

EXTRAORDINARY
ORDINARY

turn
HOW TO ~~CONQUER~~
THE WORLD
upside down

TONY MERIDA

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HOW TO USE THIS STUDY

Each session will contain the following format:

OPEN: Begin your time by watching a teaching video led by Tony that will introduce the topic for each session. Watching this together and taking notes will enrich your discussion and may provide additional insight into the session's discussion questions.

You'll then transition into the group time with icebreakers, further introducing the topic you'll be discussing over the next week.

DISCUSS AND APPLY: These times are designed to build on the lessons taught in the video by looking at additional passages of Scripture and applying them to your own life situation. This works best when you work through the questions individually before gathering together.

Come into the discussion ready to share what God showed you in your own study. If you're stumped on a question, you can look forward to asking for insight from group members during your time together.

ACTION: For each group time, we've provided more practical steps to help your group encourage one another to put into action what you've learned from God's Word. These pages along with the individual study portion provide an opportunity to solidify your move toward living a life of everyday, ordinary justice.

This section will also give you a more detailed look into the Individual Study to come and a prayer guide as you close your time together.

INDIVIDUAL STUDY: More in-depth study for each session is provided for your personal study time. Take time to read and interact with this section as you meet with God for the first few days following your group time. The topics will address concepts you've just studied with your group, encouraging you to read additional Scripture passages and answer some questions. The Moving Toward Action section will solidify your action steps toward justice.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Tony Merida is the founding pastor of Imago Dei Church in Raleigh, NC. He also serves as the Associate Professor of Preaching at Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary. Tony and his wife, Kimberly, have five adopted children—Angela, Jana, Victoria, James, and Joshua.

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Tony is the author of *Ordinary* and *Faithful Preaching*, and a coauthor of *Orphanology*. Also, along with David Platt and Danny Akin, Tony serves as a general editor and as contributor for a commentary series with B&H Publishing Group entitled *Christ-Centered Exposition*.

Find out more about Tony online at tonymerida.net.

SESSION 1

EVERYDAY JUSTICE:

TRADING SENSATIONALISM FOR
ORDINARY CHRISTIANITY

View the Session 1 video as a group and then dive into the discussion guide below.

OPEN

If this is your first experience as a small-group community, take time for brief introductions. As an icebreaker, consider sharing how each member came to be a part of your group.

Defining Christianity is different from defining a Christian. One depicts a movement. The other describes a person. Engage the following activity as a group. First, read the following question and have your group either text in their answer to the leader or write responses on a notecard and pass it anonymously to the leader.

What are the markers of a super Christian?

Next, the group leader should read each response one at a time. Have group members vote on who they think each answer belongs to. Group members will earn one point for every correct guess they make. They will lose one point for each person who correctly guesses their response. Have fun!

Were there common threads among some of the answers?

Was there a specific outlier that you hadn't considered before?

Each of us likely has a picture in our minds of what we think supreme faith and followership of Jesus is supposed to look like. That picture may make you uncomfortable or may feel like an unattainable goal when it comes to spiritual growth. Maybe you're nervous praying out loud. Maybe Sunday morning handshakes send your germaphobic tendencies into orbit. Maybe raising your hands in worship feels awkward. Maybe the subject of missions doesn't make you tingly and the thought of traveling overseas doesn't whet your spiritual appetite. Hard truth: each of these things is connected to an outward display of religion and isn't necessarily an indication of a deep relationship with God. James wrote that justice—specifically for orphans and widows—is the purest portrayal of right religion (see Jas. 1:27).

GROUP

DISCUSS

Discuss the following bullet points.

- Define justice.
- Identify specific needs or people groups in need within your context.
- Discuss ways your church engages hurting people in your community.

Does a discussion about real justice scare you? Why or why not?

What are things you believe God might call you to do that you feel personally unprepared for, are unwilling to do, or are undeserving of your attention?

It was true then and it's true now. The most vulnerable people are those with no one to love or care for them. Kids without parents and women mourning loss are among the most at-risk people in our world today. They often suffer from poverty, sickness, and even abuse. It's those very people whom Scripture commands we reach out to. James wasn't offering his audience something new as a matter of their worship practice. He's reminding them of something very old, the heart of God as described by God's Word.

¹² I delivered the poor who cried for help, and the fatherless who had none to help him. ¹³ The blessing of him who was about to perish came upon me, and I caused the widow's heart to sing for joy. ¹⁴ I put on righteousness, and it clothed me; my justice was like a robe and a turban.

¹⁵ I was eyes to the blind and feet to the lame. ¹⁶ I was a father to the needy, and I searched out the cause of him whom I did not know.

JOB 29:12-16, ESV

Who are the vulnerable people in need listed in this passage?

Job refers to justice as a robe and turban that he puts on. Job is saying that he wears justice. He puts it on everyday. He lives with a social consciousness. The vulnerable are always on his mind and in his heart. His lifestyle reflects the character of God. Plainly put, it was obvious and easy to spot the kind of man Job was.

Do you feel the kind of life Job described is an attainable goal for you? Explain.

Spiritual maturity isn't just something you do with your mind. It's about how you live your life. One of the saddest indications of failure in the area of justice and mercy is our description of those who excel in doing justice. We describe them as radical, extraordinary. Yet as we read the Bible together, we find that it treats issues of mercy and justice as anything but extraordinary. Frankly, doing justice is just a normal part of the Christian life. It's really easy to become part of a super-Christian subculture, comfortably embracing sensationalism. You can listen to Christian music, keep up with the latest Christian podcasts, and read Christian authors. You can engage in multiple Bible studies and serve on ministry teams, all the while never actually touching one of Scripture's defining characteristics of God-honoring faith: justice.

Close your group time by reading Micah 6:8 aloud together.

*Mankind, He has told you what is good
and what it is the LORD requires of you:
to act justly,
to love faithfulness,
and to walk humbly with your God.*

This journey will expose what ordinary justice looks like and invite you to become who God created you to be in Christ. It will challenge you to follow Jesus daily and become what Job described as "eyes for the blind and feet to the lame" (Job 29:15). Maybe that's what we mean when we say we hope to be the hands and feet of Christ.

What are opportunities you have had to step up and be Christ to people in need?

APPLY

Knowing is really only half the battle. The other half is doing. As a group, commit to the following opportunities that lie ahead.

- Make Micah 6:8 your life verse for the next few weeks. Commit it to memory as you embark on this important journey of making ordinary faith a reality in your life.
- Commit to the activities outlined in each of the Action pages over the weeks ahead. The Action pages of this guide along with the individual study portion provide an opportunity to solidify your move toward living a life of everyday, ordinary justice. It's a chance to look at your wardrobe and make sure you are clothed in God's justice.

ACTION

SYMPATHY IS NO SUBSTITUTE FOR ACTION.

As a group, take time to discuss your typical weekly schedules. There are no bonus points for the busiest group members. Just be honest about where you steward your time each week:

- **Amount of time you spend at work or in class**
- **Amount of time you spend recreationally and socially**
- **Amount of time you spend in prayer, Bible study, and corporate worship experiences**
- **Amount of time remaining**

Considering the time you have, is there anything in your life that can be cut or recrafted to allow for more missional margin? While it is important to reprioritize and rebudget your schedule from time to time, that's really a peripheral purpose to this study.

Ordinary justice isn't about adding another thing to an already tight schedule. It's about leveraging the everyday moments of normal life and daily routine to offer Christlike hope to the world.

Talk about ways you can be mindful of justice in each of following areas of life:

- **Work/class**
- **Recreationally/Socially**
- **Worship/Bible Study**
- **Other**

Becoming an ordinary Christian won't happen overnight, so take small steps. And it won't be a solo endeavor either. Seek out two or three people in your group to be more intentional with. You may even want to ask someone not doing this study to come along on this journey with you. Commit to pray for them daily and meet with them weekly to discuss what you are learning as part of this Bible study experience.

Finally, revisit your list of local needs (the one you composed with your group as part of the discussion on page 8). Store that list in your phone. Make it your desktop background on your computer. Just make sure it's in a prominent place where you will see it regularly.

INDIVIDUAL STUDY OVERVIEW

When was your last vacation? Vacations are a chance to refuel and refocus on what is important. Planned well, vacations can be like Sabbath. Consider this individual study to be a bit like a vacation. The moments you dedicate to this individual study time can provide the quiet you need in your life to hear the voice of God. These personal moments can offer you the necessary distance from daily life to gain Godly perspective and make intentional steps toward Christlike living.

This week's individual study examines key Old Testament passages with which James' Jewish audience would have been familiar. The idea of justice for vulnerable people was not new to them, but one that had been ignored. James' cry was for followers of Christ to bear fruit consistent with Christ. That is our hope as well—that our lives would look ever more like Christ, that intensely following Him would be our everyday, ordinary, way of life.

PRAY

Ask God to reveal spiritual blind spots in the lives of group members that may be keeping them from seeing where Christ is leading. Ask the Holy Spirit to guide and direct each member toward opportunities that expand perspective and invite action.

ORDINARY
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WORLD.

DOING JUSTICE IS JUST A NORMAL PART OF THE CHRISTIAN LIFE. ORDINARY PEOPLE, DOING ORDINARY THINGS, TURNING THE WORLD UPSIDE DOWN.

SELECTIVE SCRIPTURING

Christlikeness should be commonplace for the Christian, right? It depends on a person's definition of Christlikeness and the sources from which their description is drawn. Thomas Jefferson created his own version of Scripture by carefully cutting passages from his copy of the New Testament and pasting them into his own account. Largely committed to the specific moral teachings of Jesus, Jefferson omitted sections pertaining to miracles and occurrences that argued against reason.

Before you speak ill of the deceased or berate Jefferson for picking and choosing which parts of the biblical text mattered and which parts didn't, take a look in the mirror. Aren't many of the problems we face today in part because of our own proclivity to follow what we like from Scripture and conveniently ignore what we don't?

Are there parts of Scripture or even the Christian life in general you find difficult? List them below.

Selective Scripture reading isn't a product of the American Revolution or our own post-modern landscape. Look at the challenges facing Jesus:

⁶⁰ When many of His disciples heard this, they said, "This teaching is hard! Who can accept it?" ⁶⁶ From that moment many of His disciples turned back and no longer accompanied Him.

JOHN 6:60,66

⁴² Nevertheless, many did believe in Him even among the rulers, but because of the Pharisees they did not confess Him, so they would not be banned from the synagogue. ⁴³ For they loved praise from men more than praise from God.

JOHN 12:42-43

Jesus experienced attrition in His earthly ministry. At some point, the teaching became too difficult or the cost became too great.

Compose a list of common characteristics of following Jesus.

Of those items on your list, which are perceived as difficult or sacrificial? Why?

For many in the Gospel narratives, following Jesus was costly. Nicodemus sought Jesus in the middle of the night because of his status as a Pharisee (see John 3). A scribe sought to follow Jesus but was alerted to the truth of having no home. Still another came, but learned it would be at the expense of his family (see Matt. 8:18-22). Jesus also explained to His followers that carrying a cross would eventually be the path of discipleship (see Matt. 16:24). The promise of an easy, consequence-free life for the Christ-follower is non-existent. In fact, we're told that we'll be hated for the cause of Christ (see Matt. 10:22). A quick summary statement for Christianity might be: *Becoming a Christian is easy. Being a Christ-follower is hard. The former requires only faith. The latter? Everything else.*

That could even be utilized as a warning label: "Enter at your own risk." Following Jesus does mean hard teaching. A Christlike understanding of justice is no exception.

Read Matthew 23:14,23-24. What are some of your observations from this passage?

To be a Pharisee, according to Jesus, was to be categorized as someone who didn't practice what he preached. Hypocrites. Liars. Oppressors. According to Matthew 23:4, the burden of religion imposed by the Pharisees was heavy. It was extra-biblical legalism that didn't matter. They ignored important commands of God like justice, mercy, and faith but pressed hard on hand-washing, public prayers, and careful tithing. Consider the matters of spirituality, religion, or worship that take up space in your life. Are they the things that God desires or that tradition imposes?

Can you think of things that tradition has etched on your mind but may not really reflect God's heart and will for your life? Journal your thoughts below.

LOWEST COMMON DENOMINATOR

In math, fractions represent parts of a whole. The challenge for any young mathematician is finding what's known as the lowest or least common denominator. That's the number of which both the numerators in the fraction are multiples.

$$1/2 = 3/6 = 6/12 = 12/24$$

The goal of finding the lowest common denominator or least common multiple is the ability to add, subtract, and manipulate fractions. Without finding the least common denominator for the bottom half of a fraction, you can't easily determine that $\frac{1}{2} + \frac{1}{4} = \frac{3}{4}$ or much of anything else related to parts of a whole.

In following Christ, many of us seem to be searching for the lowest common denominator. What's the lowest hanging fruit when it comes to our connection with other believers in our churches? Is it knowing and being able to recite what's commonly called The Lord's Prayer? Is it average church attendance? Small-group participation? Tithing? Singing songs? Celebrating Christmas or Easter?

Perhaps you're accustomed to a community of faith where common, ordinary believers participate in church life but missions and sacrificial living are reserved for an elite group of called Christians like pastors and missionaries.

The call of the ordinary Christian is to understand that the burden of Christ and the responsibility for the least, last, and lost of the world isn't issued to a few elite, extraordinary Christians. It's the command for all believers in Jesus.

With regard to a least common denominator, we would be better suited to look for the highest possible calling.

You already spent time as a group considering markers of "super Christianity." Now, name a few bare minimum common denominators of what it means to follow Christ. In other words, what are the most basic actions that should be true of all believers?

Religion that pleases God the Father must be pure and spotless. You must help needy orphans and widows and not let this world make you evil.

JAMES 1:27, CEV

Do your lowest common denominators of Christianity make our Father happy? The prophet Amos had something to say about that to the people of Israel:

²¹ I hate, I despise your feasts!

*I can't stand the stench
of your solemn assemblies.*

*²² Even if you offer Me
your burnt offerings and grain offerings,*

I will not accept them;

*I will have no regard
for your fellowship offerings of fattened cattle.*

*²³ Take away from Me the noise of your songs!
I will not listen to the music of your harps.*

*²⁴ But let justice flow like water,
and righteousness, like an unfailing stream.*

AMOS 5:21-24

James was right. Religion that God accepts isn't ceremony and ritual, in spite of the prescriptions He gave Israel for those very practices. The religion God accepts is the religion of the heart. It's the religion of loving people the way He loves them.

Amos wasn't suggesting that they no longer participate in traditional worship gatherings or practices. James never suggested that we stop gathering, singing, studying, or praying. However, both prophetic voices are asserting that without justice those worship practices don't matter.

Jesus seemed to be in agreement in His words to the Pharisees:

*²³ Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! You pay a tenth of mint, dill,
and cumin, yet you have neglected the more important matters of the law—
justice, mercy, and faith. These things should have been done without neglecting
the others. ²⁴ Blind guides! You strain out a gnat, yet gulp down a camel!*

MATTHEW 23:23-24

The Pharisees of Jesus' day were the class of professional Jews. Yet, Jesus admonished them because of their hypocrisy. Their hearts didn't match their heads. Their words weren't authenticated by compassionate lives. For Jesus, it wasn't either/or. It was both/and.

Searching for the lowest common denominator in matters of faith is like looking for the easiest way to get by with the least amount of effort. In our pursuit of Christ, "getting by" can't be the goal. Honoring God must be the supreme aim.

Pause now and offer God a heartfelt prayer of commitment. Commit to God your desire to give Him your best, rather than your least.

GOD-SIZED CARE

One of the ways we administer justice is the manner in which we administer justice to the world. We do it best by illustrating God-sized care for the world in need.

Job knew a bit about God's blessing. Why? Because he had it and then lost it. Think back to the leanest moment of your life. Was it the efficiency apartment you had in college? Was it a pantry full of ramen noodles? Was it your first year as a married couple trying to navigate new jobs and new budgets? Was it when your company had corporate layoffs? One of the best ways to appreciate stability and provision is to live in a season where both of those blessings are up in the air.

Describe your leanest moment in life so far.

RELIGION THAT
PLEASES GOD
THE FATHER
MUST BE PURE
AND SPOTLESS.
YOU MUST
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YOU EVIL.

JAMES 1:27, CEV

Satan, the accuser, was certain that if God removed Job's financial means, family status, and personal health, Job would deny God (see Job 1:11; 2:5). So God allowed it all, and Job didn't blame or deny Him (see Job 1:22; 2:10). Job understood that God's name was to be praised when He gave and also when He took away (see Job 1:21).

Later in the poetic piece we know as the Book of Job, readers uncover these words defining justice. It really is a God-sized care passage.

¹⁶ *If I have refused the wishes of the poor
or let the widow's eyes go blind,
¹⁷ if I have eaten my few crumbs alone
without letting the fatherless eat any of it—
¹⁸ for from my youth, I raised him as his father,
and since the day I was born I guided the widow—
¹⁹ if I have seen anyone dying for lack of clothing
or a needy person without a cloak,
²⁰ if he did not bless me
while warming himself with the fleece from my sheep,
²¹ if I ever cast my vote against a fatherless child
when I saw that I had support in the city gate,
²² then let my shoulder blade fall from my back,
and my arm be pulled from its socket.*

JOB 31:16-22

Job was becoming more aggressive in his attempt to clear his name. His contemporaries presumed that Job's predicament came as the result of disobedient or unjust living (see Job 22:4-11). Although the context for this passage is more closely tied to why suffering exists and whether or not sin leads to loss, it's also an easy passage to glean proper definitions concerning Godly compassion.

Name the vulnerable people outlined by Job's testimony in this passage.

**Underline the specific needs mentioned by Job in this response.
How seriously did Job seem to take the responsibility to care for
people in these points of need?**

How do you come in contact with any or all of these in your everyday life?

Briefly describe the ways you see the church responding to needs of the following:

1. The world

2. Your local church body

3. The worldwide body of Christ, internationally and interdenominationally

One reason God-sized care may not be part of your ordinary Christian life is that you're insulated from the God-sized problems of the world. You can likely name a famous pastor or Christian artist/musician. But can you name an orphan? You're probably familiar with the writings of C.S. Lewis. But are you familiar with the location of the highest concentration of homeless people in your community?

The problem with ...

- the trafficked orphan girl in Moldova,
- the HIV-positive single mom in Sub-Saharan Africa,
- the child soldier in Sierra Leone,
- and the family with no food or clean water in Honduras,

... is that they don't live next door.

We can dismiss them as distant problems rather than see them as neighbors in need. What we don't see or experience, we can compartmentalize and ignore. Ultimately, it's a misinterpretation of a children's Sunday school lesson—the Good Samaritan (see Luke 10:25-37). In response to an expert interview, Jesus taught us that everyone is a neighbor. Through the parable, Jesus instructs us to be aware of people's needs. Because the injured party was ignored by the very people who should have easily integrated the law into their lives (a priest and a Levite) and was finally cared for by a Samaritan (arch enemies of the Jews), the story struck a chord.

Do you find it easy to become impassioned for the cause of global justice or easy to ignore? What about local justice?

What parts of your schedule can put justice in the back seat of your life?

Are there people who model “Good Samaritanship” in your life? Who stands out and why?

We also live in the age of non-profit professionalization. There are amazing agencies performing incredible acts of relief in the world. Outside of all the international legalities, there is a key benefit of supporting such agencies. Pooling the resources of many people can make a much larger impact. There’s also a key downside. Debiting \$30 a month to feed a child in the developing world is fantastic. It’s also really low involvement. It doesn’t have to translate into a life that sees and meets needs in a personal, hands-on way. It can offer an “out” when it comes to getting dirty, building relationships, and physically meeting a person’s needs.

Also, the invitation to share God’s passion for people isn’t just about taking trips around the world. It’s about being aware of needs in your own community.

Take a moment to pray and ask God to open your eyes to various needs and to pour Himself and His God-sized ability to care into your heart.

REDEMPTION AND RESTORATION

When we were slaves to sin, God freed us. When we were orphans with no hope, He adopted us. When we were sojourners with no home, He welcomed us. When we were widows, His Son became our groom. God’s mercy and justice flow from the cross. That’s where we meet God and have redemption.

In an effort to communicate salvation and teach about the coming kingdom, Jesus offered a series of references to the types of people who would inherit eternal life. Wise virgins, faithful servants, and ministry-minded sheep (see Matt. 25).

Read Matthew 25:21-46 from your Bible and then focus in on verses 34-36 printed below.

³⁴ Then the King will say to those on His right, "Come, you who are blessed by My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.

*³⁵ For I was hungry
and you gave Me something to eat;
I was thirsty
and you gave Me something to drink;
I was a stranger and you took Me in;
³⁶ I was naked and you clothed Me;
I was sick and you took care of Me;
I was in prison and you visited Me."*

MATTHEW 25:34-36

Ultimately, Jesus gave us His own life as bread (see John 6:35) that will always make us full and water that will always quench our thirst (see John 4:14). Jesus' blood afforded us forgiveness, which leads to adoption and, ultimately, purpose. He made us His own and He is the very essence of our lives (see Col. 3:4).

It's odd to think that we could feed, clothe, welcome, nurture, visit, etc. the maker of all things. Jesus asserts that when we meet the needs of someone considered least, we're offering it unto Him (see Matt. 25:40).

Describe a time when you felt like "one of the least of these" in your own life.

Did someone step up and meet a need? In what way? How did you feel?

Consider any "least of these" situations that might be present in your circle of influence right now. How can you step up and meet a need in your current community (food, clothing, care, attention)?

Read the following verses from Ephesians and respond to the question that follows:

⁷ We have redemption in Him through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of His grace ⁸ that He lavished on us with all wisdom and understanding.

EPHESIANS 1:7-8

How is Christ's blood related to redemption?

In this Ephesians passage, Paul writes about redemption through the blood of Jesus. What he means is ransom money paid to God for the release of a person's debt. That debt is caused by sin. And it's a debt none of us could ever afford on our own.

It's through Christ that we have redemption. Christ lived the perfect life of righteousness that we could never live and then died the death that we deserved to die. Through His sacrifice, our lives are redeemed and made righteous before God. Because of the power of Jesus now alive in us, we too can live out the righteousness and justice of God. It's our right response to the forgiveness we've been given. Here's how Timothy Keller put it:

If a person has grasped the meaning of God's grace in his heart, he will do justice. If he doesn't live justly, then he may say with his lips that he is grateful for God's grace, but in his heart he is far from him. If he doesn't care about the poor, it reveals that at best he doesn't understand the grace he has experienced, and at worst he has not really encountered the saving mercy of God. Grace should make you just.¹

An irresponsible reading of Matthew 25 might lead someone to believe that we earn a place in God's kingdom through justice-wielding good works. Feeding the hungry. Clothing the naked. Tending the sick. Visiting the lonely. Earning God's favor. God's grace is still present in this passage. After all, the sheep are inheriting the kingdom that has been "prepared for them from the foundation of the world" (v. 34). That's a clear indicator of God's grace. It's His generosity that affords us His kingdom. The truth is that the works indicated by Jesus in this parable are in response to the grace already received.

BECAUSE OF THE
POWER OF JESUS
NOW ALIVE IN
US, WE TOO CAN
LIVE OUT THE
RIGHTEOUSNESS
AND JUSTICE
OF GOD. IT'S
OUR RIGHT
RESPONSE TO THE
FORGIVENESS
WE'VE BEEN GIVEN.

How have you seen God's grace alive in your life?

How have you experienced His providential hand of blessing? Be specific.

One day Christ will return and His kingdom will be restored. There will no longer be a need for justice because there will no longer be a "least of these" part of the population in need of it. Being a justice-minded Christ-follower today is about demonstrating Christ's future reality in your present context.

How does doing unto "the least of these" communicate Christ to people?

Have you ever experienced someone come to faith in Christ in the context of a Matthew 25 moment (i.e. being fed, clothed, cared for, loved, etc.)? Explain.

How is meeting the demands of justice a good front door to share the gospel message of Jesus?

How do you perceive a healthy perspective on justice to be related to God's plan of redemption?

MOVING TOWARD ACTION

Each week your individual study will include a final section called, “Moving Toward Action.” Use this final section to solidify your action steps toward justice. Remember, the idea of being a justice-minded Christ-follower isn’t a pressure to add another item to your daily to-do list. It’s an opportunity to infuse more Christlikeness into who you already are.

In Matthew 7:24-28, Jesus described two types of builders—wise and foolish. Wise men build houses on solid foundations. Foolish men don’t. Connecting the dots, Jesus explained that anyone who hears His words and puts them into action is like a wise builder. Those who hear His words and ignore them might as well construct a house on sand. Both homes will face storms, but only one will remain standing. The same is true in the lives of people. We will all face incredible odds. But only wise listeners will stand strong.

When it comes to God’s Word, application is essential. A fool can know God’s Word inside and out, but if he doesn’t heed it, he remains a fool. Engaging a Bible study like this and not being moved to action is the mark of a foolish builder. Wisdom calls you to practice this portion of your faith. That said, how will ordinary justice make its way into your skin and out through your hands and feet?

Justice is often viewed as an “extra credit option,” a “distraction,” or something to ignore all together. But those who have a high view of God, His Word, and justification by faith should be leading the way in administering God’s justice to the world.

Set three goals regarding missional living this week. How can you infuse justice into your everyday life? Categorize them by seeing, hearing, and doing.

Seeing

Hearing

Doing

Hearing and listening can be interchangeably used in some cases, but not all. Hearing can be simple observation. Listening means letting something really sink in. Revisit some of the Scriptures you have studied this week. In the space provided, write a one-sentence summary or action step based on that particular passage.

James 1:27

Matthew 23:14,23-24

Amos 5:21-24

Job 31:16-22

Luke 10:25-37

Choose one of the needs you have noticed in your local community and meet it. Make it something you can realistically tackle this week. The point is to exercise God's call *on* your life to let justice flow *out* of your life.

List your goals for meeting this need.

When you have met this need, journal your experience here.

PRAYER

As a matter of prayer this week, make your own humble confession before God.

- In what ways have you ignored the commands in His Word?
- In what ways have you ignored the needs of the world?
- In what ways do you hope to better integrate His Word into your ordinary life, thereby, better illustrating Him to the world?
- Ask God to open your eyes and ears to see needs.
- Ask Him to give you a heart of compassion to actively pursue ways to meet the needs He reveals.

MANKIND,
HE HAS TOLD
YOU WHAT
IS GOOD
AND WHAT
IT IS THE
LORD REQUIRES
OF YOU:
TO ACT JUSTLY,
TO LOVE
FAITHFULNESS,
AND TO WALK
HUMBLY WITH
YOUR GOD.

MICAH 6:8

1. Timothy Keller, *Generous Justice: How God's Grace Makes Us Just* (New York: Riverhead Books, 2010), 68.