

Exposing Enemies Within the Church: A 7-Session Bible Study Series

Session 1: Social Justice Versus Biblical Justice, Part 1

We uphold biblical justice when we render “impartially and proportionally to everyone his due in accord with the righteous standard of God’s moral law.”

—Dr. E. Calvin Beisner in *Social Justice: How Good Intentions Undermine Justice and Gospel*—

Here are some of the Bible passages Beisner cites that uphold these qualities of justice.

Impartiality

- You shall not show partiality in judgment; you shall hear the small as well as the great; you shall not be afraid in any man’s presence, for the judgment is God’s. The case that is too hard for you, bring to me, and I will hear it (Deut. 1:17).
- You shall not pervert justice; you shall not show partiality, nor take a bribe, for a bribe blinds the eyes of the wise and twists the words of the righteous (Deut. 16:19).
- It is not good to show partiality to the wicked, Or to overthrow the righteous in judgment (Prov. 18:5).
- but if you show partiality, you commit sin, and are convicted by the law as transgressors (James 2:9).

because the way is long, and kill him, though he was not deserving of death, since he had not hated the victim in time past (Deut. 19:4-6).

Rendering everyone according to his or her deeds

- If you say, “Surely we did not know this,” Does not He who weighs the hearts consider it? He who keeps your soul, does He not know it? And will He not render to each man according to his deeds? (Prov. 24:12).
- Render therefore to all their due: taxes to whom taxes are due, customs to whom customs, fear to whom fear, honor to whom honor (Rom. 13:7).

Proportionality

- Whoever kills any man shall surely be put to death. Whoever kills an animal shall make it good, animal for animal. If a man causes disfigurement of his neighbor, as he has done, so shall it be done to him— fracture for fracture, eye for eye, tooth for tooth; as he has caused disfigurement of a man, so shall it be done to him. And whoever kills an animal shall restore it; but whoever kills a man shall be put to death (Lev. 24:17-21).
- And this is the case of the manslayer who flees there, that he may live: Whoever kills his neighbor unintentionally, not having hated him in time past—as when a man goes to the woods with his neighbor to cut timber, and his hand swings a stroke with the ax to cut down the tree, and the head slips from the handle and strikes his neighbor so that he dies—he shall flee to one of these cities and live; lest the avenger of blood, while his anger is hot, pursue the manslayer and overtake him,

According to the righteous standard of God’s moral law

- The Ten Commandments: Exodus 20:1-17
- You shall do no injustice in judgment, in measurement of length, weight, or volume. You shall have honest scales, honest weights, an honest ephah, and an honest hin: I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt (Lev. 19:35-36).
- You shall not have in your bag differing weights, a heavy and a light. You shall not have in your house differing measures, a large and a small. You shall have a perfect and just weight, a perfect and just measure, that your days may be lengthened in the land which the LORD your God is giving you. ¹⁶ For all who do such things, all who behave unrighteously, are an abomination to the LORD your God (Deut. 25:13-16).

Item 1.3, page 1/Item 6.2

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Discussion Starters for Facilitators

Impartiality: 1) What does it mean to be impartial? 2) How and why might we be tempted to show partiality? 3) How might a court of law be tempted? 4) Why does God hate partiality?

Proportionality: Discuss proportionality, which “would be making a reward fit an individual’s positive contribution or crafting a punishment to fit his or her offense. For example, proportionality recognizes a difference between abuse of another’s *property* and abuse or violations against another *individual*. Further, it recognizes a difference between a death caused by accident and premeditated murder.”¹ **Ask** if participants can think of other possible examples. **Ask** why it is important to make the distinctions that proportionality calls for.

Giving everyone his due: What does it mean to give everyone his due?

Emphasize that giving everyone his due — what he or she deserves — is truly just and fair. Note, too, that this

is **about individuals, not groups**. Here’s something else we need to understand, as well: In the realm of biblical justice, **that which one deserves is decided upon based on God’s law (see item 4)**

According to the righteous standard of God’s moral law: Note that Dr. Beisner calls the standard by which justice is to be rendered “the righteous standard of God’s moral law.” What is a *righteous* standard? **Note** that God’s law is righteous because God is righteous or holy, and His law reflects His holy character. **Note** also that His righteous standard is absolute, unchanging and applicable to all, at all times, under all circumstances. **Ask** what we as a nation have lost because we’ve abandoned God’s law on so many levels, and because as a nation, we are refusing to recognize His standards are applicable to all, at all times, everywhere, in all situations.

Note:

¹<https://www.wordfoundations.com/justice-needs-no-adjectives/>