

Social Justice Isn't Just a Leftist Talking Point—It Comes Straight From the Bible

We live in a world which increasingly focuses on social justice. We hear about it on television. It has become a regular topic of politicians. It has even become a major fixture on sports and sporting events. This is not just a good thing it is a great thing. Social justice is something every Bible believer, no matter what persuasion they are, should not only be thinking about but should be actively supporting and promoting.

Social justice is not something newly thought of by the socially aware minds of today, it is what the Bible teaches us from Genesis through Revelation. For instance, in Deuteronomy 16:20 we read

“Justice, justice you must pursue, so that you may live and possess the land that Adonai your God is giving you” (Deut. 16:20, TLV).

Another example is Psalms 99:4: “The might of a king loves justice. You have established fairness. You executed justice and righteousness in Jacob.”

Also in Isaiah 56:1: “Thus says Adonai: ‘Preserve justice, do righteousness. For My salvation is about to come, and My righteousness to be revealed.’”

These are just three of the many verses in the Bible proclaiming justice as something that should be sought after as followers of the Scriptures. Social justice is a major theme of both the Old and New Testament writings and should be central to anyone who claims to build their faith on the Word of G-D.

The question or issue for believers is not and should not be are we for social justice it should only be, "what is social justice?". The problem is seeking social justice from a biblical perspective is understand first what the Bible says about justice. The Hebrew word translated "justice" in Deuteronomy is the word *Tzedek* which means righteousness in Isaiah 56 and Psalms 99 the Hebrew word translated Justice is *Mishpat*, which means "judge" or "judgment."

Notice that in one case, justice is connected to righteousness or right action, and in the other case, it is connected to judgment. So biblically, justice is not simply tolerating bad behavior and providing resources that enable or even encourage unrighteous behavior. True social justice involved judgment or judging. I know today in many religious groups, judging is considered a bad thing. I cannot tell you how often I hear "Judge not that you be not judged" quoted out of context as if we as believers should never judge someone for failing to live their lives according to biblical expectations. The truth, however, is that we have been called to be judges. If we as the body of Messiah really took up the biblically commanded form of social justice we would become active in judging sin and through that judgment we would seek to help change sinful behavior and by doing so we would preach the righteousness of G-D and truly become the light to the world we are supposed to be.

Through biblical social justice, we would impact our world with righteous justice, which would both help elevate the lives of those who are downtrodden and speak strongly against the abuse of power by those in authority. True social justice judges all of those falling short of the expectations of G-D without respect of persons or unequal weights or measures. We are not to judge by our own thoughts, feelings or emotions, but we are commanded to judge using the only plumbline that allows true justice: the Bible itself.

The bottom line is that those of us who are believers in

Yeshua (Jesus) and claim to follow the precepts of the Bible should be at the front of the line crying out for social justice. We just need to explain better what the Bible calls justice. Real justice requires us to both judge sin and it requires to do all we can to make sure all people receive equal justice. {eoa}

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