

Justice vs. Fairness

Justice is carrying out wise judgments based on the laws and character of God.

Definition

- A primary Hebrew word for *justify* means to be right in a moral and legal sense. It is significant that Scripture uses this same Hebrew word for *righteousness*.
- Righteousness is the perfection of the character of the Lord Jesus Christ. His righteousness becomes ours when we receive Him as our own Redeemer.
- Jesus fulfilled the just demands of the Law by substituting His sinless life for our sins through His death on the cross.

This is what the LORD says: "Maintain justice and do what is right, for my salvation is close at hand and my righteousness will soon be revealed. Isaiah 56:1

I have done what is righteous and just; do not leave me to my oppressors.

Psalm 119:121

To do what is right and just is more acceptable to the LORD than sacrifice.

Proverbs 21:3

Wisdom and prudence are the parents of Justice.

"I, wisdom, dwell together with prudence; I possess knowledge and discretion. To fear the LORD is to hate evil; I hate pride and arrogance, evil behavior and perverse speech. Counsel and sound judgment are mine; I have understanding and power. By me kings reign and rulers make laws that are just; Proverbs 8:12-15

"Justice is the activity of God's holiness."

"Justice means rightness with God; nothing is just until it is adjusted to God."

—Oswald Chambers

Not at all! Let God be true, and every man a liar. As it is written: "So that you may be proved right when you speak and prevail when you judge." Romans 3:4

Only when a person sets aside his own opinions will he understand the justice of God.

He guides the humble in what is right and teaches them his way. Psalm 25:9

He has showed you, O man, what is good. And what does the LORD require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God. Micah 6:8

The Rewards of Justice

The path of the righteous is like the first gleam of dawn, shining ever brighter till the full light of day. Proverbs 4:18

Instruct a wise man and he will be wiser still; teach a righteous man and he will add to his learning. Proverbs 9:9

An evil man is trapped by his sinful talk, but a righteous man escapes trouble.

Proverbs 12:13

No harm befalls the righteous, but the wicked have their fill of trouble. Proverbs 12:21

A good man leaves an inheritance for his children's children, but a sinner's wealth is stored up for the righteous. Proverbs 13:22

for though a righteous man falls seven times, he rises again, but the wicked are brought down by calamity. Proverbs 24:16

The memory of the righteous will be a blessing, but the name of the wicked will rot.

Proverbs 10:7

The Requirements of Doing Justice

- Justice is an active expression of the will and nature of God. Justice requires a person to verbally confirm God's truth and carry it out. Therefore, the word **do** often precedes the word justice.

Defend the poor and fatherless; Do justice to the afflicted and needy. Psalm 82:3 (NKJV)

David reigned over all Israel, doing what was just and right for all his people.

1 Chronicles 18:14

For it is not those who hear the law who are righteous in God's sight, but it is those who obey the law who will be declared righteous. Romans 2:13

God provides a detailed description of a just man:

If a man be just, and do that which is lawful and right and "

- Has not looked to the false gods of his day
- Has not defiled his neighbor's wife
- Has not violated commands of personal uncleanness
- Has not oppressed anyone
- Has not taken advantage of a creditor
- Has given food to the hungry

- Has provided clothes for the poor
- Has not gotten rich by high interest
- Has not engaged in iniquity
- Has carried out wise judgment between parties
- Has walked in God's statutes and judgments

" . . . he is just, he shall surely live" **Ezekiel 18:5-9**

Based on this list, justice requires the following:

The mouth of the righteous brings forth wisdom, but a perverse tongue will be cut out.

Proverbs 10:31

The tongue of the righteous is choice silver, but the heart of the wicked is of little value.

Proverbs 10:20

The righteous man leads a blameless life; blessed are his children after him.

Proverbs 20:7

An Example of a Just Man Doing Justice

Matthew 20:1-15

The Issue of Justice

- By engaging them for the one hour the householder assumed responsibility for their readiness all day.
- Those who are greedy tend to be unjust because they do not see the bigger picture or consider all the factors of a situation.

How Justice Competes With Fairness

- Most people demand fairness. However, absolute fairness requires that all get the same things at the same time.
- This is impossible; thus, we must look to God, Who is totally just.
- When we focus on fairness, we fail to see the just compensation of God.
- (For example) If God gives more money to one, He will give more faith to another, who can appropriate needed funds.

Listen, my dear brothers: Has not God chosen those who are poor in the eyes of the world to be rich in faith and to inherit the kingdom he promised those who love him?

James 2:5

- Justice is based on the universal, unchanging principles of God's Word; fairness, on the variable will of the majority.

- Justice establishes guilt when God's standards are violated. Fairness tries to remove guilt by lowering God's standards.
- Justice causes us to confess our failures and plead for mercy; fairness, to justify our failures so we do not think we need mercy.
- Justice is based on personal responsibility and yields revival; fairness, on personal rights and produces rebellion.
- Justice expresses God's wisdom. Fairness expresses man's reason.
- Justice is impartial and objective; fairness is partial and subjective.
- Justice requires swift prosecution of criminals. Fairness results in slow punishment of criminals.
- Justice limits the punishment of criminals. Fairness produces inconsistent punishment of criminals.

How Good Judgment and Justice Work Together

- Justice is the response of one who memorizes and meditates on God's Law day and night.
- A ruler was to make his own copy of the law and read it daily so he would make wise decisions and establish his kingdom with justice.

When he takes the throne of his kingdom, he is to write for himself on a scroll a copy of this law, taken from that of the priests, who are Levites. It is to be with him, and he is to read it all the days of his life so that he may learn to revere the LORD his God and follow carefully all the words of this law and these decrees **Deuteronomy 17:18-19**

- If you want to promote revival, tell people about their responsibilities. If you want to promote rebellion, tell people about their rights.

I will praise you with an upright heart as I learn your righteous laws. **Psalms 119:7**

- Until a person is brought to justice, he will neither desire nor appreciate mercy.

"This is the way of an adulteress: She eats and wipes her mouth and says, 'I've done nothing wrong.' **Proverbs 30:20**

Proverbs was written:

for acquiring a disciplined and prudent life, doing what is right and just and fair;

Proverbs 1:3

The ability to judge wisely is given to the meek.

The humble He guides in justice, And the humble He teaches His way.

Psalm 25:9 (NKJV)

Judgment is acquired through a sequence identified in Psalm 37:4-6:

Delight yourself in the LORD and he will give you the desires of your heart.

Commit your way to the LORD; trust in him and he will do this:

He will make your righteousness shine like the dawn, the justice of your cause like the noonday sun. Psalm 37:4-6