



40 Days of Wisdom

Opening Prayer

God, thank you for meeting us here. Help us to use this time to grow in friendship with one another and to grow more connected to you. Amen.

Talk It Over

During this series, we leaned into wisdom. More specifically, we have looked at the wisdom offered through the book of Proverbs — a book written with the hope and goal of helping people live wisely. This week we looked at what Proverbs has to teach us about justice.

- How do you think our culture defines “justice” and “injustice”? How do you hear the words being used around you in life, work, media, and society?

Read Proverbs 21:3 (NKJV)

To help us understand what the Bible means when it talks about justice, let’s review some basic ideas from this weekend:

While justice is often best understood through the context of retributive justice or this idea of forcibly balancing the scales of justice, righting the wrongs, and taking down the evildoers this punitive, punishing side of justice isn’t the full picture. The Bible illustrates a justice much larger.

Biblical justice looks to offer restoration, redemption. Biblical justice is giving a person what they deserve, whether punishment or protection for the sake of restoration and redemption. This means treating all people equitably, with intrinsic value and dignity, and offering basic opportunities to thrive regardless of their race, gender, socioeconomic status, and so on.

- In what ways do these ideas about justice feel new to you?
- In what ways do these ideas about justice make sense to you in light of what you believe, have experienced, or see around you?
- In what ways do you feel challenged by these ideas of biblical justice?
- In what ways do you see injustice around you today?

Let’s review two key principles we looked at about Biblical justice:

One — Justice reflects the character of God.

Read Proverbs 11:1 (NIV), Proverbs 22:22-23 (NLT) and Proverbs 23:10-11 (NIV)

- Tell us about a time you saw justice come to life firsthand either through punishment or protection.

(Content continued on the next page.)

- How does understanding God's desire for justice help you make better sense of the heart of God?

Two — We must be people who pursue biblical justice.

Read Proverbs 29:7 (Voice)

- In your own words, define what it means to be compassionate.
- What are some good things that can come from growing in our compassion?
- Have you ever felt a lack of compassion being offered to you? What was that experience like?
- Tell us about a time someone offered you compassion.
- In what ways do you think you can grow in your compassion for others? This can be a general idea or a specific area.

To assist us be people who help bring about God's restorative, redemption justice, here are two key ideas to remember:

One — We pursue justice when we recognize the dignity of all people.

Read Proverbs 31:8-9 (Voice)

- What sorts of actions or attitudes show a desire to offer dignity to all people?
- When do you find it hardest to offer dignity to someone?
- Where do you not see dignity being offered to all people?
- Have you ever felt someone didn't recognize your dignity? Tell us about that experience.

Two — We pursue justice when we realize the power we have to bring justice.

Read Proverbs 3:27 (Voice)

- While we all cannot do everything or fix the problems of this world on our own, what is something you can get better at doing in order to help bring about justice?
- Do you know someone who is good at doing what they can to offer justice to others? Tell us what you have observed this person do.

Read 1 John 4:7-8 (Voice)

While action and compassion are great virtues, the greatest gift we can give is justice that points people back to the love of God.

- How can we offer justice and compassion that points to Jesus without being too pushy about our faith?

Alternative Closing Prayer Idea

For this week's prayer, consider *reading* through the lyrics we sang this weekend at the end of the talk as a group (see the next page) and then welcoming everyone to pray for issues of injustice at home, work, the community, our city, our country, and our world.

Closing Prayer

God, thank you for using today to remind us about justice. Soften our hearts to the things that matter most to you. Shape us to be people of biblical justice. Amen.

How To Use this Discussion Guide

The guide is meant to serve you and your group as you intentionally create space to grow in friendship and faith. Use the guide as a tool to help your unique group.

With that in mind, consider reviewing the guide before your group to see if some content or questions might resonate more or less with your group. Don't feel pressured to read all the content or to hit all the questions. The guide is not meant to be something you power through for the sake of completing. Pick the content from the guide you feel will help foster friendship and faith in your specific group.

In addition, spend some time praying for your group each week, preparing your heart, and asking God for wisdom and guidance as you lead.

Lyrics to The World Needs Jesus (By River Valley Worship)

When our homes are hit by heartbreak
Let Your presence meet us here
When the pain seems overwhelming
We hold onto You
When the streets are torn by chaos
We will be Your hands and feet
When the darkness brings division
May we be Your light
'Cause we know our world needs Jesus
We know that our world needs freedom
So give us eyes to see the hurting and the broken
And let our lives align with every word You say
When the nations ache from violence
We will be Your blessed peace
When the headlines scream injustice
May we shout Your name!
'Cause we know that our world needs Jesus
We know that our world needs freedom
So give us eyes to see the hurting and the broken
And let our lives align with every word You say!
'Cause we know that our world needs Jesus