



DISCUSSION GUIDE APRIL 18, 2021

Dive In

Go around and let everyone answer...

Fill in your own answers to this quote from 13th century theologian Thomas Aquinas: "Mercy without justice is _____; justice without mercy is _____."

Dig Deep

Read Scripture: Deuteronomy 16:18-20

18 Appoint judges and officials for each of your tribes in every town the LORD your God is giving you, and they shall judge the people fairly. **19** Do not pervert justice or show partiality. Do not accept a bribe, for a bribe blinds the eyes of the wise and twists the words of the innocent. **20** Follow justice and justice alone, so that you may live and possess the land the LORD your God is giving you.

- Who would protect the people of Israel and enforce God's law? Why is this important as each of the tribes begin to live in their assigned territory? (16:18)
- What warning is given in verse 19 and why is this significant?
- What is the goal set before the Israelites in verse 20?
- What are some godly characteristics of a just and righteous judge?

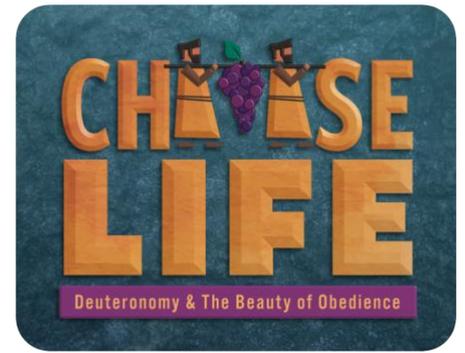
Do Big

"It's not fair!" Ask any parent which phrase is most frequently uttered by his/her kids, and this one will most likely top the list. So why is this such an often-repeated cry?

Starting with the early days when we learn to string together a sentence, we search out and point fingers at perceived injustices *against* us, but are we as equally aware of the injustices done to others?

Our greatest example of perfect justice balanced by unearned rightness is seen at the foot of the cross. We deserved a death sentence, but received our reprieve as Christ took our place.

Read James 1:27, then discuss the following questions: How will you live out both JUSTICE and RIGHTNESS this week? Whose rights have you consistently withheld or trivialized? What can you do to help the poor, orphans, widows, and immigrants? Ask God to help you be his instrument of mercy and justice.



LEADERS

For Context Read:

Deuteronomy 16:18-18:13

Background:

The Bible often pairs justice and rightness (righteousness). Justice is giving people what is due and is measured by the Word of God. While rightness is more like living in a right relationship with others, doing good, being gracious, generous and treating people with equity and kindness especially to the vulnerable (see James 1:27 in the "Do Big" section of this discussion guide).

Weekly Memory Verses

"Righteousness and justice are the foundation of your throne; love and faithfulness go before you."

Psalm 89:14

"Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world." James 1:27

