered it up. This started my path to living the orphan lifestyle, doing things on my own and existing as if no one were there for me. The next five years of my life were spent in rebellion against my parents, the boarding school and other authority figures.

I spent those years in the pigpen as I struggled to get free from addictions and other issues. My parents sent me to a boarding school in Gjøvik, Norway, but before long, school officials kicked me out. During that time, my name was in two national newspapers, which explained that I had been forced to leave school because of drug abuse. I was desperate for attention and affirmation. Eventually, I ended up homeless, sleeping on a bench in a park in Oslo, Norway.

I knew my family loved and accepted me, but I still lived as if I had no home. Like the prodigal son, I was headed toward

the pigpen. After that, I decided to go home. When I walked into my parents' house, I was surprised to find that my 15-year-old brother had prepared a big cake that said, "Welcome Home, Leif." Not only did I come home to my family and my parents, but during this time, I also came home to Father God. No matter how far we may wander, God always welcomes His children home.

The orphan heart cannot be cast out. It cannot be forced out of our systems. It can only be healed, and healing can only be found in our Father's house. We need to learn to find our way home. Father God is waiting there for us. Let us come home to Him and experience His love.

My journey to sonship was only beginning. Soon after my homecoming experience, I went from being a rebellious spiritual orphan to a religious son. I worked hard for God. I wanted to show Him I was a good son that He could be proud of. The root of religion is the same as rebellion—fear—and the fruit is a lifetime of striving. Fear was embedded deep within my soul, and only God could heal me. In my 20s and 30s, I continued to work for God's love and experienced several traumatic events that encouraged my orphan lifestyle.

During this time, a close friend invited me to a meeting in Melbourne, Florida. Even though I felt broken and lost, I decided to attend the event. I had no idea how I would recover from a spiritual breakdown after being kicked out of church and if I would ever be entrusted to minister again. A man named Dennis Jernigan led worship onstage during the event. He called out my name in the middle of service and said, "Leif, I have a song for you. It's called 'Daddy's Song.'"

As he played the song, I felt waves of liquid love flow over me that continued for two hours. In the encounter, God took me back to when I experienced trauma in my mother's womb and the abuse I experienced as a 12-year-old boy. I was lying on the floor, and these images from my life flashed in my mind like a

movie. Suddenly, a voice said, "Leif, you are Mine, and you are My beloved. You are My beloved son. I love you. I like you, and I am well pleased with you."

When I heard "I am well pleased with you," it was as if a sword went in and cut a root at its deepest level. All the issues in my life flowed from my father deficiencies. My entire theology, ecclesiology, pneumatology and eschatology shifted. I read the Bible through a new lens. I was no longer the prodigal son or brother. I was a beloved son. I call this my baptism of love experience.

In the early 2000s, I had a lot of favor from God, and ministry opportunities began opening in new places. It seemed as if every church I visited and every nation I traveled to was experiencing an outpouring of the Holy Spirit. And then it happened. I came to a crossroads in my faith as I encountered a difficult situation and experienced disappointments. A failed friendship caused immense pain and stress to my church and family. I had already been taking painkillers but started abusing the opioids due to the stress of coping with my internal and external pain. In 2005, I could no longer feel God's presence for the first time since my baptism of love.

After returning from a mission trip to Tanzania, my wife and my spiritual father, Jack Taylor, held an intervention on my behalf and checked me into a treatment center in California. I was devastated and hopeless. It was a five-month season where every day was a struggle to survive. Jesus became my closest friend and champion as I faced root fears and overcame opioid addiction. My apostleship and leadership used to lead my sonship. After checking into the treatment center, all my "ships" became shipwrecked, and the only one remaining was "sonship." After five months, I started traveling again, but ministry would look different from this point forward. I only did what I saw my Father in heaven doing. I walked out of that season with a spiritual and physical limp—one with which I still minister today.

God's Restoration Back to Family

Over the last 20 years, God has increasingly entrusted me with His kingdom. I have learned to love by facing heartache, sacrifice and pain. I have the amazing privilege of being known as the Ambassador of Love to the Muslim world. On a trip to Pakistan in 2021, I was given the International Peace Award from President Arif Alvi.

Getting to where I am today was a challenging journey. And I have had to face a lot of pain to be able to stand in front of the Muslim world with clean hands and a pure heart. My current title of "Ambassador of Love" is directly connected to the baptism of love I experienced in my early 30s. It is a constant reminder that Father God is already pleased with me and that my value does not stem from what I do but is defined by who I am. I meet regularly with the top Muslim leaders in Pakistan and other nations, sharing in life and giving strategies for building bridges of love with other religions.

Many have prophesied the coming of a billion-soul harvest. In 1975, Bob Jones had an experience of dying and seeing heaven. He heard the Lord tell him about this wave of a billion souls coming into the kingdom family. Though many people have come to the Lord since then, we haven't yet seen a distinct move in which a billion souls have said yes to Jesus. Why not? He is preparing the environment of His kingdom on earth not just to receive souls, but to welcome sons and daughters who fit into a family, and can understand what it means to be family members.

I believe God is saying, "I don't want a billion orphans. I want a billion sons and daughters. I want a family." Many in the church have been busy looking for the fire, but God is looking for fireplaces. If we build the fireplaces, He will provide the fire.

I have the distinct honor of discipling leaders in 22 nations.

Through my *Blueprint for Kingdom Identity Masterclass*, it is a great joy to help spiritual orphans become sons and daughters. Hundreds of people have become healthy fireplaces who are learning to live and love from the Father's house. Every day they wake up and ask, "Papa, who do you say I am?" They are drenched in the Father's affirmation and love.

God is restoring us back again to family in this season. We have a heavenly Father whose chief joy is to give us love, peace, joy, security and abundance. We can only find these things in His home. The Garden of Eden was the first home created for man and woman. It was a sacred place, a place where heaven intersects with earth. The garden was the home God had created for His first son and daughter. It was a perfect place where there was love, peace and abundance. Food was abundant, and no one had to labor in order to eat. It was a blessed place, a mini version of heaven. Yet the only reason it was a home was because there was a connection between the Father and His children.

Are you longing to be free from the orphan spirit? Do you want to be baptized in the Father's love? I want to invite you to say this prayer with me:

Father God,

I thank You that I am Your beloved son/daughter. I thank You that You delight in me and celebrate me, not just tolerate me. I ask You to send Your love to heal any and all orphan thinking and behavior in my life. Reveal Your love to me in a fresh, new way so that this revelation brings a radical transformation to my life. I want to be a representative of Your kingdom of love. I want to partner with You as Your son/daughter in bringing Your healing love to the nations so they will know You as the loving Father of all men. In Jesus' mighty name, amen.

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Awareness, . He ministers globally, bringing an impartation of God's love, healing and apostolic authority through a paradigm of kingdom family.