



July

Monthly Prayer Focus: **Youth Who May Age Out of Foster Care**

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*What do people really get for all their hard work? I have seen the burden God has placed on us all. Yet God has made everything beautiful for its own time. He has planted eternity in the human heart, but even so, people cannot see the whole scope of God's work from beginning to end. So I concluded there is nothing better than to be happy and enjoy ourselves as long as we can. And people should eat and drink and enjoy the fruits of their labor, for these are gifts from God.*

**Ecclesiastes 3:9-13**

#### Prayer for Youth Who Will Age Out of Foster Care

When I sat down to reflect on what blessing to offer for youth who may age out of foster care, there was an intense heaviness I felt. I know these youth. I love them. I have kids in my home who will likely age out of the foster care system. I immediately felt overwhelmed thinking of the challenges they face - nowhere to "belong," life skills no one ever taught them (like cutting chicken at the dinner table, tipping a waiter, or doing their laundry), homelessness, years without knowing what tomorrow holds, unemployment, depression - no safety net when things fall apart, hard and fast.

But as I prayed, I felt like I heard the Lord say, "be joyful". And I was confused. What is there to have joy about when there is such intense suffering in the lives of these youth and families? And then I remembered Ecclesiastes 3. Thank God that we don't know the full scope of His work from beginning to end, because Lord knows I couldn't handle it. But He has planted eternity in our hearts, and that is something to be hopeful about.

May we, as those who love and support these youth, celebrate and enjoy them as the beautiful and broken creations they are. May we not be so focused on "fixing" them and their problems that we miss out on simply enjoying who they are. May we teach them, leading by example, to trust God to carry out the full scope of His work, and to be happy and enjoy themselves as long as they can.

I pray that these youth learn to hold the beauty and tension of the full range of emotions and experiences in this beautiful and broken world. Grief and delight. Despair and laughter. Sorrow and joy! May they ultimately learn to trust and put their hope in Jesus. When their parents fail them, when "the system" fails them, when the church fails them - bless them with an extra measure of faith to carry them through and enough silliness and levity to keep them afloat until they get a chance to see Jesus face to face and understand the full scope of His work from beginning to end.

