

The Next Time You Want to Scream, 'That's Not Fair!'

Come on. Admit it! We've all shouted this phrase at God at one time or another, right?

I've just finished Bob Goff's new book *Everybody, Always*. It's fabulous! One of the most profound comments in the book caught my attention, and I've been mulling it over in my mind. Goff writes, "I don't want what's fair anymore. I want to be like Jesus. It's a distinction worth making."

As humans, we all want life to be fair. We want the bad guys to get what they deserve, and we want the good guys to thrive. When we see someone who is doing great financially—while we struggle financially—we churn inside. When someone gets the promotion at work, we feel we deserve, we chafe inwardly.

Jesus understood us oh so well. In fact, He told a story for all of us who want life to be fair. You can read it in Matthew 20:1-16. Basically, a landowner hires a bunch of workers for his vineyard. He hires some early in the morning, some at noon, some late in the afternoon and some just before closing up the vineyard for the night. Everyone lines up to be paid, and to their utter shock and horror, everyone is paid the same. You can imagine the picket lines and the phone calls being made to the union—it's just not fair! But then, the landowner says, "Don't I have the right to do what I want with my own money? Or are you envious because I'm generous?" (see Matt. 20:15).

Here's the thing: Grace isn't fair. If it was—frankly, we'd all be on our way to hell.

So what do you do the next time you feel tempted to scream, "That's not fair!"?

3 Suggestions

1. Shift your focus to the giver of the gifts rather than the gifts themselves.

Whenever I find myself tempted to complain that life's not fair, I know I need to shift my focus. I need to be recaptured by Jesus. If Jesus never gave me another thing, what I have in Him is enough. Every person will have a different measure of suffering and favor. Jesus never said that in His kingdom life would be fair. It's His right to lift one up and humble another. All we have and all we are, He owns. We've been bought with a price (1 Cor. 6:20). Instead of grumbling about the unfairness of life, make a list of all the beautiful characteristics of Jesus, and then spend some time worshipping Him.

2. Stop comparing.

Don't allow yourself the luxury of comparing your lot in life to another's. It's my conviction that we have to be ruthless with ourselves in the area of comparison. Don't compare your kids to someone else's kids. Don't compare your salary to the salary of another. Don't compare your body to someone else's body. Don't compare your spouse to someone else's spouse. Don't compare your home to the home of another. Just stop. Comparing leads you down a path of discontentment. What God has done in your life is beautiful; simply celebrate that.

3. Start a thankful list and keep it going until you're overflowing with gratitude.

The people I've met who are the most fun and joy-filled are the people who are overflowing with gratitude. I've met some people from around the world who are living in poverty, but they shine with thankfulness because they are cultivating a heart of gratitude. That's the way I want to be, but I have to keep asking Jesus to change me. Want to join me?

“Lord, help me not to obsess over things being fair. Help me to be more and more obsessed with Jesus. And as my obsession for Jesus grows, help me to become more like Him. Create in me a heart of contentment and gratitude.” {eoa}

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