

*Micah Challenge* →

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# Session 10



**GLOBAL EDITION**

EDITED BY: JASON FILETA



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Live Justly: Global Edition was created by



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*Designed by Danny Palmer.*

# Session Ten

## How Then Shall We Live? A Lifestyle of Justice

“Jesus came to bring complete transformation in us – transformation of our lives ... to bring justice into this world.”

- Kuki Rokhum

“Doing justice is more than just an action a year, it is a lifestyle.”

- Jason Fileta

## Eleanor<sup>1</sup> by Eugene Cho

This is a story about a lady named Dr. Eleanor Sutherland, a family physician in Federal Way, Washington, USA. She died in 2012, after living a life of simplicity. In doing so, it allowed her the flexibility in her time and finances to be extraordinarily generous. Her closest cohorts in serving others were her sister Kathleen and friend Beatrice.

She could not afford medical school in the US, so Eleanor elected to attend medical school in Germany, as it was more affordable and was more actively enrolling women. A friend of Eleanor's and the trustee of her estate, Paul Birkey, said that Eleanor cared about helping people access health care. Her version of health care reform was simple: she charged a fraction of the going rate, and did not turn anyone away because they couldn't pay.

Paul wrote in an obituary:

*Nothing was wasted—if a patient needed a wheelchair, walker or cane, she would round one up, probably a well-used one. She wheeled pharmaceutical reps for samples she could give away. Perhaps most importantly, each and every patient was listened to carefully and treated in the context of their lives, as a whole person. Her sense of humor was not the ordinary kind; it was an insightful, eloquent, smart-alecky kind—always kind and always present...*

*Eleanor's boundless passion for medicine, as with her boundless passion for everything, was fueled by and undergirded with her passion to serve God and Jesus Christ. In every way, she led life as a mission with Christ's teachings as her template and guide. Her medical practice, her travels abroad, her everyday life and her supreme self-confidence all were guided by her all encompassing faith.*

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1 Excerpts from "Overrated" by Eugene Cho, David C. Cook 2014

Paul says that if you knew Eleanor, you had probably been chided for not being sufficiently thrifty. She saved wrapping paper, sat in the dark to save candles, and wore used clothing. She wanted to put herself last so that she would be able to give as Christ taught us to give: generously and unconditionally.

Eleanor died at home, as she wanted, in early 2012. She was 85, leaving a small fortune to charities as a result of her lifestyle - and a legacy of compassion to her friends and clients.

## Live Justly<sup>2</sup> by Eugene Cho

Everyone loves the idea of justice until there is a cost. Ironically, justice is never convenient, and there is always a cost. This is why we often like “doing justice” or following Jesus up to the point at which it provokes an act of sacrifice forcing us to change the way we live or change the way we think.

God challenges us to live more simply. He challenges us to give up some of the excess in our lives.

The example of Pope Francis has been refreshing. He took a vow of poverty early in his ministry and has never gone back. Since he has been elevated to the papacy, the former Jorge Mario Bergoglio has elected to live in the papal guesthouse, not the four-star accommodations where previous popes lived. He wants people to know that he is with them, not above them. He likes the idea of being in community and close to others, rather than on his own, living in luxury.

As the leader of the Catholic Church, every pope should act like this. His actions are consistent with what we read about in the Bible. It shouldn't be earth-shattering or surprising and yet the new pope's behaviour is entirely counter cultural. His story - early on - washing feet and welcoming dialogue with lay people, shows his heart - and most importantly, reflects the heart of Christ. The pope is living a life of love and justice.

Jesus loves justice. And justice, by its very nature, involves people. I've learned that people often struggle with Jesus' commitment for justice because he rarely, if ever, spelled out the importance of justice in a three point sermon.

Instead, Jesus lived justly.

Justice was in Jesus.

He reflected justice in how he lived, how he loved and how he welcomed the stranger, the marginalized, the leper, the widow, the prosti-

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2 Excerpts from “Overrated” by Eugene Cho, David C. Cook 2014

tute and the sick. Jesus reflected justice in how he approached the powers and systems of his age, how he confronted religious leaders, how he embraced, welcomed and empowered women, and how he confronted ethnic biases and prejudices.

Yes, Jesus loved justice but more so, he lived justly. And here's the kicker: He called us to follow him.

Justice is not just a thing that is good. Justice is not merely doing good. Justice is not something that's moral, or right, or fair. Justice is not, in itself, a set of ethics. Justice is not just an aggregation of the many justice-themed verses throughout the scriptures. Justice is not trendy, glamorous, cool, or sexy. Justice isn't a movement. Justice is so much more and the understanding of this fullness is central to the work that we do in pursuing justice.

God invites and commands his people to not just be aware of injustice but to pursue justice. Not just to pursue justice but to live justly. These two acts are not the same but they are inseparable. To be a follower of Jesus requires us to both pursue justice and live justly at the same time. This is a truth that ought to inform both our theology of justice and our praxis of justice, and we seek to live this way because ultimately, justice reflects the character of God. We do justice because justice is rooted in the character of God and thus must be reflected in the character of his followers.

In seeking to do justice, we have to be open to the reality that God will challenge us, change us and transform us. In doing justice and in doing things that matter to God, we actually grow more in his likeness. We will begin to reflect more of the character of God. We grow more intimate with the heart of God.

We will do things because they embody the Kingdom of God. And it is right in the eyes of God. But in doing these things, there is something equally beautiful, in that we become more in tune with the heart of God.

Oftentimes, we go about our concept of justice or compassion or generosity when it is about us and our power and privilege to do some-

thing for others, without entertaining the possibility that maybe God wants to change us.

We have much to learn from our neighbours that do not look like us, think like us, or act like us. We may even have much to learn from our enemies. There is a level of humility that justice exacts inside us.

The inescapable truth about justice is that there is something wrong in the world that needs to be set right. Sometimes the things that need to be set right are not just in the lives of those we seek to serve. The things that need to be set right may also be in our own lives.

We need to pursue justice not just because the world is broken, but because we're broken, too. Pursuing justice and living a just life every day helps us put our own lives in order. Perhaps this is what God intended - that in doing his work serving others, we discover more of his character, and are changed ourselves.

## Reading

During this session, your final session together, you'll be reading your own words. Continue to the "together" exercise.

## Together

Present your action plans to each other. Offer feedback and come up with ways to hold each other accountable (eg accountability partners, sending text messages or emails at the beginning of each month or setting aside time once a month to check on each other's progress, etc). Finally, spend time in prayer together over your action plans.

Share your creative expressions with one another if you feel so led!

## Solo Work

Edit your plans based upon the feedback you received from your group. If you have access to the internet, you can log on to [LiveJust.ly](http://LiveJust.ly) and load your plan to the site. Here you'll be able to set reminders via email or text, and we'll be able to track the ways Live Justly is impacting readers! Finalize your creative expression and prepare to share it with your small group.

## Prayer

Lord, forgive me for the times I forsake your mission in the world for my own comfort. Guide me as I put this plan of daily justice into action. Help it not to be a checklist I seek to complete each day, but let it come from an attitude of worship. Give me the endurance, desire and will to allow justice to truly encompass my actions. Help me to be a person who lives justly. Help me to be more like Jesus.

END

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