

Voices: Justice looks like treating all people as God's children

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EDITOR'S NOTE: "Justice looks like ..." is a special series in the Voices column. Readers will have the opportunity to consider justice from numerous viewpoints. The series is based on each writer's understanding of Scripture and relationship with Jesus Christ. Writers present their own views independent of any institution, unless otherwise noted in their bios.

You are encouraged to listen to each writer without prejudgment. Then, engage in conversation with others around you about what justice looks like to you.

[Click here](#) for more information about the series. [Click here](#) to read the full "Justice looks like..." series.

Every summer growing up, my family and I took a summer vacation. Since money wasn't growing on trees to pay for my three siblings, my parents and me to travel by plane, we always opted for road trips.

While these road trips mostly were enjoyable, there was always at least one or two instances during the ride that caused an argument or fight between siblings, resulting in tears.

Daniel, my brother a few years older than me, was about twice my size. Doing my duty as a younger brother, I made sure to "poke the bear" the whole car ride. Eventually, he had enough, punched me in the arm as hard

as he could, and I started crying to my dad for help.

My dad quickly pulled over the car, yanked Daniel out of the back seat, spanked him, and told him sternly with his finger pointed in his chest: "That is my son you just hit. Don't treat my son like that."

Having an advocate

I never will forget the feeling of having an advocate and protector. My father was fighting on my behalf, even though he knew I also had wronged my brother. My father also instilled a healthy fear in my older brother that his son was not to be abused or wronged.

What if each of us had a similar conversation with our heavenly Father? What if the Lord Almighty sternly pointed his finger in our chest demanding we treat his children with love, justice, mercy and respect? Well, he does through Scripture.

Whether it's in Genesis at the beginning of time when he tells us mankind is created in his image, or in Galatians when he proclaims believers are sons and daughters of God, these identifiers of mankind and believers point to four practical lessons that call us to seek justice, love mercy, walk humbly with our God, and to treat all people as God's children.

The sin of partiality

Partiality is a sin we often justify by saying it's just the system in which we operate. Even Christians show deference to the rich, wealthy and powerful. We treat the esteemed with respect, give them our time and ear, and show them love and grace. But the poor we neglect, leave behind and have no time for.

Leviticus 19:15 is clear that we are to be fair and impartial to all people,

regardless of status and wealth.

- How would the world look if you treated the poor and outcasts as wealthy kings?

Rejoicing and mourning

One of the first steps to pursuing justice is to listen and empathize.

Romans 12:15 is clear when it says to “rejoice with those who rejoice; weep with those who weep.” By doing so we acknowledge the individual’s humanity and engage in his or her joy or sorrow.

Listening always precedes action. We must take time to listen to our brothers and sisters before we engage.

- How would the world look if you listened and empathized with all people, even those who look different than you or have totally opposite views?

Caring for the voiceless

James 1:27 shares the direct message that pure religion is caring for the orphans and widows in their distress. Orphans and widows during biblical times had no rights, no privileges and no voice. They were unrepresented people with no one to fight on their behalf.

While we certainly are called to care for the literal orphans and widows, we also are called to practice pure religion in fighting and caring for those with no voice.

- How would the world look if you cared for those with no voice?

Sharing all things in common

The last call for justice is for communities of Christian believers. Acts 2 commands believers to share possessions, food, fellowship and worship with one another, to have all things in common.

If believers did this, it would be a compelling example of the benefits of a Christian lifestyle and the greatest evangelistic tool one could use. We would create an equitable lifestyle among our brothers and sisters in Christ, thereby encouraging others to participate.

- How would the world look if you shared all things in common with your brothers and sisters in Christ?

Through being impartial, rejoicing and mourning, caring for the voiceless, and sharing all things in common, we truly can seek justice, love mercy and honor every human as image-bearers of God.

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[Click here](#) to read the full “Justice looks like...” series.