

Biblical Perspectives on Social Justice

The Bible teaches that God is a God of justice. Furthermore, the Bible supports the notion of social justice in which concern and care are shown to the plight of those less fortunate such as the poor, afflicted, needy and oppressed. Here are some biblical principles and perspectives:

- 1) **God is just** (Duet 32:4), **and God desires us to act justly** (Micah 6:6-8).
- 2) **God followers are exhorted to defend and seek justice for the less fortunate such as the oppressed, fatherless, widows, hungry, poor, aliens, etc.** (Duet 10:17-18, 24:17, 27:19; Isaiah 1:17, 58:1-12; Jer 22:3; Proverbs 31:8-9; James 1:27).
- 3) **In addition, we should be motivated to help people based on the Great Command to “love our neighbors as ourselves”** (Matt 22:40) **and the Golden Rule of treating people like we would like to be treated** (Mat 7:12).
- 4) **Israel was encouraged to loan freely to the poor—supports the modern concept of micro loans** (Duet 15:1-11).
- 5) **We should pray persistently for justice** (Luke 18:1-8).
- 6) **Jesus came in part to preach good news to the poor, prisoners and oppressed** (Luke 4:16-21); **Jesus reached out and helped the poor, hungry, sick, outcasts, etc.** (Gospels)
- 7) **Jesus taught that helping the “least of these brothers of mine” (e.g. hungry, thirsty, stranger, naked, sick, imprisoned) is liking helping Him and demonstrates we are truly saved** (Matthew 25:31-46).
- 8) **The Bible seems to lay out a hierarchy for the meeting of individual needs:**

First, we should work and take care of our own needs when possible (I Thes 4:11-12; II Thes 3:6-10; Eph 4:28).

Second, when an individual cannot meet their own needs, family members should meet the needs if possible (I Tim 5:4, 8).

Third, if individuals and their families are unable to meet their needs, the church and other Christians should help (Matt 25:31-46; Acts 2:42-47, 4:32-35).

Fourth, civil government can help under the broad biblical role of “protecting the innocent”. However, there are concerns with excessive government involvement, such as forced taxation and redistribution of wealth versus giving out of love. Also, those in power in the government decide how to spend the tax money versus individuals, and there may be different values of how to spend the money (e.g. state of Oregon paying 100% of abortion costs for all people for any reason).

- 9) **Someday, there will be perfect justice—on the New Heaven and New Earth!** (Revelation 21 & 22).