



# GENEROUS JUSTICE

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*Discussion Guide*

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DiscipleshipPath.com provides an outcome-based pathway for one on one discipleship. This guided journey through the basics of the Christian faith is a mix of original and curated content created by the church for the church.

DiscipleshipPath.com was created by pastors Phil Wiseman and Megan Koch at Table Church in Des Moines, IA. You can contact them directly at [hello@tablechurchdsm.org](mailto:hello@tablechurchdsm.org).

Table Church exists to invite people to the way of Jesus. We pursue God, create belonging, do justice, and make disciples. Find more discipleship tools at [tablechurchdsm.org/resources](http://tablechurchdsm.org/resources).

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**WATCH** the companion video from Tim Keller and keep your journal nearby to take notes as you do. Write down what strikes you as interesting, essential, or powerful, and write down things you've got questions about or disagree with, too. If you feel overwhelmed with all the information he gives, that's ok! Just listen and see what sticks out to you.

This discussion guide is divided into two parts and can be used individually or for groups. It is designed to work for two discussion sessions, or in one longer session with a break.

### **DISCUSSION ONE:**

1. What were your first thoughts as you listened to this message? What stood out to you?
2. Keller explains, "All other religions say, 'Live as you ought and God will accept and bless you.' But the gospel says, 'Receive his acceptance and blessing as a gift through what Jesus Christ did on the cross and then and only then will you live as you ought. Not live as you ought and get the blessing. Get the blessing through Jesus Christ as a free gift, and then live as you ought.'"

This illustrates two approaches to "doing the right thing". What are the two approaches, and what motivates each one?

What makes the motivations of Jesus' disciples unique to all other religions?

3. Justification, in short, is God's pardon and welcome of sinners, not because of what *they* have done, but because of what *he* has done. Justice for sinners isn't earned; it's given. But we aren't *only* forgiven.

**READ** 2 Cor. 5:21.

The NIV says, "God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God." When we put our faith in Jesus there is an incredible exchange: our sins are no longer counted against us, and instead, we are *righteous* just like Jesus. God removes a burden we could never lift alone, and gives us a gift we could never earn.

Keller said, "When you know you're saved by grace, you cannot be condescending [hold in contempt or judgement] to perpetrators of injustice because you know that you were the perpetrator of the ultimate injustice, which was rebelling against God, and yet God saved you."

Consider your own life. There was a time when you were “out”, but Jesus welcomed you in, cleaned you up, and made you a member of the family. By faith, grace gave you a gift you didn’t deserve. Jesus didn’t give you what was *fair*, he did what was *right*.

What’s the difference? Is justice about making things equal and fair, or making things right?

What might that have to do with this conversation about doing justice for others?

#### 4. **READ** Micah 6:8.

Step through this passage backwards. God’s people should walk humbly with him, love mercy, and do what is right. This is what God requires of us, because it is good. First, when we walk humbly with God, we walk confident that God has ultimate power and authority over everything, and he uses that power to take care of us. We don’t have to be prideful, overextended, or worried. God’s power won’t run out, and he wants to extend it to us. Second, we are to love mercy; in other words, as we are with God, we love what he loves, and even become like him. God is full of compassion and loves to give out forgiveness for wrongs. If we are walking with God, we do the same. That leads to the third point: do what is right.

This is an illustration of a full-bodied life of faith. If we do not embody all three of these things, something is wrong. But consider the language here: we *love* mercy and *do* what is right.

What motivates the acts of justice we do? Are you motivated by results, or your Redeemer?

In light of that, are you willing to commit to doing justice, even when you can’t guarantee the outcome, or see the full picture like God does? If things don’t appear to resolve as they “should”, what was the point?

#### **DISCUSSION TWO:**

1. Who are the poor? Poverty is about much more than financial resources. Nicholas Wolterstorff often talks about the “Quartet of the Vulnerable”: the widow, the orphan, the alien or immigrant, and the [financially] poor. These are people who are most easily taken advantage of, or harmed, and the issues they face often compound on one another, creating generations of oppression that are very difficult to escape.

Do you identify with one of these four groups yourself, or have you in the past?

The world favors the voices of those with power and influence. How does this affect the vulnerable? How do you see this play out in the world, your country, your city, and your church?

2. Unjust living is not only about doing wrong things, but about *not* doing *right* things. When God puts good things in our hands (resources, gifts, abilities, forgiveness and pardon, etc.) and we withhold them from people who need it, we are not loving mercy. When we have good things and keep them for ourselves, we aren’t doing justice. We aren’t living in full partnership *with* God.

**PAUSE** and ask God to speak to you about this right now. What is he revealing to you?

3. Have you ever attempted to help someone, and suddenly felt confronted with how little you wanted to do with them? When you engage with difficult situations, do you become easily frustrated, angry, overwhelmed, or impatient? A life of loving mercy and doing justice doesn't just mend the broken world; it mends *you*.

When we encounter the broken, it can be much easier to see what is broken in *us*. Injustice can be like a mirror, reflecting back to us what is not right in our own hearts. Because if we are willing to call something "not good" in the world, God wants to help us uncover if that same core issue is also "not good" in our own life. If we see someone lied to, taken advantage of, or hungry when their government could feed them, we need to be ready to face how we might do these same wrong things. This is, perhaps, why so few people truly partner with justice over the course of their lifetime. It is easier to avoid seeing these messes (if we are privileged enough to do so) and simply turn away, or send a check instead.

How can compassionate engagement with the brokenness of the world heal what is broken in your own heart?

Have you ever resisted this? For example, has God ever offered you the opportunity to become more patient, more forgiving, or more selfless as you serve others? Have you always embraced these gifts? If not, what held you back?

If you want to engage with unjust practices in the world, are you willing to allow God to show you how you might be living an unjust life? Why or why not?