

Standing Up for Justice

What can I do to help establish and preserve justice?

Bible Truth: God is just, and He expects His followers to establish and preserve justice.

**Just for fun:* Can you recall a time when you were treated unjustly? How did you respond?

Realize God Requires Justice (Read Deut. 32:3-4)

1. What does it say about God...what is He like...what is revealed about His character...His actions? How does this make you feel? Why? (cross-reference with Isaiah 30:18; Ps. 37:28; Ja.1:17)

2. How does God relate to people of various distinctions of race, skin color, or social class?

(Read Micah 6:8)

3. What does God desire of Christians? How are the three interrelated?

4. Give several reasons as to “why” we should pursue justice.

Treat Everyone Justly (Read Exodus 23:6-9)

1. What actions are God’s people told: (discuss where/how we might see abuses of these in society today)

Not to do

To do

2. How do you see these instructions reinforced in Matthew 5:46-47 and James 2:1-10?

Work for the Cause of Justice (Read Isaiah 1:15-17)

1. Imagine a people so wicked, those who oppressed the poor, that God refused to hear their prayers. How far is America from that state?

2. God requires a higher standard than our merely *not treating people unjustly*. He expects us to take a stand for the cause of justice **defending** people who are most vulnerable to exploitation. From these verses, what can we do to take a stand for the cause of justice? How could this be acted out in today's society? (also James 1:27)

-
-
-
-

Preserve Justice (Read Psalm 106:3)

1. What's the significance to the word "maintaining" in this verse?

(Read Amos 5:14-15, 24)

2. What's in it for those who maintain justice?
3. How do we measure up to God's standards of justice? Do you need to make some changes in your attitudes or actions? Does our church need to make changes in the way we respond to persons who are victims in our society?

Review/Personal Application:

- *What was the most meaningful statement, thought or Scripture from this lesson?*

Care and Prayer: How can we help one another through prayer?

LIFE Groups

Providing an environment to nurture caring relationships and spiritual growth.

- L** ♦ Learn..... applying Biblical truth for everyday living
I ♦ Invite.....welcoming others to our fellowship
F ♦ Fellowship.....nurturing Christ centered caring relationships
E ♦ Evangelism..... combining evangelism, teaching and nurturing to impact our world for Christ

Sharing with the Poor and Needy

What should be my response to poor and needy people?

Bible Truth: God expects Christians to share generously and compassionately with the poor and needy.

Overcome Selfishness (Deut. 15:7-9)

1. Who is (or was) the generous giver in your family background? How so?
2. *[During the seventh year, or year of Jubilee, all debts were cancelled which meant that the nearer it got to that year, the less likely one would recover what was loaned out]* Discuss what attitude and behavior God is challenging through this instruction to the Israelites and believers today?
3. What causes might make for a “tight fist”... why might someone become “hardhearted”?
4. How might things change today if there were a “release from debt” year?

Give Generously (Deut. 15:10-11)

1. Compare and/or define the words ***generously*** and ***grudgingly***.
2. What is God's promise to those who give generously to those in need? When we give, how does our attitude affect what is pleasing to God and His blessing as we give?
3. Have you seen this promise to be true either in your life (or some other example)? How?
4. How do you deal with the frustration that sometimes people who we have helped get back into debt or trouble? What is our responsibility or accountability and what is theirs... how should these verses affect Christian's attitude toward people who seem to stay in a poverty pattern?

Share Compassionately (James 2:14-17; 1 John 3:17-18)

1. What are some needs that are identified here?

2. *Doing good works doesn't make a person a Christian (only trusting Jesus does) but a faithful Christian will do good works.* Why ... what should be our motive? Discuss what having material possessions but ignoring the needy say about our faith.

Plan to Provide for the Poor (Lev. 19:9-10)

1. What "intentional plan" to provide for poor does God establish in these verses?
2. Do you regard caring for the poor as an afterthought or as a planned ministry?
3. List some ways the Christian community in Toledo and/or Westgate Chapel intentionally plan to meet physical needs of people in need? How can/do you participate in these efforts?
4. Brainstorm about some ways Christians (individually or as a group) might become more intentional about meeting the needs of the poor.

Review/Personal Application:

- *What was the most meaningful statement, thought or Scripture from this lesson?*

Care and Prayer: How can we help one another through prayer?

- *Are there selfish money habits or attitudes that should be confessed and given to the Lord?*
- *In what home, work, or community situations can you demonstrate your faith by helping someone in need this week?*

LIFE Groups

Providing an environment to nurture caring relationships and spiritual growth.

- L** ♦ Learn..... applying Biblical truth for everyday living
- I** ♦ Invite.....welcoming others to our fellowship
- F** ♦ Fellowship.....nurturing Christ centered caring relationships
- E** ♦ Evangelism..... combining evangelism, teaching and nurturing to impact our world for Christ

Rejecting Pornography

What guidance does the Bible offer to those who are tempted to use pornography?

Bible Truth: Christians should seek to be sexually pure in thought and deed.

Determine Not to Be Involved (Ps. 101:3-4 NIV)

1. Pornography is vile, evil and impure. What are some of the destructive results of it in society?
2. How would we define pornography?
3. How would the entertainment industry change if they adopted these verses as their business credo?
4. From these verses, (what guidance does the Bible offer to those who are tempted to use pornography)... i.e., what *specific commitments does David make* to combat his battle against pornography, and other immorality?

Discipline Your eyes (Job 31:1-4)

1. Look up Matt. 6:22-23 and 1 John 2:16. How are our eyes so significant to why and how we sin in our lives?
2. Discuss how *lust* is the antithesis of *love*.
3. Do you agree or disagree with this statement: *Society today legitimizes lust*.

Guard Your thoughts (2 Cor. 10:4-5)

1. What do the following verses teach about guarding our thoughts?

Proverbs 15:26 (NIV)

The LORD detests the thoughts of the wicked, but those of the pure are pleasing to him.

Mark 7:20-23 (NIV)

He went on: "What comes out of a man is what makes him 'unclean.' For from within, out of men's hearts, come evil thoughts, sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery, greed, malice, deceit, lewdness, envy, slander, arrogance and folly. All these evils come from inside and make a man 'unclean.'"

Philippians 4:8 (NIV)

Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable--if anything is excellent or praiseworthy--think about such things.

Titus 1:15-16 (NIV)

To the pure, all things are pure, but to those who are corrupted and do not believe, nothing is pure. In fact, both their minds and consciences are corrupted. They claim to know God, but by their actions they deny him. They are detestable, disobedient and unfit for doing anything good.

2. List some specific words or phrases in 2 Cor. 10:4-5 to describe the believers' ability to take charge of their behavior.
3. [Pornography is now an 8 billion dollar industry, more than Hollywood's domestic box office receipts and more than all revenues from rock and country music recordings. We have five times more hard-core pornography outlets in the United States than McDonald's restaurants. Pornographic Web sites are one of the fastest growing areas on the Internet.] Where else is pornography available? What are some ways to monitor and protect children and youth from what they see?

Practice Self-Control (1 Thess. 4:3-5, 7)

1. In the Bible self-control does not simply mean our making a strong effort. What do the following verses teach about how God has promised to help us regarding self-control?

Gal. 5:23 John 14:26; 15:26 Romans 8:37 1 Cor. 10:13 Phil. 4:13

Review/Personal Application:

- *What was the most meaningful statement, thought or Scripture from this lesson?*

Care and Prayer: How can we help one another through prayer?

LIFE Groups

Providing an environment to nurture caring relationships and spiritual growth.

- L** ♦ Learn..... applying Biblical truth for everyday living
- I** ♦ Invite.....welcoming others to our fellowship
- F** ♦ Fellowship.....nurturing Christ centered caring relationships
- E** ♦ Evangelism..... combining evangelism, teaching and nurturing to impact our world for Christ

Offering Hope to Homosexuals

What should my attitude be about homosexuality and homosexuals?

Bible Truth: God condemns homosexuality but offers homosexuals hope of a new life through faith in Jesus Christ.

Homosexuality Is Not an Acceptable Lifestyle (Read Lev. 18:22; Rom. 1:24-32)

[What are the biggest challenges to sexual purity in our society?]

1. Define “detestable”. What are some other words that could be used in place of it?
2. Complete this summary chart and discuss how these verses relate to our society and the homosexual society today.

God gave them over to _____ (v.24)

God gave them over to _____ (v. 26-27)

God gave them over to _____ (v. 28-31)

Homosexuality Is Unnatural (Review Romans 1:26-28)

1. Discuss the potential consequences of living a homosexual lifestyle. How does it affect a persons body? Values? Mind and emotions? Family? Career? Soul? Future? Etc.
2. Do you see our society driven to accept homosexuality as an acceptable lifestyle as reflected in Ro.1:32? Why or why not?

Christ Provides a Way Out of Homosexuality (Read 1 Cor. 6:9-11)

1. What is the hope offered in these verses for the homosexual?
2. What is necessary for forgiveness and “cleansing from unrighteousness” (1 John 1:9)?

3. How should the work of Jesus (to wash, sanctify, and justify) affect and motivate believers to love and care about homosexuals? How can believers share this redemption with homosexuals?

What Will Help Someone Not Fall Back into a Homosexual Lifestyle? (Read 1 Cor. 6:18-20)

1. To win victory over homosexuality requires changing both thinking and habits. Compile a list of ways a homosexual in today's society can "flee" this behavior.

2. Christians can reject homosexuality yet still love and respect the homosexual as a person.

Case study: I am an active member of our church and of an adult Sunday School class. Yesterday I found out my 20-year-old son is HIV positive. His partner has just called to tell me that my Terry has been ill for months. The partner no longer can care for Terry by himself. I want my son to come home. What will my church do? How will my Sunday School class react? Should I keep this a secret? I am not sure if I have the heart to face this on my own!

Reflect on the role of being restorers. How could her Sunday School class help this woman and her son?

Review/Personal Application:

- *What was the most meaningful statement, thought or Scripture from this lesson?*

Care and Prayer: How can we help one another through prayer?

LIFE Groups

Providing an environment to nurture caring relationships and spiritual growth.

- L** ♦ Learn..... applying Biblical truth for everyday living
I ♦ Invite.....welcoming others to our fellowship
F ♦ Fellowship.....nurturing Christ centered caring relationships
E ♦ Evangelism..... combining evangelism, teaching and nurturing to impact our world for Christ

Moving Beyond Abortion

How can I help those who have been involved in abortion?

Bible Truth: Jesus offers God's forgiveness and restoration, not condemnation, to those who have broken God's laws.

View People as Persons, Not as Objects (Read John 8:1-6a)

[Just for fun - Describe a time in your childhood when someone tattled on you.]

1. What kinds of people are we more likely to treat as "objects"... instead of persons of value and worth?
2. Look up Lev. 20:10 and Deut. 22:23-24. What did the law of Moses say about those caught in adultery?
3. What do you see in the Pharisees' actions that show them as treating the woman as an object to be used... what was their real objective?

Avoid Judgmental Attitudes (Read John 8:6b-9)

1. What challenge did Jesus give to the Pharisees? How did they respond? How should we as Christians respond to that challenge today?
2. Sometimes Christians act self-righteously by only counting "big sins" as serious. How does such an attitude lead to judging others?
3. Is it difficult to "speak the truth in love" (Eph. 4:15), i.e., being right in belief and right in spirit? Why or why not?

Extend Forgiveness (Read John 8:10-11)

1. How would we define *condemn* and *condone*?

2. How does Jesus' response to the woman exemplify "grace and truth" (John 1:17)?

3. How does the way Jesus treated the adulterous woman impact the way you face your own sin?

Support with Prayer (Read James 5:16)

1. Why does God give these instructions... how is confession and prayer significant to healing and restoration for everyone involved in abortion (or any other sin for that matter)? Why is it important to support those who have been involved in abortion?

Be a Change Agent (Read James 5:19-20)

1. Every sin has physical and psychological consequences and churches should be havens for people whom sin has injured. How do these verses support and encourage a ministry of restoration to those who are considering abortion or who have had that unfortunate experience in their past?

Review/Personal Application:

- *What was the most meaningful statement, thought or Scripture from this lesson?*
- *What can you learn from Jesus about helping a friend who has been involved in abortion?*

Care and Prayer: How can we help one another through prayer?

LIFE Groups

Providing an environment to nurture caring relationships and spiritual growth.

- L** ♦ Learn..... applying Biblical truth for everyday living
- I** ♦ Invite.....welcoming others to our fellowship
- F** ♦ Fellowship.....nurturing Christ centered caring relationships
- E** ♦ Evangelism..... combining evangelism, teaching and nurturing to impact our world for Christ