

PLEASING GOD BY PURSUING JUSTICE

A. Biblical examination of justice

1. Justice (135 times with 9 in NT)

- a. God is pleased to grant a request to pursue justice, 1 Kings 3:11 (*And God said to him, "Because you have asked this thing and have not asked for yourself long life, nor have asked riches for yourself, nor have you asked for the life of your enemies, but have asked for yourself discernment to understand justice.*
- b. God places a priority on justice.
 - 1) Luke 11:42, *But woe to you Pharisees! For you pay tithes of mint and rue and every kind of garden herb, and yet disregard justice and the love of God; but these are the things you should have done without neglecting the others.*
 - 2) Proverbs 21:3, *To do righteousness and justice is more acceptable to the LORD than sacrifice.*
- c. God is our Example, Colossians 4:1, *Masters, grant to your slaves justice and fairness, knowing that you too have a Master in heaven.*

2. Righteousness and justice (52 times)

- a. Proper instruction for families, Genesis 18:19, *For I have chosen him, in order that he may command his children and his household after him to keep the way of the Lord by doing righteousness and justice; in order that the Lord may bring upon Abraham what He has spoken about him.*
- b. Blessing for those who practice righteousness and justice, Psalm 106:3, *How blessed are those who keep justice, Who practice righteousness at all times!*
- c. Righteousness and justice are limitless, Amos 5:24, *But let justice roll down like waters And righteousness like an ever-flowing stream.*

3. Righteousness, justice and lovingkindness (5 times)

- a. Triune character of God: righteousness/justice/lovingkindness, triune nature -Father/Son/Holy Spirit, Psalm 33:5, *He loves righteousness and justice; The earth is full of the lovingkindness of the Lord.*
- b. Foundational characteristics of God, Psalm 89:14, *Righteousness and justice are the foundation of Thy throne; Lovingkindness and truth go before Thee.*
- c. Characteristics of the Messianic Kingdom
 - 1) Isaiah 16:5, *A throne will even be established in lovingkindness, And a judge will sit on it in faithfulness in the tent of David; Moreover, he will seek justice And be prompt in righteousness.*
 - 2) Isaiah 9:7, *There will be no end to the increase of His government or of peace, On the throne of David and over his kingdom, To establish it and to uphold it with justice and righteousness From then on and forevermore. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will accomplish this.*
- d. Covenant components, Hosea 2:19, *And I will betroth you to Me forever; Yes, I will betroth you to Me in righteousness and in justice, in lovingkindness and in compassion.*
- e. Characteristics that delight God
 - 1) Jeremiah 9:24, *but let him who boasts boast of this, that he understands and knows Me, that I am the Lord who exercises lovingkindness, justice, and righteousness on earth; for I delight in these things," declares the Lord.*
 - 2) Micah 6:6-8, *With what shall I come to the Lord And bow myself before the God on high? Shall I come to Him with burnt offerings, With yearling calves? Does the Lord take delight in thousands of rams, In ten thousand rivers of oil? Shall I present my first-born for my rebellious acts, The fruit of my body for the sin of my soul? He has told you, O man, what is good; And what does the Lord require of you But to do justice, to love kindness, And to walk humbly with your God?*
- f. Comments on justice
 - 1) Thomas Constable, *Truly knowing the Lord in this way implies participating with Him in valuing and practicing these essential covenant virtues. The standard is not social custom or community consensus but the character and will of Yahweh.*
 - 2) Thompson, . . . *true religion consists in a personal and existential knowledge of God, and in a commitment to those qualities displayed by Yahweh himself—unfailing loyalty, justice, and right dealing.*
 - 3) For Israel, true religion consisted of acknowledging God's sovereignty over all of life and allowing Him to produce the qualities that mark Him in the lives of His people.
 - 4) The means of walking humbly before God - pursue justice and mercy (kindness) - Micah 6:8, *The LORD does not let the righteous go hungry, but he thwarts the craving of the wicked. A slack hand causes poverty, but the hand of the diligent makes rich. A child who gathers in summer is prudent, but a child who sleeps in harvest brings shame.*

B. Principles for Pleasing God or what to Give the One Who has everything!

1. Receive His Gift

- a. Augustine, *You ask what you should offer: offer yourself. For what else does the Lord seek of you but you? Because of all earthly creatures, He has made nothing better than you, He seeks yourself from yourself, because you have lost yourself.*
- b. God doesn't need me - He wants me!

2. Obey His commands

- a. Distinction between religion/works and relationship/grace
- b. Meeting with doctors in China - have to vs. want to

3. Love others

- a. It is active, Deuteronomy 10:18, *He executes justice for the orphan and the widow, and shows His love for the alien by giving him food and clothing.*
- b. Robert Chisholm, Jr., *No vital relationship with God is possible if one is unfaithful to the responsibilities arising out of his God-given relationship with his fellow men...one's response to the material and physical needs of a fellow Christian reveals whether or not his professed faith is genuine, 1 John 3:16-20.*
- c. A church member I respect greatly, asked me about our ministry of providing food for the needy, *Is there any benefit to the church?*
It is worth doing!
 - 1) It pleases God.
 - 2) It demonstrates His nature.

4. Pursue justice

- a. It is a lifestyle not a cause
 - 1) Righteousness is position.
 - 2) Justice is practice.
- b. It is personal not corporate
 - 1) Micah 6:8 offers personal requirements, not programs for social justice.
 - 2) Charles Ryrie, *To do justice may be different from imposing justice on others. God's just judgments are often delayed for higher purposes known only by Him. This implies that there can be a higher purpose than bringing immediate justice to all men.*
- c. It is sensing God's direction - How do I know when God tells me to do something?
 - 1) It is not comfortable.
 - 2) I am capable through Him.
 - 3) It honors Him and does not contradict His Word.
- d. It is confidence in God's sovereignty
 - 1) I can't establish peace, righteousness or social justice but I can demonstrate what it should be like.
 - 2) Jesus will establish peace, righteousness and social justice in the Millennial Kingdom.
 - 3) Charles Ryrie, *Christians will not win the war until He comes; yet they must fight to win battles now.*

CONCLUSION

1. Live out Jeremiah 9:24 and Micah 6:8.
2. Act justly - be fair in your dealing with others.
3. Love mercy - seek to meet the needs of others'
4. Walk humbly with God - have an attitude of submission not arrogance.
5. Practice what you preach - my position in Christ demands that I exhibit His nature which is in me.