

# What Is Fairness?

*Selected Passages*

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## ***Introduction***

- Fairness is one of the most talked about topics in our current day; especially in the current election season.
  - The problem, of course, is that we live in a world filled with unsaved, self-serving people who - ultimately know nothing whatsoever about what “fairness” truly is!
  - What so many people have in mind as fairness today is a self-serving, self-centered, “as long as I get mine” kind of doctrine that bears no resemblance to the kind of FAIR that God is.
  - Thus they have no concept about exercising TRUE fairness in the world.
  - To them, at least most of them Fairness is the “the quality of making judgments that are free from discrimination.”
    - Judges, umpires, and teachers should all strive to practice **fairness**.
    - **Fairness** comes from the Old English *fæger*, meaning “pleasing, attractive.”
      - That idea is at least a part of the problem that our society faces when thinking about how we, as believers must exercise fairness.
    - This makes sense given that the word is also used to describe physical beauty.
- **A. Everything has to be fair**
- We see the worldly idea is things like politics and sports.
  - To oppose fairness is like opposing goodness and rightness itself, many Americans say.
  - Money is made, contracts are negotiated and government legislation is approved, while using the “fairness argument”.
  - Teachers complain that it’s not fair for some children to live in the poor side of town, while others live in the rich side of town.

- Others cite equal pay for equal work as fair.
- The federal government has created new laws that require employers to pay a minimum wage due to their views of fairness.
- However, closer examination of man's ideas of fairness reveals a deceptive, destructive attack on the biblical views of justice and mercy.
- The word "fairness" is a good word with a right usage;
  - but our society has distorted the true meaning of fairness and is effectively communicating false ideas through a trusted word.
  - That is why I have put quotations around the word "fairness" throughout this article.

### 1. *Politicians*

- The "political" claim is that our society is unfair to most people and what is REALLY needed to make America right is for everyone to have a fair chance.
- The problem is that, for the most part, this is (and has been) already true.
- One of the real issues is that we did our human changing years ago and it has irreparably damaged our society.
  - We give everyone this, that and the other thing and don't make a LOT of people do anything to move along their way.
- Politicians mis-define what has caused America's issues (as well as those of the rest of the world) and so mis-define what solutions are.
  - Our issues began back some 50 or so years when we started our attacks on the Bible and Christian thinking and began removing any Christian influence from everywhere it was present.
  - Likewise, we began inserting anti-Christian thinking and practices anywhere we could find to do so.

- It's clear that most of this is the result of unsaved thinking and a misunderstanding of just what ought to be basis for our society and living.
  - We find ourselves thinking in the fashion that the Bible teaches the unredeemed think.
    - They are rebellious, twisted and ignorant.
    - Of course, they don't see themselves that way, but they are none-the-less.
- How can we think our way through this matter this morning?
- First of all...

## **B. God Is Fair**

- God is fair and He is an honest judge and just like any honest judge He has to judge sin,
  1. *He can't let the guilty go free.*
    - In a way we might think of Him as unjust from two directions:
      1. Because on earth He doesn't immediately treat us as our sins deserve.
      2. He allowed (and in fact, arranged for) a totally innocent Man to pay the price for another's sin.
    - God is holy and a holy just God must punish sin and that means hell fire.
- Jesus Christ was crushed for our sins and for all who receive Him there is no condemnation,
  - but sadly it seems that most people try to take advantage (in a negative way) of this.
    - They never truly accept Christ and are rebellious towards the Word of God.
    - For many, this is even a point of pride - the KNOW BETTER that what the Bible says men truly need...
    - They can do what they wish and never answer for it.
    - My Father.
- 2. *God has to fairly judge these people.*
- God does hate evildoers.
  - No matter how much you say you love Him if your life doesn't show it you're lying.
- God doesn't care who you are,

- how you look, or where you're from, He treats us all the same.
  - Be an imitator of God in life.
  - Judge and treat others fairly and show no favoritism.
- Quote

*“Fairness is such a valuable thing, that no money can buy it.” –  
Alain-Rene Lesage*

*Fairness is what justice really is. Potter Stewart*

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## ***1. God is just. He treats everyone fairly and shows no favoritism.***

- 2 Thessalonians 1:6

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*<sup>6</sup> since it is a righteous thing with God to repay with  
tribulation those who trouble you,*

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- It is interesting to see that Paul says this matter of God seeing to it that those who “trouble” us are get tribulation back as payment.
  - We don't have to do it ourselves.
  - It is a thing that Paul ties to the concept of Law in the OT.
  - The word righteous actually has to with the concept the right application of justice, penalty, or punishment.
  - One who is righteous is, then, One who is not deserving of, and understanding of the right requirement of these things.
  - God, therefore is RIGHTEOUS.
- He completely understands what is right and just, and is prepared and able to exercise that standard on all men.
  - Further, he will exercise that commitment to righteous action on behalf of, Paul says, those who are His.
- This judgement will be extended to all men at the time of the end and judgment.

- 1. Psalm 9:8

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*He will judge the world with justice and rule the nations  
with fairness.*

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- Unlike human judges, God's justice is not and never will be perverted.
  - God will, when Justice is (or will be) exercised, it is (and will) be done in a just and fair fashion.
  - Fairness here speaks of uprightness, in a way that cannot be questioned as to whether it was done rightly.
    - It speaks of a level or orderly path or manner.
    - It isn't haphazard or chance.
  - David is saying that God will judge the world in a fashion that all will see is right and fair.
    - How many do we hear today claiming that the Christian (or religious) way is wrong and unfair!

2. Job 8:3

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*Does God twist justice? Does the Almighty twist what is  
right?*

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3. Peter, in Acts 10:34-35, when speaking to Cornelius' household in Caesarea, said:

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*Then Peter replied, "I see very clearly that God **shows no favoritism**. In every nation he accepts those who fear him and do what is right. This is the message of Good News for the people of Israel—that there is peace with God through Jesus Christ, who is Lord of all.*

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- The issue was that it was unlawful for a Jewish man to keep company with a Gentile.
  - Cornelius responds that God does not see any difference between people.
  - This truth is rooted in the work of the Lord Jesus.
  - Favoritism here is speaking of the idea that one group or person has an advantage over others.

## 2. *Fair people in Heaven.*

- Isaiah (in 33:15-17) asked about the effect coming accountability to God has on the ungodly.
- Isaiah 33:14-17

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*The sinners in Jerusalem shake with fear. Terror seizes the godless. “Who can live with this devouring fire?” they cry. “Who can survive this all-consuming fire?” **Those who are honest and fair**, who refuse to profit by fraud, who stay far away from bribes, who refuse to listen to those who plot murder, who shut their eyes to all enticement to do wrong—these are the ones who will dwell on high. The rocks of the mountains will be their fortress. Food will be supplied to them, and they will have water in abundance. Your eyes will see the king in all his splendor, and you will see a land that stretches into the distance.*

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- Who can survive the coming judgement he asks in the second half of verse 14?

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*Who among us shall dwell with the devouring fire?  
Who among us shall dwell with everlasting burnings?”*

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- He answers the question in verse 15.

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*He who walks righteously and speaks uprightly,  
He who despises the gain of oppressions,  
Who gestures with his hands, refusing bribes,  
Who stops his ears from hearing of bloodshed,  
And shuts his eyes from seeing evil:*

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- The one who walks rightly, honestly
  - The one speaks “uprightly” or in a more modern way, “fairly”
  - Given this and a number of other passage, we can conclude that in order to walk in a manner that can be described as “fairly” we need to consider the standard put forth in God’s Word, because that is the only place where “righteousness”

is described for us - otherwise men make that standard up for themselves, according to their own image.

- Living life in the world is thus, not ALWAYS “fair” or according to righteousness...

### 3. *We know that sometimes life is not always fair.*

- Solomon observed this in:
  1. Ecclesiastes 9:11

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*Again, I observed this on the earth:*

*the race is not always won by the swiftest,  
the battle is not always won by the strongest;  
prosperity does not always belong to those who are the  
wisest,  
wealth does not always belong to those who are the most  
discerning,  
nor does success always come to those with the most  
knowledge—*

*for time and chance **may overcome them all.***

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- Solomon was in an excellent position to both see this and to evaluate if what he saw was so...
- One of the place he saw this was so (and others in the Scripture as well).

### 4. *Fairness in business deals.*

- One of the things that our society delights in that God hates (or detests)
- Proverbs 11:1-3

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*The LORD detests the use of **dishonest scales**, but **he delights in accurate weights**. Pride leads to disgrace, but with humility comes wisdom. Honesty guides good people; dishonesty destroys treacherous people.*

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- Dishonest business
- Pride
- Dishonesty

- What is the way that we can do with business (the way we make our living) the way God wishes us to is to be sure that we are “Fair” in the way we do so.
- How is it that we can be sure that we are adopting the fairness that God wishes us to?
  - We can:

## 5. *Follow God’s example*

- He does not make decision based on the appearance or personal situation of men as the walk through life.

### 1. James 2:1-4

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*My brothers and sisters, believers in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ **must not show favoritism.** Suppose a man comes into your meeting wearing a gold ring and fine clothes, and a poor man in filthy old clothes also comes in. **If you show special attention** to the man wearing fine clothes and say, “Here’s a good seat for you,” but say to the poor man, “You stand there” or “Sit on the floor by my feet,” **have you not discriminated among yourselves and become judges with evil thoughts?***

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- A part of the Law was specific about the idea of fairness both in the direction of the poor and the rich.
  - We note that we are not to favor or make special decisions either with regard to poor or rich.
  - We are to make judgments - But they must be done according to righteous standards...
  - THAT is the very definition of Fairness.

### 2. Leviticus 19:15

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*“Do not pervert justice; **do not show partiality to the poor or favoritism to the great, but judge your neighbor fairly.***

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- Further, true fairness not only involves judging rightly as we said, that is, make good decisions about life and what is right and wrong...
  - But it involves speaking up about it...
- Solomon, once again, tells us this:

3. Proverbs 31:9

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***Speak up and judge fairly; defend the rights of the poor and needy.***

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- Note that he tells us that this is not just an intellectual matter, but that we are to exercise this “fairness” especially with regard to **“defending” the rights of the poor and needy**
  - The implication here is that they will NEED to be defended.
    - It is our job, those who know the Lord, to do so.
  - But one other implication here is that there are many who will either NOT do so, or will do so wrongly or even not at all.
    - Remember that we said earlier that the ONLY way be fair in a correct Biblical fashion is to KNOW the Lord Jesus and act on what the Word of God SAYS is the righteous way to act in all matters, even matters of commerce, etc.
- One of the ways that so many fail to observe what God says about living according to justice and righteousness is because they do NOT fear the Lord.
  - There can be “fairness” if there is no real and genuine fear of God the undergirds and fuels the ongoing evaluation of the various situations where UNFAIRNESS can occur.
  - We must remember that men (not just males) are virtually totally self-oriented and completely given to that which benefits themselves in the physical and the mental/emotional world.
  - Meekness is virtually an unknown concept to them.
- Fairness, for Christians is very clearly a function fearing the Lord and applies, as WE function, to all those around us.

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***Do not take advantage of each other, but fear your God. I am the LORD your God.***

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## 6. Reminders

- Let's just summarize what we are saying to bring us to a conclusion in our thinking.
1. Colossians 3:24-25

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*since **you know** that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. **It is the Lord Christ you are serving.** **Anyone** who does wrong **will be repaid for their wrongs,** and there is **no favoritism.***

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- Are there (and, is there anyone who can say no here?) any wrongs being suffered in your life?
  - Are you mistreated, unfairly dealt with?
  - DO NOT seek to right the wrong yourself!
  - God deals with such matters!
  - If we seek to do so, we are ONLY treating some in a different way than others!!
    - Not to do so!
  - The “no favoritism” here is speaking of the fact that though we may be moved by the type and nature of the people we deal with, God is most definitely NOT
  - HE will deal with men based on their actions - in return for their sin and offenses to His holiness.
  - He doesn't seek to cultivate their favor.
- This is a reason why we MUST NOT seek to curry men's favor to get them to join our church, come to Jesus, etc.
  - It must be the knowledge of Who God is and what His mind is concerning them and their sin that MUST be the mover for men to obey Him.
  - Otherwise, we are simply painting God as a bribable, unjust God who will do for us in whatever way we talk him into doing!

- There is only one source of true wisdom and knowledge
  - We do not make our own standards and use them to prompt us to action.
  - This is the problem with those who do not know the Lord and are not PRIMARILY interested in following Him and pleasing Him.
  - Though many are convinced that they KNOW, they are really not only ignorant but rebellious and haters of what the Lord and His Word have said.
  - This is NOT to say that we are better than they, but only to recognize that men need God's enablement and enlightening to make right and good decisions.

2. Proverbs 2:6-9

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*For the Lord **gives wisdom**; from his mouth come knowledge and understanding;*

*he **stores up** sound wisdom for the upright;*

*he is **a shield** to those who walk in integrity, **guarding** the paths of justice and **watching over** the way of his saints.*

***Then you will understand** righteousness and justice and equity, every good path;*

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- It is interesting to note these 5 named states and then the following concluding state that is a result of the first three!
  - Gives wisdom
  - Stores us wisdom, with the implication that enables us to act up it and make good decisions later
  - He Shields those who walk according to the rightness His Word tells of - with the implication that there is no shield (or a shield not so effective) otherwise
  - He actively guards us as a result of our following after Him, watching over our "path".
- The conclusion is that it is then, and only then that we will understand just what the things mentioned
  - Note that they are stated to include

- the right and godly way to act
  - What the JUST thing to do regarding acting for God in this society
  - And he mentions “equity”, or fairness!
  - He summarizes by saying that God will enable us to both understand and act on these holy things.
- Interestingly, David was very clear on one seemingly contradictory idea.
    - From this we could almost take the idea that there are times when God does NOT deal fairly or righteously.
    - David observed this to be so and was deeply thankful for it!
    - Of course, from a NC PoV, we know this is because He has already punished His Son, the Lord Jesus for all that is due us.
    - This was not, technically, fair
    - However, because God is God and we are not, He could impute our sin to those who were to become His children.
    - In return, He imputes Christ’s righteousness to those who believe.
  - But the chief idea is that He does not treat **US** as we deserve to be treated.
    - It is thus important that also do two things:
      - View the lost as both need and ought to be treated the same as God treated us regarding the Gospel.
      - It also requires that we see them the way that God sees them - objects of His love and of his desire to come and be saved.
    - There is no justification for treating them differently.

3. Psalm 103:10

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*he does not treat us as our sins deserve or repay us according to our iniquities.*

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- David further notes in Psalm 7:11:
4. Psalm 7:11

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*God is **an honest judge**. He is angry with the wicked every day.*

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- We must be honest as HE is honest.
    - We must recognize that God is “angry” with the wicked, and we must have the same attitude toward sin and see their need for Christ.
  - Lastly, David tells us that those who “observe”, that is - actively “do” justice are blessed!
    - Hebrew equivalent of the “blessed” in the Beatitudes.
5. Psalm 106:3

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*Blessed are they who observe justice, who do righteousness at all times!*

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- Do we want blessing?
- Observe justice and do righteousness!