

Proverbs: God's Wisdom on Justice

Proverbs 31:8-9 & Selected Texts

The What of Justice

Proverbs 1:2-3 – [2] *To know wisdom and instruction,
to understand words of insight,
[3] to receive instruction in wise dealing,
in righteousness, justice, and equity.*

"Justice is giving people what they are due, whether punishment or protection or care....We do justice when we give all human beings their due as creations of God." –Tim Keller

"The righteous are willing to disadvantage themselves to advantage the community; the wicked are willing to disadvantage the community to advantage themselves." –Bruce Waltke

The Who of Justice

"We instinctively tend to limit for whom we exert ourselves." –Tim Keller

Proverbs 31:8-9 – [8] *Open your mouth for the mute,
for the rights of all who are destitute.
[9] *Open your mouth, judge righteously,
defend the rights of the poor and needy.**

- The Voiceless
- The Vulnerable

Zechariah 7:9-10 – [9] *"Thus says the LORD of hosts, Render true judgments, show kindness and mercy to one another, [10] do not oppress the widow, the fatherless, the sojourner, or the poor, and let none of you devise evil against another in your heart."*

The Why of Justice

- Those who belong to God reflect His character and His concerns to the world (22:22-23; 23:10-11).

Psalm 68:5 – [5] *Father of the fatherless and protector of widows
is God in his holy habitation.*

- Those who are justified by faith in Jesus Christ will seek justice in the world.

Luke 4:18-19 – [18] *"The Spirit of the Lord is upon me,
because he has anointed me*

*to proclaim good news to the poor.
He has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives
and recovering of sight to the blind,
to set at liberty those who are oppressed,
[19] to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor."*

"A true experience of the grace of Jesus Christ inevitably motivates a man or woman to seek justice in the world." –Tim Keller

The How of Justice

- Proclaim the gospel.

Proverbs 24:11-12 – [11] *Rescue those who are being taken away to death;
hold back those who are stumbling to the slaughter.*
[12] *If you say, "Behold, we did not know this,"
does not he who weighs the heart perceive it?
Does not he who keeps watch over your soul know it,
and will he not repay man according to his work?*

- Open your ears to injustice.

Proverbs 21:13– [13] *Whoever closes his ear to the cry of the poor
will himself call out and not be answered.*

- Open your mouth against injustice (31:8-9).

"As a pastor whose church is filled with young adults, I have seen this concern for social justice, but I also see many who do not let their social concern affect their personal lives. It does not influence how they spend their money on themselves, how they conduct their careers, the way they choose and live in their neighborhoods, or whom they seek as friends." –Tim Keller

- Give to the poor (14:21, 31; 19:17; 28:27; 31:20).

- Love your neighbor (Luke 10:25-27).

The Where of Justice

- Where lie the greatest injustices around us? And where lies the greatest vulnerability?
- How isolated are you from the vulnerable and voiceless, the widow and orphan, the poor and destitute? How might you change that?