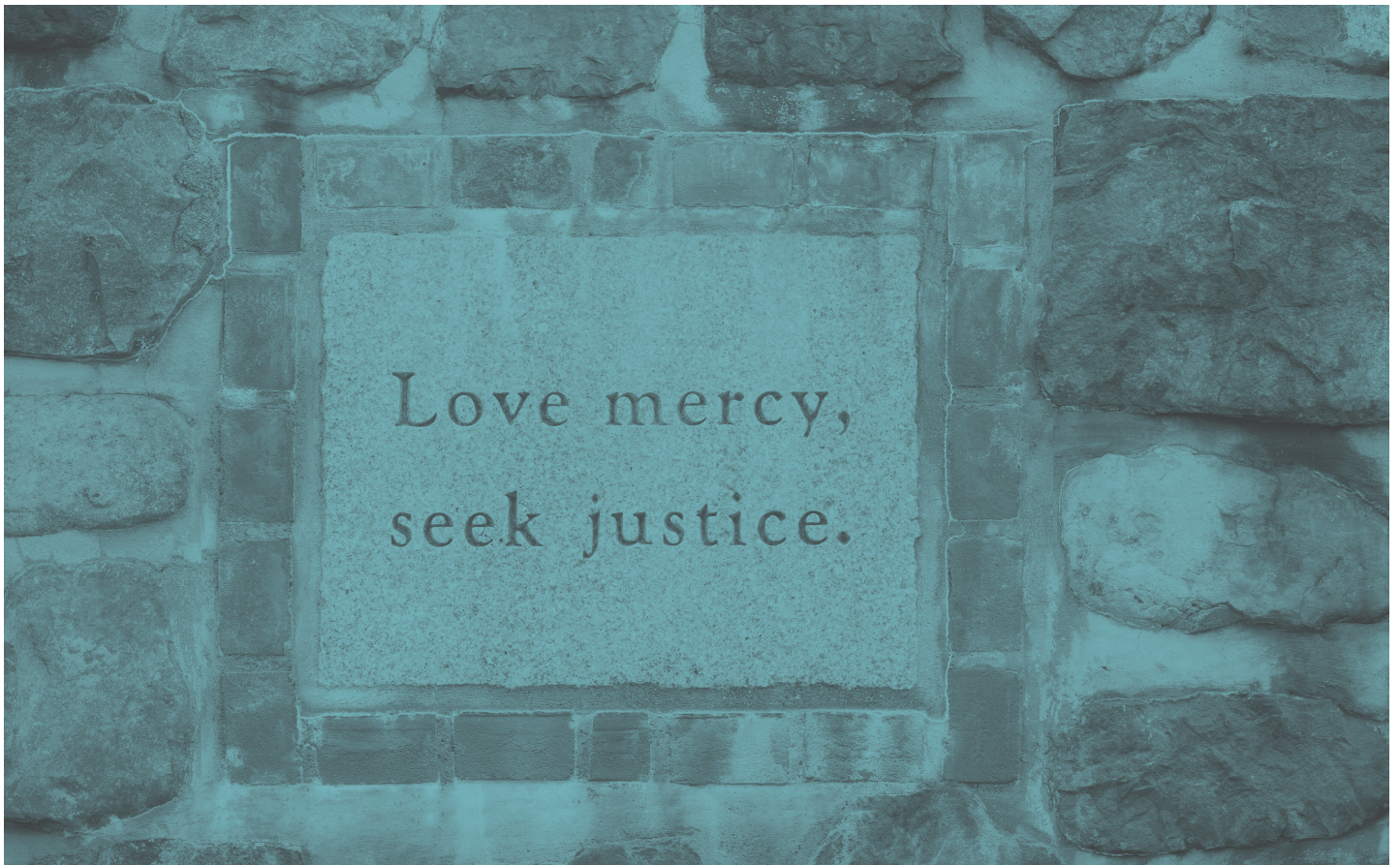


FOUNDATIONS FOR **BIBLICAL JUSTICE**

LEADER GUIDE



Welcome

Dear Champ/ Life Group leader,

One Hope Church is a gospel community that seeks to know God and make Him known. We do this through equipping people for evangelism, discipleship, community building, social justice, and societal renewal.

We believe that as Christians individually and corporately we have been placed in the town of Stellenbosch at this time in our country's history with good works that God has prepared for us to do (Acts 17: 26-27; Ephesians 2:10). Importantly, God has not left us alone to do this. With the power of the Holy Spirit and the message of the Gospel, we can grow in knowing Him and making Him known right across our town. A Biblical theology of justice helps us to understand God's heart for the poor and marginalized and our role as believers in "doing justice."

The purpose of the Foundations for Biblical Justice course is to highlight the foundations of biblical justice - what the Bible says and how it should be an important part of the way Christians live their lives. The focus is on inspiring One Hoppers to think, believe, and live more justly every day. Equipping and mobilizing will happen in other spaces and platforms.

Important and difficult topics will most likely surface in discussions during this course such as racism, violence, gender, homelessness, and other important social injustice issues. Discussions will easily tend to lean to practical application and how to deal with specific social justice issues. We suggest you acknowledge these when they arise, but that you facilitate your participants to focus on the foundational concepts of biblical justice. Encourage participants to engage with these topics more deeply as next steps in their journey to live more justly. A list of resources for further self-study are available on the Serve Stellenbosch website at <https://servestellenbosch.co.za/>. Contact Serve Stellenbosch for opportunities to take part in further training, equipping, and involvement opportunities.

It is very important to approach this course prayerfully. We are grateful for your willingness to lead this course, therefore, "we do not cease to give thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers, that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of him" Ephesians 1:16-17 (ESV).

Welcome

The course runs over 4 weeks:

Session 1: Introduction - Introducing the Foundations for Biblical Justice course and coming in prayer before God, especially acknowledging Him as a God of justice.

Session 2: God of Justice - Justice is an integral part of God's character.

Session 3: Life of Justice - Christians are called to live a life of justice.

Session 4: Living a Life of Justice before God - Application

Each week has a video available at <https://servestellenbosch.co.za/> and participants receive a Foundations for Biblical Justice booklet (physical copy/electronic copy). Leaders receive a Leader Guide for each session to help them prepare. Make sure you as leader also have a copy of the Group Study Guide booklet your group members use. This will enable you to align the content and questions as you prepare to present.

The questions, as in the Group Study Guide, are in a text box in your Leader Guide.

Welcome

In summary, here are some tips for leading this course:

1. Pray for this course and the participants.
2. Prepare for each session before you meet with your group. All the tools are found in the four Leader Guides. Align it with the Group Study Guide booklet.
3. At the end of each session there are some optional self-study suggestions for the group to do during the week. It will be helpful for your preparation to read through these before you present the session.
4. A 15-day devotional on a biblical response to justice is available at <https://www.commongood.org.za/resources/courses/foundations-for-justice/>. Encourage your participants to do this devotional during the week. In doing the devotional, participants will have an opportunity to engage with more Bible passages on biblical justice. It is user friendly for families with older children.
5. Possible answers for discussion questions are supplied in the Leader Guides. Write these in your own words in the spaces provided as you prepare.
6. Each session has a section called "Session at a Glance." Suggested time slots are provided to keep momentum and focus. People will tend to talk about applications but guide them to leave these discussions for session 4.
7. Communicate the suggested self-study after each session on your Whatsapp group.
8. Remind your group members every week to bring their Foundations for Biblical Justice booklet, pens, and Bibles.

For God's glory,

The Serve Stellenbosch Team

Sessions

01 Introduction

02 God of Justice

03 Life of Justice

04 Living a Life of Justice Before God

The purpose of this course is to highlight the foundations of Biblical Justice - what the Bible says, what God says and how it should be an important part of how Christians live their lives.



01 Introduction

BIG IDEA

Introducing the Foundations for Biblical Justice course and coming in prayer before God, especially acknowledging Him as a God of justice.

AIMS OF THE SESSION

1. Know that part of God's character is that He is a God of justice.
2. Spend time in prayer:
 - Ask God for a deeper understanding of the character of God.
 - Ask that God will grab and mold our hearts.
 - Ask that God will teach us as believers what it means to live out justice, to live out the call we see in Micah 6v8.
3. People will tend to talk about what the application of justice looks like but guide them to keep conversations focused on the session's big idea.

YOU WILL NEED THE FOLLOWING

1. Video: Foundation for Biblical Justice - Session 1 found at <https://servestellenbosch.co.za/>
2. Screen for video presentation.
3. Group Guide notes for each participant (paper or digital).
4. About an hour to an hour and a half to get through the session.
5. Blank papers and pens.

SESSION AT A GLANCE

Welcome and prayer	Introduction	Start thinking	Video and discussion	Text and discussion	Prayer
10-15 minutes	3 minutes	7 minutes	6+6 minutes	10 minutes	15-30 minutes

01 Introduction

WELCOME AND PRAYER

Before you start, you can do introductions, catch up with everyone in the group, share and pray for prayer requests. There will be a different prayer focus at the end so it is important to do this at the beginning.

INTRODUCTION

SAY: *In this new course we are going to focus on justice as a part of God's character. We will look at the Foundations of Biblical Justice. A biblical theology of justice helps us to understand God's heart for the poor and marginalized and our role as believers in "doing justice."*

This course is just an overview and not an in-depth study or equipping time. Opportunities for further engagement on the topic are available, and we will guide you to them if you want to know more.

Today is just an introduction to the course and an opportunity to come before the Lord in prayer to ask Him to teach and guide us on this topic.

START THINKING

1. Pairing and sharing: break up in smaller groups.
2. The groups get one minute to make a list of God's character traits - as many as they can think of.
3. The group with the most points can read their list to everyone out loud.

VIDEO & DISCUSSION

Watch the Video: Session 1

Encourage people to take notes as they watch the video.

ASK: *What stood out for you in the video?*

The hope is that people's interest will lead them to discover God more as a God of Justice, to discern what that means for them, to see the need for justice, and to be willing to pray about justice.

TEXT & DISCUSSION

Read Psalm 146

ASK: *What do you learn about God from this Psalm?*

Possible answers include:

- God deserves praise v1, 2
- God is worthy of our trust v3, 4
- Salvation is only in God v3
- He is the Creator v6
- He is faithful v 6
- God cares for the oppressed v7
- God is a God of justice v7
- God has power to do justice v7-9
- God reigns forever v10

PRAYER

If your group has more than 5 participants, break up into smaller groups of 2-4 people per group. Encourage people to ask God to

1. reveal His heart to us.
2. show us that He is a God of justice.
3. mold our hearts so we can live out the call of Michah 6:8 to do justice, love kindness, and walk humbly with our God.

Close with prayer, and mention the self-study options to the group that are listed in their handout.

SELF STUDY

- A Podcast by Tim Keller on the justice of God:
<http://podcast.gospelinlife.com/e/the-justice-of-god/>
- A 15 day devotional on a biblical response to justice: Download the 15-day participant's devotional for access to week 1:
<https://www.commongood.org.za/resources/courses/foundations-for-justice/>

BIG IDEA

Justice is an integral part of God's character.

AIMS OF THE SESSION

1. Know that part of God's character is that He is a God of justice as seen in the Old Testament and in the life of Jesus.
2. Know that every person bears the image of God and that the character of God at work in us should motivate us to love others and seek to live more justly.
3. People will tend to talk about what the application of justice looks like but guide them to keep conversations focused on the session's big idea.

YOU WILL NEED THE FOLLOWING

1. Video: Foundations for Biblical Justice - Session 2 found at <https://servestellenbosch.co.za/>.
2. Screen for video presentation
3. Group Guide notes for each participant (paper or digital)
4. About an hour to an hour and a half to get through the session

SESSION AT A GLANCE

Welcome and prayer	Start thinking	Video	Text and discussion	Prayer
5 -10 minutes	8 minutes	12 minutes	25 minutes	10 - 30 minutes

02 God of Justice

WELCOME AND PRAYER

Catch up with everyone in the group and open in prayer.

SAY: *Today we will look at justice as an integral part of God's character.*

ASK: *Does anyone have feedback from the homework?*

Keep it short.

START THINKING

SAY: *In today's session, we are going to see that justice is an integral part of God's character.*

ASK: *What do you think is the definition of justice?*

There is no need to come to a conclusion; acknowledge their answers, and jump into the video to save time.

VIDEO

- Watch the video: Session 2
- Encourage people to take notes as they watch the video.

TEXT & DISCUSSION

Read Psalm 146:5-9 and and Psalm 33:5

Psalm 146: 5 Blessed is he whose help is the God of Jacob, whose hope is in the Lord his God, 6 who made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, who keeps faith forever;7 who executes justice [mishpat] for the oppressed, who gives food to the hungry. The Lord sets the prisoners free;8 the Lord opens the eyes of the blind. The Lord lifts up those who are bowed down; the Lord loves the righteous [tzedakah]. (ESV)

Psalm 33:5 "The Lord loves righteousness [tzedakah] and justice [mishpat]; the earth is full of the steadfast love (or chesedh, pronounced "Heh-sed") of the LORD." (ESV)

ASK: Unpack the meaning of these three words. It will be helpful to think of/look for examples of how you see God display these character traits in the Old Testament, the New Testament and how God's heart for justice is displayed through Jesus.

Leader: At the end of the session is a video by The Bible Project on justice: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=A14THPoc4-4>. Watch this before your session in preparation for the discussion. Below are explanations of the words but try to write it in your own words before you meet as a group to make sure you as a leader have a good grasp of the concepts. If you have enough time, you can also show this video to your group when you meet (highly recommended!).

Possible answers include:

- MISHPAT

The Hebrew word, MISHPAT, translated as "justice." Tim Keller says "mishpat's most basic meaning is to treat people equitably. It means acquitting or punishing every person on the merits of the case, regardless of race or social status. Anyone who does the same wrong should be given the same penalty. But it means more than just the punishment of wrongdoing. It also means giving people their rights. Mishpat is giving people what they are due, whether punishment or protection or care."

MISHPAT has to do with retribution and restoration. In this sense, justice can mean paying the consequences of an action, or it can mean seeking out people who are vulnerable to injustice so that you can help them.

- TZEDAKAH

The Hebrew word TZEDAKAH (pronounced sed-ah-kah) is translated as “righteousness.” It has to do with reflecting God’s goodness and right relationships between people; people being treated with the dignity they deserve because they are created in the image of God. TZEDAKAH refers to daily living in which we conduct all of our relationships with fairness, generosity, and equity. If we are living in right relationship with God, we should be motivated to live in right relationship with the world around us.

- CHESEDH

The Hebrew word CHESEDH refers to God’s loyal love, mercy, and kindness. We bear the image of God who restores the vulnerable, who rights relationships, and who never stops loving us with grace and mercy.

- Old Testament

In the Old Testament we see God identify with poor and broken people through his words. For example, the Mosaic laws on tithing, gleaning, and the Year of Jubilee were to do justice and mercy to the poor. God punished injustice, the exile being a punishment for not observing the jubilee years.

- New Testament

In the New Testament, with the incarnation & death of Jesus we see God identifying with the poor and broken through his actions. We see believers in the early church, especially through the book of Acts, continuing to follow the example of Jesus in doing justice.

ASK: *When we think about who God is, do we usually think about Him in the way He is described in this video? Why or why not?*

- Conclusion:

We bear the image of God who restores the vulnerable, who rights relationships, and who never stops loving us with grace and mercy. This should shift our perspective of God in a big way! The character of God at work in us should cause us to strive for these very same things.

PRAYER

1. Mention the self study options to the group that are listed in their handout.
2. Close in prayer.

SELF STUDY

- A video by The Bible Project on Justice:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=A14THPoc4-4>

- A 15 day devotional on a biblical response to justice: Download the 15-day participant's devotional for access to week 2:

<https://www.commongood.org.za/resources/courses/foundations-for-justice/>

BIG IDEA

Christians are called to live a life of justice.

AIMS OF THE SESSION

1. Confirm what Scripture means by "justice."
2. Understand what living a life of justice looks like according to Scripture.
3. People will tend to talk about what the application of justice looks like, but guide them to keep conversations focused on the session's big idea. Application will be discussed in Session 4.

YOU WILL NEED THE FOLLOWING

1. Video: Life of Justice
2. Screen for video presentation
3. Group Guide notes for each participant (paper or digital)
4. About an hour to an hour and a half to get through the session

SESSION AT A GLANCE

Welcome and prayer	Video	Text and discussion	Prayer
5 -10 minutes	12 minutes	40 minutes	10-30 minutes

WELCOME AND PRAYER

- Catch up with everyone in the group and open in prayer.
- **SAY:** *Today we are going to see that Christians are called to live a life of justice.*
- **ASK:** *Does anyone have feedback from the homework?*

Keep it short.

VIDEO

- Watch the Video: Life of Justice
- Encourage people to take notes as they watch the video.

TEXT & DISCUSSION

- Read Romans 3:21-26

But now the righteousness of God has been manifested apart from the law, although the Law and the Prophets bear witness to it— 22 the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe. For there is no distinction: 23 for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, 24 and are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, 25 whom God put forward as a propitiation by his blood, to be received by faith. This was to show God's righteousness, because in his divine forbearance he had passed over former sins. 26 It was to show his righteousness at the present time, so that he might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus. (ESV)

ASK: *How has God demonstrated justice toward you?*

Possible answers include:

God is a God of justice and we humans are sinners: we have rebelled against God. He is justifiably angry at sinners and His righteous anger needed to be satisfied before sin could be forgiven. We are guilty sinners who deserve the punishment of sin. Sin cuts us off from our holy God and leads to death. Our guilt of sin puts us in a desperate, needy, and helpless state: nothing we do can save us from God's condemnation. We are weak and vulnerable.

God is also a God of love. After all this bad news of sin, Paul gives us wonderful news in Romans 3: There is a way to be declared not guilty - by trusting Jesus to take away our sins. In his mercy and grace, God sends Jesus and declares that his death pardons our sins and our guilty record is wiped clean. Jesus paid our penalty, we are justified which means we are declared righteous before God. Through faith in Jesus we can have a right standing before God. He has regarded my helpless estate and has shed His blood for my soul.

At the cross, God's justice and love meet.

If you want to read more on this topic in preparation for this session, read the following article: How Should We Talk About Justice and the Gospel?

<https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/article/how-should-we-talk-about-justice-and-the-gospel/>

Notes (leader, when you prepare, you can write above in your own words)

SAY: Micah 6:8 says: "He has told you, O man, what is good: and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness (or mercy), and to walk humbly with your God?" (ESV)

ASK: What does a life of justice look like? Read the following passages and look for principles for living a life of justice.

Leader, we are not looking at personal applications yet; this will happen in Session 4. If your group is quite big, you can break up into smaller groups for this question.

1. Jeremiah 22:3

"This is what the Lord says: Do what is just [mishpat] and right [tzedakah]. Rescue from the hand of his oppressor, the one who has been robbed. Do no wrong or violence to the immigrant, the fatherless, or the widow, and do not shed innocent blood in this place."

Notice in this passage that justice involves specifically:

- not wronging the immigrant, orphan, and widow—in other words, those who are vulnerable to oppression and who are often marginalized in society.
- a command to actively "rescue" someone from their "oppressor." This is an example of using power or influence to stop injustice from happening or to right a wrong on behalf of someone else.

2. Ezekiel 18:5-8

"Suppose there is a righteous man who does what is just [mishpat] and right [tzedakah]. He does not...oppress anyone, but returns what he took in pledge for a loan. He does not commit robbery but gives his food to the hungry and provides clothing for the naked. He does not lend at usury or take excessive interest."

In this example we see that “justice” according to God’s right standards includes:

- not doing wrong: for example, not oppressing someone, not denying justice to those who have grievances. Justice involves returning what was borrowed and not committing robbery.
- being proactive: according to both of these passages, key aspects of living justly include giving food to the hungry, providing clothing for the poor, not letting the vulnerable grow weary—in essence, not keeping our power and our resources for ourselves.

3. James 2: 13(b)-17

13 *“Mercy triumphs over judgment. 14 What good is it, my brothers, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can that faith save him? 15 If a brother or sister is poorly clothed and lacking daily food, 16 and one of you says to them, ‘Go in peace, be warmed and filled,’ without giving them the things needed for the body, what good is that? 17 So also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead.”*

James laid out clear teaching that as Christ-followers our faith should bear specific fruit. It should result in showing justice and mercy toward those in need around us. Caring for the poor and hurting and deeds of loving service are necessary results of our faith.

PRAYER

Close the prayers and mention the self study options to the group that are listed in their handout.

SELF STUDY

- The example of Jesus living justly as seen in the Gospels: see post at <https://www.commongood.org.za/blog/the-bible-justice-and-my-life/>
- A 15 day devotional on a biblical response to justice: Download the 15-day participant's devotional for access to week 3:
<https://www.commongood.org.za/resources/courses/foundations-for-justice/>
- In order to reflect on the implication of justice for your own life, complete Common Good's *Lifestyle Quiz*
<https://www.commongood.org.za/resources/courses/foundations-for-justice/>

LIFESTYLE QUIZ

LIFESTYLE STATEMENT	YES	NO	TO SOME EXTENT	GROWTH AREA
I have a good understanding of the biblical command to act justly.				
I have an understanding of the causes and extent of poverty, injustice, and division in South Africa.				
I seek to be informed about current issues in the country related to poverty, injustice, and division.				
I speak with God and seek his thinking on these matters.				
I seek opportunities to listen to the stories of people who are different to me, especially people of other race groups.				
I know what I spend my money on.				
I know how much money I have to give away.				
I pray about how I use my money and give as I feel prompted by the Holy Spirit.				
I regularly think and pray about people living in poverty and suffering injustice.				
I regularly give of my time and skills to help those living in poverty and suffering injustice.				
I look for opportunities at school/university/work/home to talk about issues relating to poverty and injustice and how we can respond.				
I am friends with someone different to me.				
I try not to use more than my share of the earth's resources.				
I am fully persuaded that responding to poverty and injustice is intrinsic to what it means to be a Christ-follower.				

BIG IDEA

God is calling us to live justly, love mercy and walk humbly before Him
- what does it look like in everyday life?

AIMS OF THE SESSION

- 1.To explore the motivation for a lifestyle response to biblical justice: what engaging in justice looks like in our everyday lives.
- 2.Group members will reflect and pray on how they can live a life of justice.

YOU WILL NEED THE FOLLOWING

- 1.Video: Foundation for Biblical Justice - Session 4 found at <https://servestellenbosch.co.za/>
- 2.Screen for video presentation
- 3.Group Guide notes for each participant (paper or digital)
- 4.About an hour to an hour and a half to get through the session

SESSION AT A GLANCE

Welcome and prayer	Start thinking	Video	Discussion	Reflection	Prayer
5 minutes	8 minutes	12 minutes	25 minutes	20 minutes	20 minutes

WELCOME AND PRAYER

- Catch up with everyone in the group and open in prayer.
- **SAY:** *Today we are looking at what God's call on us - to live justly, love mercy and walk humbly before Him, looks like in everyday life.*

START THINKING

ASK: *In one sentence, what has stood out to you from the course so far?*

- Session 1: Introduction - Introducing the Foundations for Biblical justice course and coming in prayer before God, especially acknowledging Him as a God of justice.
- Session 2: God of Justice - Justice is an integral part of God's character.
- Session 3: Life of Justice - Christians are called to live a life of justice.

VIDEO

- Watch the Video: Living a Life of Justice Before God.
- Encourage people to take notes as they watch the video.

DISCUSSION

ASK: *On what basis can Christians respond in mercy to humans in need?*

The answer is in the connection of living justly and what Jesus has done for us: Tim Keller said in his podcast (see homework Session 1):

"There are people who do care about justice, and then there are Christians because Christians look at the cross and that tells you two things. One is that the cross tells you that justice is so absolutely important that God could not set it aside, that even his son had to die on the cross to satisfy the demands of justice.

That means Christians no justice cannot be set aside. It's inviolable, God's justice is so important that Jesus had to die for us. But at the same time, we know we look at the cross that you and I were the perpetrators of injustice. And the greatest injustice is that we have not treated God as we should. That's the ultimate injustice. God gives us everything we live as if we belong to ourselves. It's a form of cosmic treason. God gave us everything and we lived as if we knew we belonged to ourselves. And God forgave us for that. The cross not only tells us justice is important, but it also tells us that you have been forgiven. And because you've been forgiven, and because you know that you were a perpetrator of injustice, and God forgave you, that sends you out into the world with a unique balance. On the one hand, justice is important. On the other hand, you'll be gracious. You'll be humbled. You'll be kind, you won't get haughty against the people who are indifferent or her perpetrators of injustice, you'll be insistent. You'll push. You see how different that is? The cross makes you care about justice, but it sends you out with a kind of merciful, gracious, humble attitude. If you learn how to praise and worship the God of justice, in life now in the light of the cross of Jesus Christ. See, there's the secret. How are you going to praise the God of justice? How are you going to adore the God of justice by looking at the Cross Oh, Lord, thank You that you're so just that you couldn't set it aside. Thank you that you're so just that you have created a people to go out and do justice. Thank you that you're so just that in the end, you're gonna make everything right. But thank you that your God is such a God of justice, and the God of love that you were willing to come and take our punishment yourself. Jesus Christ didn't come to bring God's vengeance, he came to bear it. And that if you let that get to the heart of your heart, will turn you into agents of justice in the world. Gracious agents of justice. How can we escape if we neglect so great salvation?"

ASK: How is God inviting you to more fully embrace a lifestyle of living justly?

If your group is very big, break up into smaller groups.

Below are the 4 lifestyles Robyn mentioned in the video with some questions to use if the group is struggling to stay on topic. Members can also reflect on the lifestyle quiz they did for homework in Session 3.

A Lifestyle of Awareness: Are we opening our eyes and hearts to what God is doing and what is going on in our town around us?

- Is God's voice in Scripture the loudest voice helping you interpret what is happening around you?
- Do you need to relearn the history of our town and of South Africa?
- Are you cultivating a posture of listening and looking to seek where God is working?

A Lifestyle of Reconciliation: Reconcile the relationship between God and people and between people and people.

- Are you making an effort to build relationships with others outside your normal circle who are different from you?

A Lifestyle of Generosity: Everything we have is God's and is a gracious gift to steward and manage to glorify God.

- Do you reflect on the generosity of Christ?
- Take stock of what you have - time, experiences, education, physical things, talents...
- Are you prayerful about this stock? I.e. pray about planning your week, how to spend your money etc.

Living a Life of Justice Before God

A Lifestyle of Influence: Connections, opportunities and the influence we have on others.

- Consider where God has placed you.
- How can we bring God's influence into these places?

REFLECTION

SAY: *Take a moment now to reflect on what God has been saying to you throughout this journey and write it down. (Allow ± 2 mins)*

ASK: *What 2 or 3 things is God inviting you to change or participate in?*

Pair and share.

ASK: *Ask everyone to share this awareness/invitation in one sentence only.*

This question is optional if you have time left. Do this in the big group.

PRAYER

Break up in groups of 2 or 3.

Some suggested prayer points:

- Pray for each other - that what God has started he would complete.
- Pray for social justice to be lived in your small group, congregation, and community.

Close the prayers.

Mention to the group the self-study options that are listed in their handout. The focus now at the end of the course is on digging deeper and getting involved.

SELF STUDY

- If you want to go deeper on the topic of biblical justice, visit the Serve Stellenbosch website at <https://servestellenbosch.co.za/resources-2/> for more resources.
- Contact Serve Stellenbosch via the website if you feel called to get involved in a specific area.
- Continue to pray and reflect on Psalm 146 and on what God has placed on your heart concerning justice.



SEEK JUSTICE | LOVE MERCY | WALK HUMBLY