

How Children Understand Justice and Injustice and how to teach them to think biblically about it

- I. We need to be aware of the impact God's image has on our children's understanding of justice.**
- **We see the shadow of God's image in our children's lives in that they believe that fairness exists.**
 - According to Genesis 1:26, all mankind is fashioned in the image of God.
 - Mankind's lifelong pursuit for justice is actually an apologetic evidence of the existence of God.
 - Animals are not concerned with justice.
 - It's God's image in us that makes us fight for fairness and justice so vehemently.
 - **We see the shadow of God's image in our children because they understand that some things are wrong.**
 - Justice is consumed with the idea that there is a right way and a wrong way. God is very passionate about having mankind understand that some things are right and some are wrong.
 - Animals don't care. They don't act out of any noble sense of right and wrong.
 - **We see the shadow of God's image in our children because they believe wrong things shouldn't occur.**
 - Not only do your kids believe that right and wrong exist, they are *convinced* that bad things should not happen under any circumstances.
 - **We see the shadow of God's image in our children because they believe that wrong things should be punished.**
 - Not only do children believe wrong exists and that it shouldn't exist, they are prepared to punish it at every turn.
 - Even very young babies have a perception that injustice should be punished.
- II. We need to be aware of the impact our children's *sin nature* has on their understanding of justice.**
- Sin perverts our understanding of justice.
 - Sin makes us stupid. Proverbs 12:1; Jeremiah 4:22;
 - Our sin nature taints everything. So, we parents have to understand that our children's conceptions about justice and injustice are going to be affected by their sin.
 - Yes, wrong exists. Yes, it shouldn't occur. Yes, it should be punished. But here are the ultimate questions:
 - What is "wrong"? and . . .
 - Who gets to mete out the punishment?
 - And that's where sin messes everything up.
 - When God created the world, everything was clear. He was in charge. That meant that He had the right to decide what should and should not be done, and He also had the right to decide how evil should be punished.
 - And what were the first demonic and human sins? Satan decided that he would take God's place, and then he convinced Eve to do the same.
 - Sin taints our ability to understand justice correctly because it convinces us that we get to decide what wrong is and how it is to be punished.

III. How do we teach our kids to think correctly about justice?

- **We must be biblical.**
 - If we are not going to turn our family's gaze toward God — the ultimate standard of what is just and right — then all we can do is convince them that some human or institution made up of humans is the standard of justice.
 - We absolutely must teach our children to understand and interpret life through the lens of Scripture. To not do so is child endangerment. It's child abuse. You're lying to your child if you don't root their understanding of life in God's Word.
- **We must teach them to think.** If we don't teach them how to think according to God's Word, they will be no better off than every other human instinctually reacting from their own delusion of divine grandeur.
 - **Define your terms.**
 - **Study what God says about justice.**
 - Proverbs 21:15; Amos 5:24; Romans 12:19; Isaiah 1:17; Matthew 5:20; Acts 28:1-6
 - **Discuss what the world says about justice.**
 - According to the Center for Economic and Social Justice, "Social justice encompasses economic justice. Social justice is the virtue which guides us in creating those organized human interactions we call institutions. In turn, social institutions, when justly organized, provide us with access to what is good for the person, both individually and in our associations with others. Social justice also imposes on each of us a personal responsibility to work with others to design and continually perfect our institutions as tools for personal and social development."
 - The National Association of Social Workers propounds, "Social justice is the view that everyone deserves equal economic, political and social rights and opportunities. Social workers aim to open the doors of access and opportunity for everyone, particularly those in greatest need."
 - Listen to a statement from the United Nations. "Social justice may be broadly understood as the fair and compassionate distribution of the fruits of economic growth. Social justice is not possible without strong and coherent redistributive policies conceived and implemented by public agencies . . . Present-day believers in an absolute truth identified with virtue and justice are neither willing nor desirable companions for defenders of social justice."
 - **Help your kids come to right conclusions based off what God says.**
 - Romans 13:8
 - Mark 14:6-9
 - Ecclesiastes 8:11
 - We need to teach our kids that true justice is objective; it's grounded in God's expectations for how people relate to each other. But it is also subjective in that people can and should glorify God by relating to each other differently in appropriate situations.
 - There is no one-size-fits-all justice. Genuine biblical love is going to act according to the need of the moment. I love my wife very different than I love all the other women in my life. That's not injustice, that's obedience to God.