



Collegiate Quarterly

Teacher's Guide

Mercy and Justice in Psalms and Proverbs

Surveying the Source

Deut. 15:7–11; Psalm 82; 101; 146; Prov. 10:4; Matt 10:8; 25:45; Luke 10:25–37; 15:15

Plotting the Course

The students will:

► Recognize that the Christian's relationships with other people is as intrinsic to one's life with God as are explicitly "religious" activities.

► Show the same concern for relieving suffering as God does.

► Learn to seek God's will in their lives as they demonstrate His love to the world.

Preparing to Lead

We usually find one or two things we are good at, and stick to them. One may, for example, be artistically inclined, but not so good at managing money. Think about why so many transcendent musical talents end their lives broke and broken, for example.

In our spiritual lives, we are the same. We try to please God with the things we

are good at, and often this involves observance of religious rules and regulations. On the other hand, we may not be so fond of complicating our lives with other people and their scary, messy problems. But according to Psalms and Proverbs, we find God in the midst of others' (and our own) scary, messy problems.

Materials

Reproducible Activity, Bibles, scrap paper, writing implements, a blackboard/whiteboard

Getting Started

A. Ask your students to describe a time and/or situation where they needed and received God's mercy. Did they feel it was deserved? Was it what they expected? How did it change their relationships with God himself and with others in their lives?

B. Paul calls upon us to imitate Christ, and specifically to imitate Him as—and only as he imitates Christ. What does this mean to you? Whom have you encountered in life who imitated and modeled Christ to you? Of what did their example consist? In what specific ways did their example help you to be a more faithful imitator of Christ?

Delving Into the Word

A. The parable of the good Samaritan is familiar to most people who have some knowledge of the New Testament. We all know, for example, that a long time rivalry existed between the Samaritans and the Jews; and that Jesus' audience would have regarded the very idea of a good Samaritan as being scandalous. But have you considered that the priest and the Levite in Luke 10:31, 32 respectively, may have just been trying to follow God's laws?

Ask your students to look up Lev. 21:11 and Luke 10:31.

It is easy to assume that the priest was acting out cowardice or selfishness, but these are not the only potential motivators. The passage from Leviticus warns against contact with dead bodies under even the most stringent of conditions. The Levite may have been trying to obey the law, but it was not in a very imaginative or thoughtful way. How can we be doers of the law in the thoughtful and beneficial way God intended?

B. Distribute the Reproducible Activity. Look up the following verses: Prov. 14:31; Matt. 18:21, 22; John 15:13; Heb. 2:17, 18.

What principle does each verse illustrate? What does it teach us about God? What does it teach us about ourselves? Jot down thoughts on the table provided in the Reproducible Activity, either individually, or as a group effort.

Discussing the Ideas

1. How can we avoid the tendency to ignore the needs of others in spite of all the distractions available to us?
2. Can adversity bring us closer to God and others? How?
3. What does Christ's example tell us about how to reach other people for Him?
4. What part does a vital spiritual life

play in our ability to minister to others?

5. Do you ever find the need and suffering in the world overwhelming? How do you get past that, and bless others anyway?

6. What does the Bible mean by justice, and how can we help bring it about?

Closing the Activity

In 1 John 4:8, the author tells us that God is love. And this love is not just a positive feeling, but rather something that shows itself in action; the very specific action of God coming to earth in the form

of Jesus to be both a sacrifice for us, and an example to us. When we as Christians manifest mercy and do justice, we follow that example and make God real for the world.

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Text	What the Verse Reveals About God	What the Verse Means in our Lives
Matthew 18:21, 22		
Proverbs 14:31		
John 15:13		
Hebrews 2:17, 18		