

# Living Justly

AN ASJ DEVOTIONAL GUIDE

**ASJ**  
USA  
FOR A MORE JUST SOCIETY

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# About this Devotional

At the Association for a More Just Society (ASJ), we strive to be brave Christians dedicated to doing justice in Honduras and inspiring others around the world to seek justice in their own contexts.

We also believe that justice work is best done in community. It's that commitment to community-oriented justice-seeking that has inspired this 12-chapter devotional. We hope that you will use it not only for personal encouragement, but also for communal learning and action. Go through it with your small group at church, with your book club, with your family. Learn, study, and be encouraged together as you reflect more deeply on the role of justice in our faith.

We hope and pray that as you go through this devotional resource, it will not only deepen your commitment to seeking God's kingdom of justice and peace, but also deepen your commitment toward seeking it in community. Because justice work can be hard. But it doesn't have to be lonely.





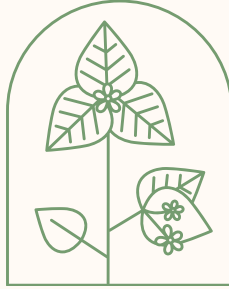
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# SECTION 1:

Brave Christians



# Chapter 1: What is Justice?

## GENESIS 1:27

*So God created humankind in His image;  
in the image of God He created them;  
male and female He created them.*

Each one of us is made in the image of God. You and me. Your family and mine. Every man, woman, and child—from Chicago to Jos; from Tegucigalpa, Honduras to the tiniest village. Each person bears God’s image.

To be image-bearers means we are called to reflect God’s character. Because God is love, we are called to love our neighbors. Because God is just, we are called to do justice.

But what does it really mean to “do justice”?

You’ve probably heard the saying:

*“Give a man a fish, and he’ll eat for a day. Teach a man to fish, and he’ll eat for a lifetime.”*

But what if someone has built a tall fence around the pond?



What if someone's stealing the fishing rods?  
What if the water is polluted or the fish are gone?

Charity (i.e. giving a fish) and development (i.e. teaching to fish) are both important. In a crisis, people need food and shelter now, not a resume-building workshop. In the long term, access to loans and job training can help families rise out of poverty. But both charity and development fall short when underlying systems are broken.

In Honduras, for example, small businesses don't just fail due to poor planning. They often shut down because criminal groups demand extortion payments that business owners can't afford. Business training doesn't help much when the justice system fails to protect business owners.  
That's where justice comes in.

Justice asks deeper questions than charity or development: Who has access to the pond? Who is kept out, and why?

In the area of education, charity hands out notebooks. Development trains teachers. But justice asks:  
Is school funding fair? Are schools safe for every child, no matter where they live? Are teachers showing up to the classroom and doing the work they are paid to do?

These are the kinds of questions that ASJ has been asking—and acting on—for over 25 years.

If we truly believe that every person reflects the image of God, then we must work for justice.

We must tear down the fences. We must make sure everyone has access to the pond.

## Reflection

- What would you add to this vision of justice?
- Where in your church, school, or workplace do you see people asking the deeper questions of justice?
- What would it look like to work to restore “access to the pond” in your community?



## Prayer

*God, open our eyes to the injustice around us. Help us see your image in every person—friend and stranger alike. Move our hearts to act, to love, and to work for a world where dignity and justice go hand in hand.*

*Amen*



## Chapter 2: Why Should Christians Care About Justice?

### MATTHEW 5:10

*“Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.”*

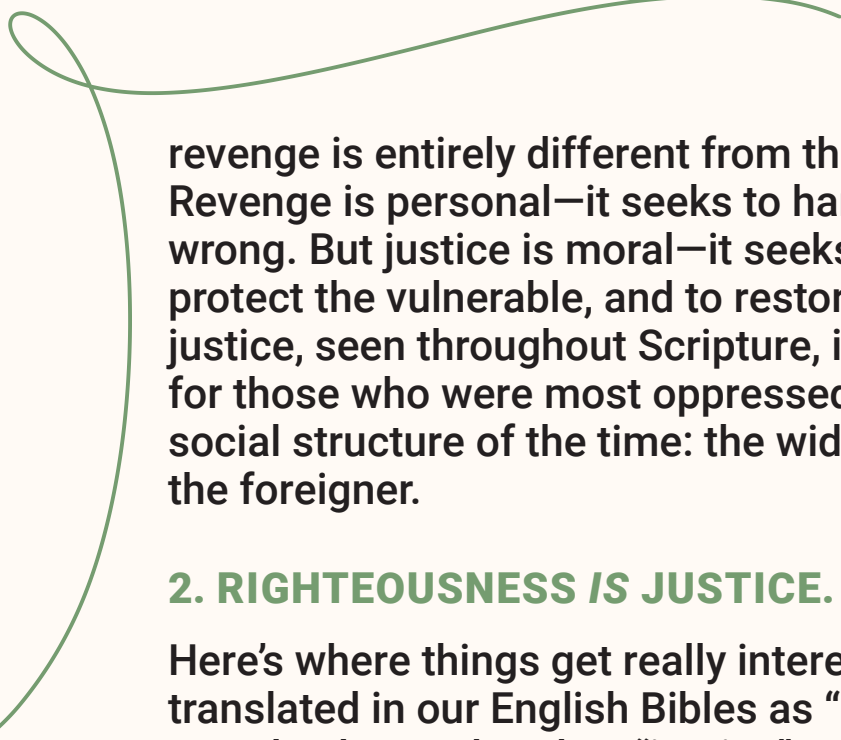
Despite the Bible’s many references to justice, the idea often makes people uneasy. Some Christians worry that talk of “doing justice” has been hijacked by politics or distorted by a secular or partisan agenda. Others assume justice was a focus of the Old Testament, but that the New Testament shifts the emphasis to love instead. Still others believe that justice is solely God’s responsibility. After all, in Deuteronomy 32:35 God says, “Vengeance is mine.”

But justice is not the same as vengeance.

Christian philosopher Nicholas Wolterstorff offers deep insight into what the Bible teaches about justice. (If you ever get the chance, his books are well worth reading!) For now, let’s consider two key ideas from his work:

#### 1. JUSTICE IS NOT REVENGE.

Wolterstorff reminds us that God’s command to avoid seeking



revenge is entirely different from the call to pursue justice. Revenge is personal—it seeks to harm someone in return for a wrong. But justice is moral—it seeks to uphold what is right, to protect the vulnerable, and to restore what’s been broken. God’s justice, seen throughout Scripture, is consistently aimed at caring for those who were most oppressed and marginalized in the social structure of the time: the widow, the orphan, the poor, and the foreigner.

## 2. RIGHTEOUSNESS IS JUSTICE.

Here’s where things get really interesting. The Greek word often translated in our English Bibles as “righteousness”—*dikaiosune*—can also be rendered as “justice”. In other words: In Greek, “righteousness” and “justice” are synonyms. In Matthew 5:10, Jesus says, “*Blessed are those who are persecuted for the sake of dikaiosune.*” English translations typically render this as “righteousness.” But in Spanish, French, and Portuguese Bibles, it’s translated more directly: *la justicia, la justice, justiça.*

Wolterstorff challenges us to imagine how our understanding would shift if those verses read: “*Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for justice.*” What if instead of being told to “be righteous,” we were clearly called to be *just*?

That simple linguistic shift reveals a powerful truth: justice isn’t on the fringe of Christian faith and living—it’s at the very center.

Throughout Scripture, God’s people are called to imitate God’s justice and remember God’s faithful acts of deliverance. And throughout history, Christians have answered that call—from speaking out against slavery to fighting child labor, and from civil rights to telling the truth about myriad other corrupt systems.

At ASJ, we strive to follow in that tradition. Like the Old Testament prophets and Jesus himself, we believe that standing for justice—especially when it’s hard—is part of our witness to God’s truth in the world.

## Reflection

- What's your favorite example of Christians throughout history standing for justice?
- Who in your life might enjoy a conversation about why justice matters to Christians?



## Prayer

*God of justice and mercy, open our eyes to your truth.  
Give us courage to love boldly, act justly, and speak  
up for those who cannot. May your Spirit guide us to  
reflect your character—in righteousness and in justice.*

*Amen*



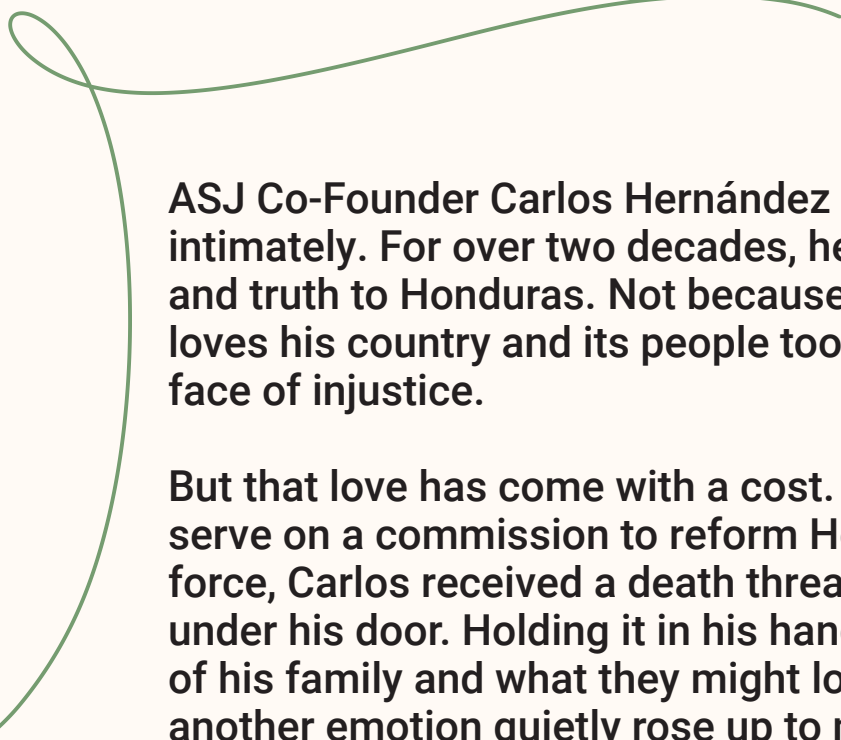
## Chapter 3: God Calls Us to Love Beyond Fear

### 1 JOHN 4:18–19

*“There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear, because fear has to do with punishment. The one who fears is not made perfect in love. We love because God first loved us.”*

When we hear the word love, we often think of romantic feelings or sentimental gestures—the kind of thing you might find in a Hallmark card. But the love described in 1 John is far deeper. The Greek word used for “love” is *agape*. This is a self-emptying, self-sacrificial kind of love. It’s bold. It costs something. It’s courageous. It’s the kind of love that pushes through fear rather than avoiding it.

It’s the kind of love that drove Jesus to the cross. As followers of Christ, we’re called to imitate that kind of love—not only for our families and neighbors, but for strangers, for the marginalized, and even for those who make us uncomfortable. It’s a love that crosses borders and breaks barriers.



ASJ Co-Founder Carlos Hernández knows this kind of love intimately. For over two decades, he has worked to bring justice and truth to Honduras. Not because it's easy, but because he loves his country and its people too much to stay silent in the face of injustice.

But that love has come with a cost. In 2016, after agreeing to serve on a commission to reform Honduras' deeply corrupt police force, Carlos received a death threat—a chilling note slipped under his door. Holding it in his hand, his first thoughts were of his family and what they might lose. But as he stood there, another emotion quietly rose up to meet his fear: love.

“I love my children so much,” he said, “that I want them to grow up in a country where peace and justice are possible.” He continued his work on the commission, which would go on to remove nearly 6,000 corrupt officers from a force of 13,000 and lay the foundation for a more honest and accountable police force for the entire country.

Carlos insists that fear doesn't have to win. Fear makes us focus on what we might lose. Love—agape love—invites us to focus on what we might gain. That is the call of the Gospel: to choose love, even when fear whispers that it would be safer to stay quiet. To stand for justice, even when it costs us something.

At ASJ, we see the power of this kind of love every day:

- Families finding justice after loss.
- Parents organizing for better schools and health clinics.
- Children discovering that their future can hold more than violence.

These moments remind us that God's agape love not only comforts, it transforms. And it calls us to love beyond fear.

## Reflection

- What fears are holding you back from living and loving as God is calling you to do?
- Who in your life are you being invited to love—beyond comfort, beyond convenience, beyond fear?



## Prayer

*God, you have loved us with a perfect love—far greater than we deserve or understand. Help us to choose that same love when we are afraid. Let your love drive out our fear and lead us across boundaries to love boldly.*

*Amen*

# SECTION 2:

Do Justice





## Chapter 4: Justice is Possible

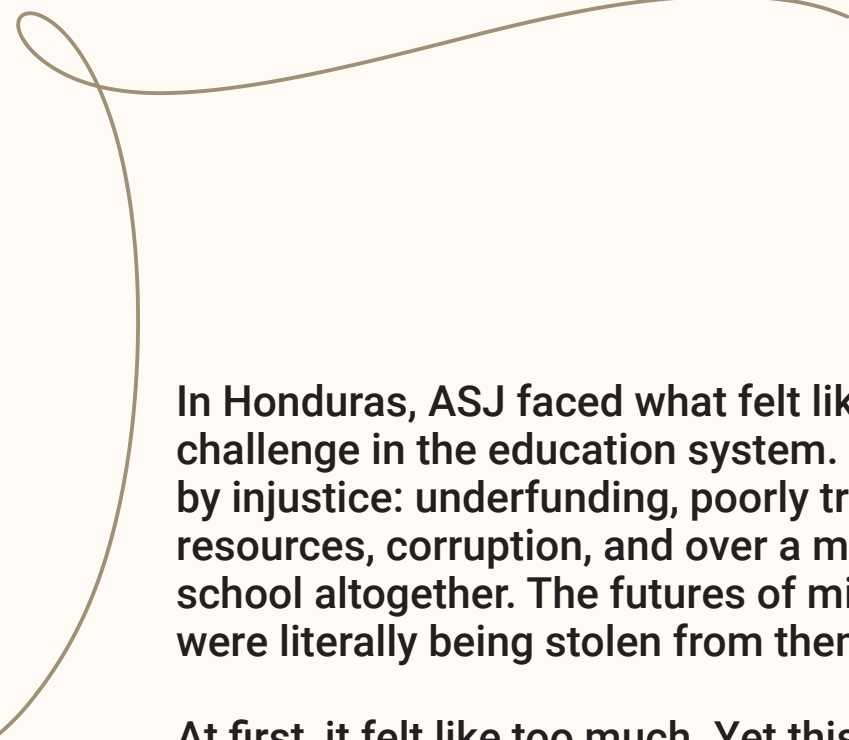
### MICAH 6:8

*He has told you, O mortal, what is good;  
and what does the LORD require of you?  
but to do justice, and to love kindness,  
and to walk humbly with your God.*

Many of us feel stirred by God’s call to pursue justice. Just as quickly, we can feel overwhelmed. We think, “I’m no Mother Teresa or Martin Luther King Jr. What could I possibly do?” Our culture often sees justice work as too complicated, too political, too slow—or simply too impossible.

Some Christians may even believe this life is something to endure until we reach heaven, and that injustice here is something we just have to accept.

But Scripture tells a different story. Micah 6:8 doesn’t say, “Do justice later.” It says, “Do justice”. It doesn’t say, “Once you’ve got it all together.” It calls us, as we are, with all our fears and flaws, to join God in the work of justice right here and now.



In Honduras, ASJ faced what felt like an impossible justice challenge in the education system. Public schools were plagued by injustice: underfunding, poorly trained teachers, lack of resources, corruption, and over a million children excluded from school altogether. The futures of millions of Hondurans children were literally being stolen from them.

At first, it felt like too much. Yet this was exactly the kind of justice that Micah commands us to do.

So, ASJ reached out to churches and civil society leaders. Together, we formed a coalition and we discovered shocking truths: children were only attending school around 100 of the 200 required days, and over a quarter of teachers on the government payroll weren't teaching at all.

Instead of giving up, we launched a national campaign. We exposed the truth. We kept the pressure on. And we saw change. We helped purge the national teacher rolls—firing 15,000 absentee teachers—and children began receiving over 200 days of instruction per year.

Micah 6:8 isn't a vague ideal. It's a call to action. Yes, doing justice is hard. But it's not impossible.

It's not only for saints or superheroes—it's for *us*. And when we respond with courage, collaboration, and faith, God works through us to bring real change.

## Reflection:

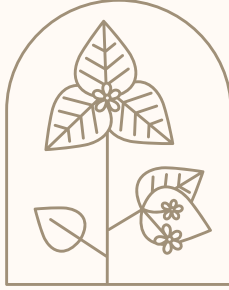
- What injustice breaks your heart but feels too big to tackle?
- What might trusting God in that area look like—one small, faithful step at a time?



## Prayer:

*Holy God, give us the courage to believe that justice is possible. Strengthen our faith when the work feels overwhelming. Help us walk humbly, love mercy, and act boldly in your name.*

*Amen*



## Chapter 5: Blessed Are...

### MATTHEW 5:11–12

*“Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me. Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.”*

In Chapter 2, we explored how the translation of *dikaïosune* as “righteousness” instead of “justice” changes how we understand Jesus’ teaching. As Nicholas Wolterstorff asks pointedly, “How many people do you know who have been persecuted for simply living a morally upright life? Probably not many.” People who fight for justice, on the other hand—who challenge corrupt systems and stand with the oppressed—are the people who often face insult, opposition, and even violence.

The pursuit of justice flips the world’s values upside down. Jesus says the meek, the persecuted, the grieving—they are the ones closest to God’s kingdom.



This upside-down vision doesn't promise safety. Quite the opposite. Justice work requires telling hard truths about people in power, often putting justice-seekers in dangerous positions.

In Honduras, ASJ has seen this firsthand. Maria, a grandmother who lost her husband to violence, bravely stepped forward to work with ASJ's Peace and Justice program. She worked with our staff to identify those who were responsible for violence in her community and then seek justice for those whose family members had been killed. Because of her courage, Maria helped reduce violence in her community by 75%.

One of our partners once said, *"You will never find a verse in the Bible that says, 'Be safe and comfortable.'"* That's a truth we should think hard about. Over and over, God lifts up those who are bold enough to speak out, even when it's unpopular. Comfort is not the goal of a Christian. Faithfulness is.

## Reflection:

- Who in your life is courageously seeking justice, even when it's unpopular?
- Why do you think the work of justice makes so many people uncomfortable?



## Prayer:

*God, you bless those who are vulnerable, bold, and willing to suffer for what is right. Help us not to chase comfort, but to walk in faith. May we be willing to be misunderstood, even rejected, if it means standing for your truth.*

*Amen*



## Chapter 6: The Call to Active Prayer

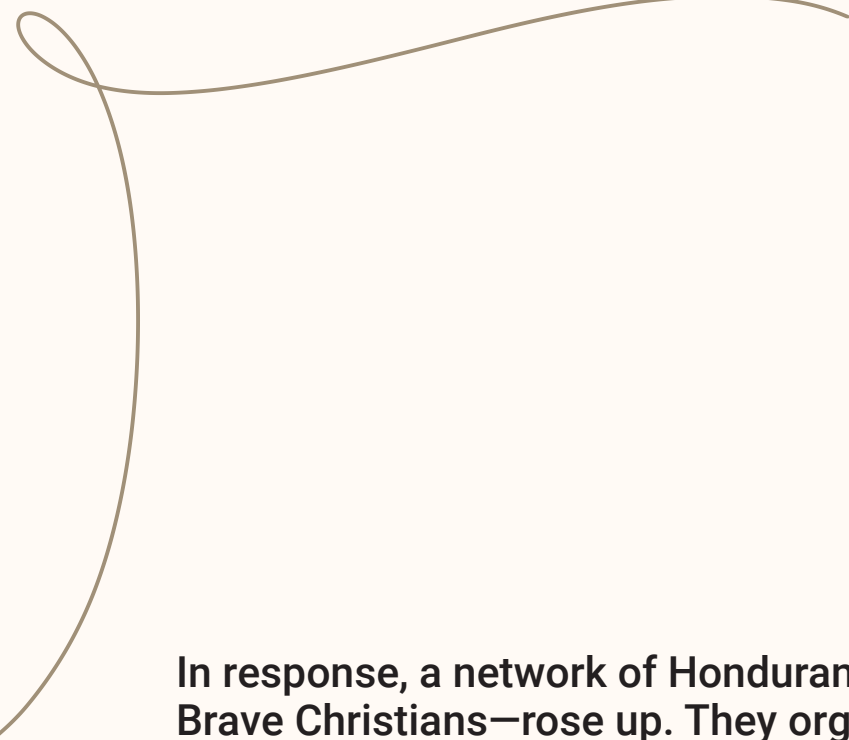
LUKE 18:1–8

*“And will not God grant justice to his chosen ones who cry to him day and night? Will he delay long in helping them?”*

Sometimes we act like prayer and action are opposites, as if we have to choose one or the other. But in the Bible, and in the lives of justice-seekers past and present, prayer and action are inseparable.

Jesus’ parable of the persistent widow reminds us that crying out for justice is both an act of faith and an act of resistance. Her prayer was not passive. It was relentless. It was powerful.

At ASJ, prayer is woven into everything we do. One of the most powerful examples came during the police reform process described in Chapter 3. As ASJ took on this dangerous task, we called on supporters around the world to pray for protection and wisdom.



**In response, a network of Honduran Christians—now known as Brave Christians—rose up. They organized radio prayer meetings, monthly bulletins, social media campaigns, and even “brown bag” prayer sessions in churches.**

**And they didn’t just pray behind closed doors. When the selection of a new Attorney General came under political threat in 2018, the Brave Christians group gathered on the steps of Congress. To everyone’s surprise, they were invited inside to pray for justice over the process. Soon after, key authorities publicly denounced the threats against the Attorney General.**

**This is what active prayer looks like: not withdrawing from the world, but standing in the middle of it, crying out to God, and trusting that He hears—and acts.**

## Reflection:

- Do you tend to isolate prayer from action? Which one feels easier or safer to you—and why?
- What would it look like to invite God into both?



## Prayer:

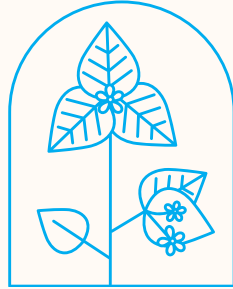
*God, you are the One who hears the cries of your people. Teach us to pray with boldness and persistence, and to act with courage and faith. Let our prayers stir us to move, and our actions be grounded in constant prayer.*

*Amen*



# **SECTION 3:**

## Work



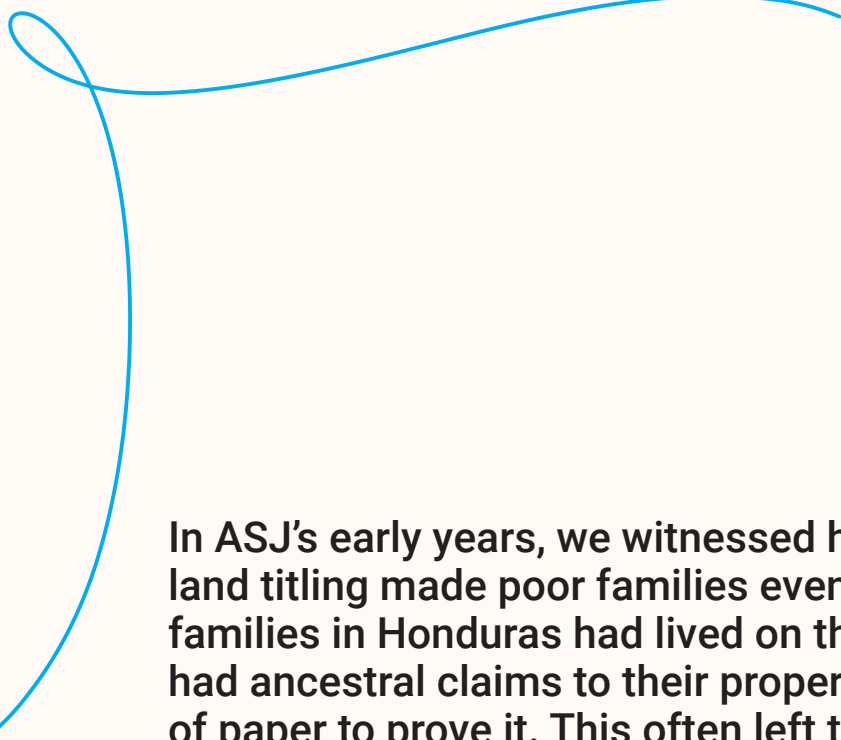
# Chapter 7: Making Systems Work

## ISAIAH 58

*“You shall be called the repairer of the breach, the restorer of streets to live in.”*

God cares about the human-made systems that govern our lives. All the structures we see around us—the way our schools work, the way courts investigate crimes and respond to victims, the resources available to pregnant mothers—were created by human beings. But too often, these systems are manipulated for another’s profit or power.

Too often, our response to these weak public services is to create parallel services like private schools or health clinics that work better but are only able to serve a fortunate few. Meanwhile, the poor and vulnerable—those who can’t afford private schools, private health clinics, and gated communities—are stuck with broken systems that fail to meet their basic needs.



**In ASJ's early years, we witnessed how the broken system of land titling made poor families even more vulnerable. Many families in Honduras had lived on their land for generations and had ancestral claims to their property, but lacked a legal piece of paper to prove it. This often left them vulnerable to land theft, where wealthy individuals or corporations could secure legal rights to their land and kick them off of it.**

**Before ASJ stepped in, getting a land title in Honduras involved 177 complicated administrative steps and engaging with multiple government agencies. If you were lucky enough to complete the entire process, it could still take as long as six years to receive your title. These barriers meant that more than one million Honduran families lacked titles for their land.**

**After five years of working closely with the Honduran Property Institute, Honduras passed a new property law and made the process of getting a land title a much clearer and easier process.**

**God calls us to focus on the most vulnerable and that means we have to be willing to rebuild broken systems and restore ruined streets so that all may peacefully dwell in them.**

## Reflection

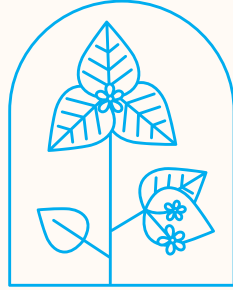
- What broken systems are affecting the vulnerable in your community?
- What can you do to begin to “restore the streets” of your community?



## Prayer

*God of restoration, you call us to join you in the work of repairing the brokenness around us. Forgive us when we cloister ourselves in our privilege and forget to join you in the work of restoration around us. Give us eyes to see broken systems in our midst and move us to action.*

*Amen*



# Chapter 8: Confronting Injustice

## 2 SAMUEL 11 & 12:1-13A

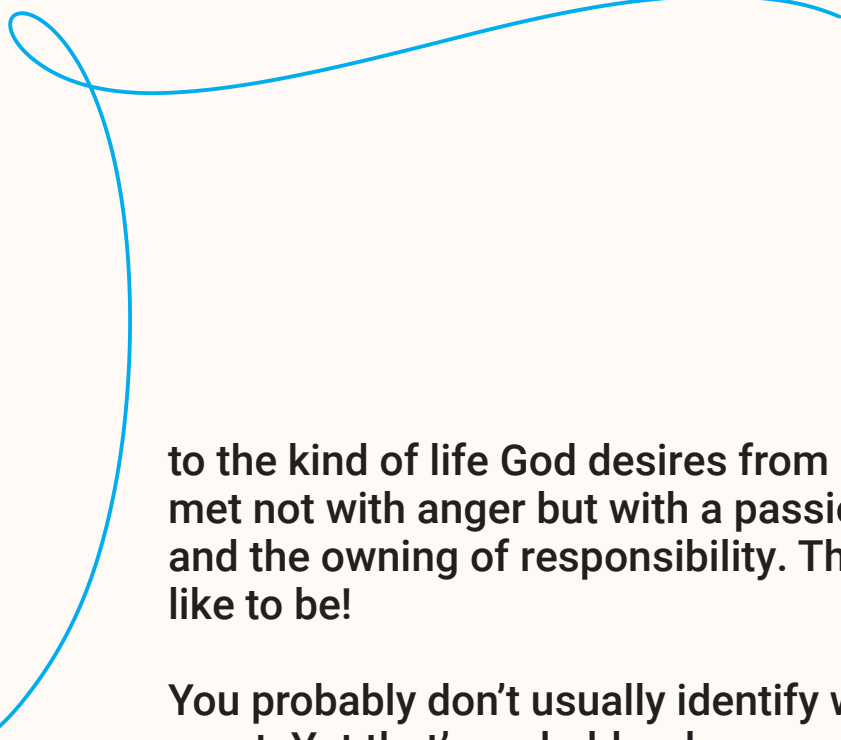
*“Nathan said to David, “You are the man!”*”

In the story of David and Bathsheba, we read of a dark moment where David, the leader chosen by God, committed sin and tried to cover it up. In doing so, he committed even more sin.

Read the story now, and while you are reading, think about which character you identify with: David? Bathsheba? Nathan? The people of David’s court?

King David is often held up by Christians as someone to be imitated. However, did any of us identify with him in this story? We are probably all quick to condemn what David did, but the truth is that we are often more like him than we would care to admit. We go against God’s law, we involve others in our wrongdoing, and we make excuses to cover it all up.

Many of us probably want to identify with Nathan. He boldly risks his life to speak truth, denounce sin, and call the powerful abuser



to the kind of life God desires from him. His risky truth-telling is met not with anger but with a passionate response of contrition and the owning of responsibility. That's the kind of people we'd like to be!

You probably don't usually identify with the members of David's court. Yet that's probably where most of us most often find ourselves. The dozens of soldiers, servants, and courtesans in this story are not named and few speak. Yet, they must have seen Bathsheba brought to the palace. They likely helped deliver her there. Surely word traveled. Everyone saw Uriah sleeping on the castle steps. Uriah's entire battalion was instructed to step back and leave him fighting alone. Each soldier, to a man, followed those orders.

How many of us are like David's court and turn a blind eye to injustice? How often do we see others abuse their power and choose to do nothing?

In ASJ's work, we seek to be Nathans, who try to respond to God's passionate anger against injustice. But that is not easy. The story of Nathan and David is inspiring, and like most things that happened long ago, the moral feels crystal clear. But, that kind of clarity is not always felt in real time when we ourselves face injustice.

## Reflection:

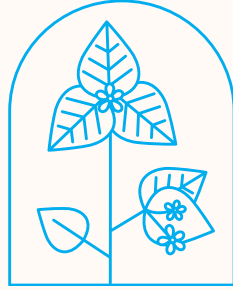
- What present injustices feel complicated now, but will likely seem crystal clear in the future?
- How can you become more like Nathan in the midst of these injustices?



## Prayer:

*Mighty God, truth-telling so often feels so hard. Power dynamics, differences of interpretation, siloed media ecosystems—it all makes us wonder if it's ever possible to truly call injustice what it is. In our muddled world, give us the courage of Nathan to call out injustice and to convict perpetrators to repentance.*

*Amen*



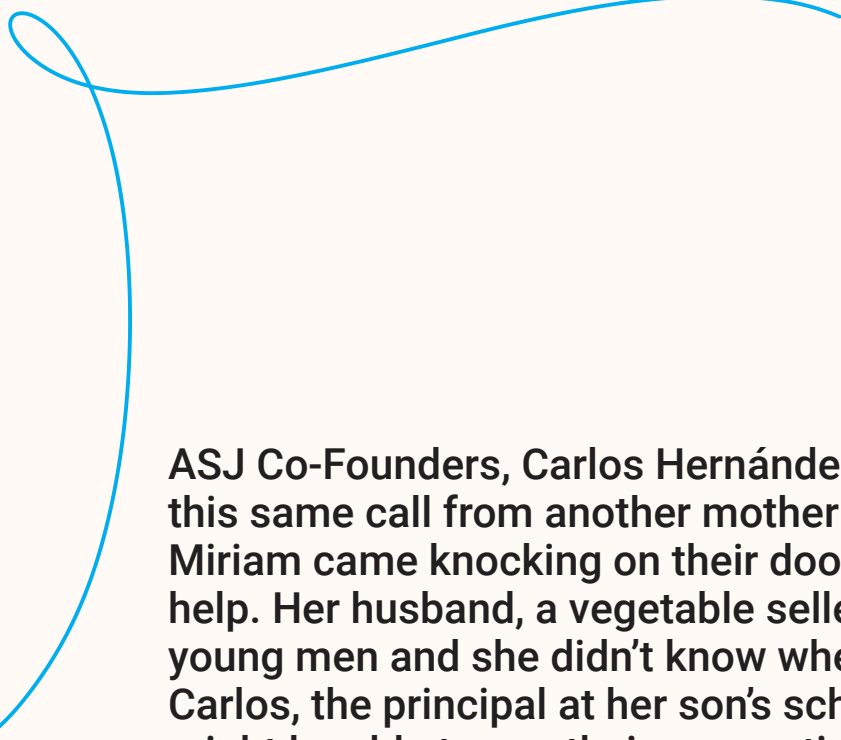
## Chapter 9. Speaking Up

### PROVERBS 31:8-9

*“Speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves, for the rights of all who are destitute. Speak up and judge fairly; defend the rights of the poor and needy.”*

Most of us probably don't know that the passage above is believed by some scholars to have been written for King Solomon by his mother, Bathsheba—one of the victims in the story of injustice that we read about in Chapter 8. Many mothers instruct their children to be quiet, but not Bathsheba! Solomon and anyone who read these instructions probably knew Bathsheba's story as a victim of violence, so when she reminds him to speak up, her words have the power that comes from personal experience—the experience of desperately needing someone to speak up for her and having no one respond.

This passage is unambiguous. It is a call to action to defend the vulnerable loudly and consistently. It's hard to wiggle out of this one. The need to “speak up” was clearly needed then and now.



ASJ Co-Founders, Carlos Hernández and Kurt Ver Beek, received this same call from another mother more than a decade ago. Miriam came knocking on their door one morning, pleading for help. Her husband, a vegetable seller, had been killed by two young men and she didn't know where to turn. She thought Carlos, the principal at her son's school, and his best friend Kurt might be able to use their connections to speak up where she could not. Kurt and Carlos contacted local police, but were told it would be too dangerous to pursue the perpetrators, despite knowing exactly who they were.

Kurt and Carlos stayed quiet. As a result, 19 more people were killed by the same men. They were ashamed at their lack of action and vowed not to let it happen again. Their experience of what happens to the vulnerable in a justice system that doesn't work propelled them to start ASJ's Peace and Justice project.

They put together a tiny team comprising a psychologist, a lawyer, and an investigator who walked alongside victims of violence in their grief and helped them navigate the complex justice system. Since 2005, the team has helped over 700 people, including many children, to bring perpetrators to justice and to make their communities safer places to live.

The Peace and Justice program is a direct response to Bathsheba's clear call to "speak up" for the needy.

## Reflection:

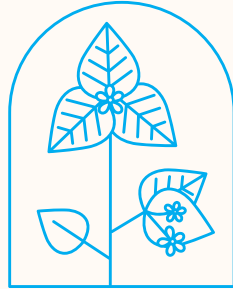
- What stops you from speaking up when you see injustice?
- Consider how you can speak up more boldly in the future.



## Prayer:

*God of the poor and needy, we admit that “speaking up” isn’t always easy. We feel much more comfortable staying silent. When injustice is present and the opportunity to speak up arrives, help us remember the instructions of Bathsheba and to not miss our chance to speak!*

*Amen*




## Chapter 10: Building Trust

### NEHEMIAH 2:17-18

*“Then they said, “Let us start building!” So they committed themselves to the common good.”*

Prophets like Nehemiah served a unique role in communities that longed for justice. We often think of prophets as fortune-tellers who predicted the future. In fact, their function was very different. Their role was to speak the words of God to God’s people. They spoke on behalf of God, declaring God’s truth and helping their communities imagine a future beyond what they could see in the moment. Often, as in the case of Nehemiah’s project to rebuild the ruined walls of Jerusalem, the prophets used this imagination to inspire their communities to trust in the work of restoration and to build a better future themselves.

ASJ has seen what a lack of trust and imagination looks like in Honduras. Because the police have historically failed to protect them, Honduran citizens have often been afraid to report crime. As a result, Honduras’ rate of impunity (the percentage of unsolved homicides) has been as high as 96%.



**This, then, becomes a vicious cycle of violence, lack of trust, and hopelessness.**

**In 2016, after years of pushing from ASJ and other civil society organizations, the Honduran government asked ASJ and others to form a police purge commission tasked with removing corrupt officers from the police force. We were nervous to take on such a complex and potentially dangerous project, but we felt called to rebuild trust in a system that impacts the life of every Honduran. We wanted to live into the role of the Biblical prophet, building trust and casting a vision for what we could all build together.**

**The commission has done what few thought possible. It removed over 5,000 corrupt police officers out of a force of 13,000. It created a brand new training program which, as of 2019, graduated more than 10,000 new cadets. It helped change laws that would make corruption in the police force much more difficult.**

**At ASJ, we often look to prophets like Nehemiah for courage and insight as we work to build bridges of trust.**

## Reflection:

- Where is there little trust in your community, and what are the impacts?
- What can you do to begin to build trust and cast a vision for what could be?



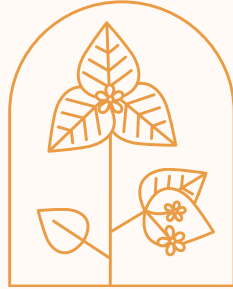
## Prayer:

*God, you are the Great Architect of everything we see around us. Thank you for placing us in communities where we can creatively come up with solutions together. When we have it, help us to use our power to follow in your image as just builders. Give us your eyes to see the broken systems around us, and your heart to hope and work for their restoration.*

*Amen*

**SECTION 4:**  
GO & DO LIKEWISE





# Chapter 11: Living Justly

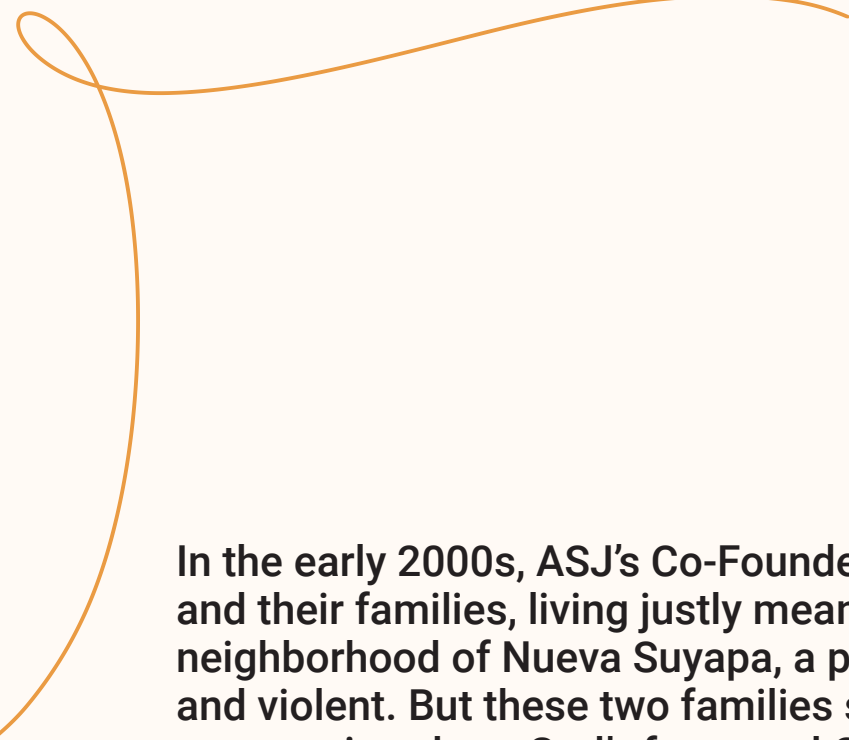
**LUKE 4:16-22**

*“He has sent me...to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor.”*

As we pursue a life of justice instead of overlooking the world’s brokenness, our longing for a time when the world will be made whole expands. We live in the time of “already and not yet”--a time when God’s kingdom is present in our world but so too is injustice. We understand that injustice will not be fully defeated until Jesus returns and yet we remain committed to doing justice now as a sign of our faith and our commitment to living into the kingdom that is yet to fully come.

Contrary to popular depictions, doing justice is not just the work of lawyers, community organizers, or superheroes. It is not a singular dramatic act. Instead, it is a lifelong effort to pay attention to the lives of the most vulnerable and to respond with courage and love.

The way you live justly will be shaped by your gifts, your passions, and the particular lessons God wishes to teach you.



**In the early 2000s, ASJ's Co-Founders decided that for them and their families, living justly meant moving into the urban neighborhood of Nueva Suyapa, a place long stereotyped as poor and violent. But these two families saw something different: a community where God's favor and God's people were already at work. Their decision to be faithful to that call led to relationships and experiences that have shaped ASJ's most impactful programs.**

**God's call to justice is not one-size fits all. We are not all called to the same things, but we are all called to some things. None of us get to check out of the call to do justice.**

## Reflection:

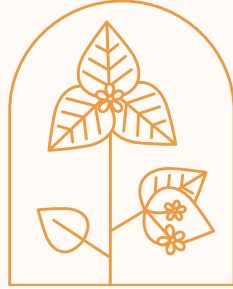
- Where in your life have you already answered the call to justice?
- Where in your life are you being invited to deeper acts of justice? What's keeping you from answering the call?



## Prayer:

*God, strengthen us in the areas of our lives where we are already living into your call to do justice. Give us courage to step into new areas of justice you are calling us to.*

*Amen.*



## Chapter 12: Choosing Hope

### ZECHARIAH 8:4-5

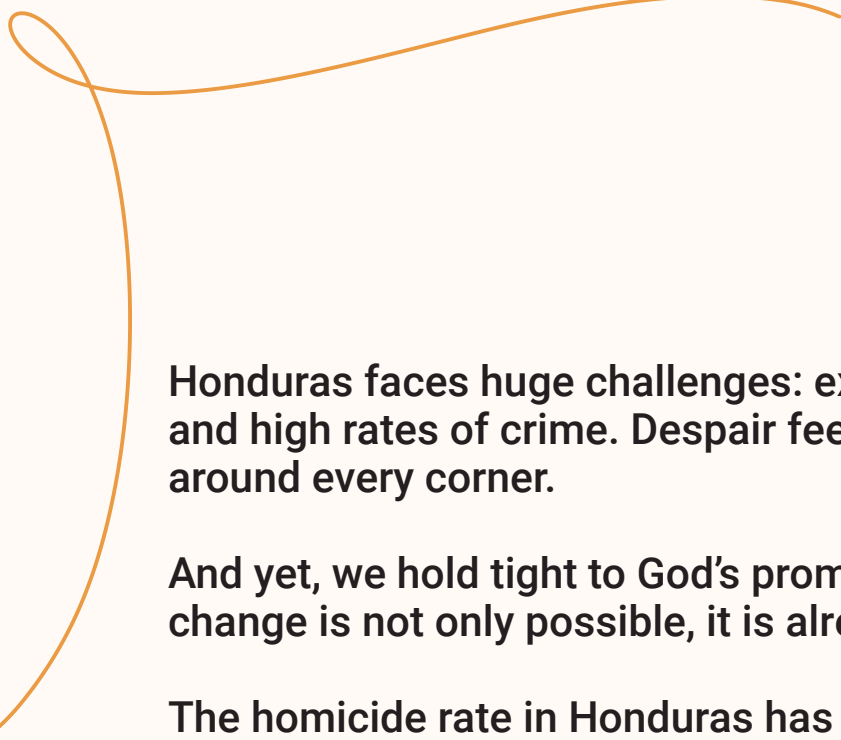
*“Once again men and women of ripe old age will sit in the streets of Jerusalem, each of them with cane in hand because of their age. The city streets will be filled with boys and girls playing there.”*

The vision in this verse from Zechariah resonates deeply with us in Honduras where violence has made many people afraid to go out of their homes. Children are often kept indoors, not allowed to play in the street and sadly, few people live to a “ripe old age.”

That’s why this image of the most vulnerable in society, the young and the very old, safely enjoying being outside relaxing and playing in the street is so powerful! It paints a beautiful picture of peace, safety, and restored community.

When God spoke these words through Zechariah, Israel was in a moment of deep despair. Exile had separated them from their land and scattered them to the wind. They felt hopeless.

Living in Honduras, it is not hard to relate to that feeling.



**Honduras faces huge challenges: extreme poverty, corruption and high rates of crime. Despair feels like it is constantly lurking around every corner.**

**And yet, we hold tight to God's promise of restoration. We believe change is not only possible, it is already happening.**

**The homicide rate in Honduras has dropped from a high of 87 per 100,000 in 2012 to less than 28 per 100,000 in 2025.**

**Dozens of drug traffickers have been extradited, more than \$1.5 billion of assets have been seized back from criminals, and major corruption cases have been made public and resulted in arrests and convictions.**

**Choosing hope does not mean ignoring what is wrong. In fact, the biblical formula for hope requires that it move through lament first. We cannot truly hope for what is to come unless we allow ourselves to fully feel the brokenness of what is. Yet staying in lament without making the turn toward hope leads to cynicism. The work of justice requires lament and hope together.**

**That's why as we continue to go about our work, we choose to keep Zechariah's vision before us. It is a daily reminder that even as we are honest about the brokenness around us, a different future is possible. Not because of our abilities or our strengths, but because we trust the One who is already bringing that future into existence.**



## Reflection:

- Where do you need to lament the injustice of the world?
- How can you avoid staying stuck in lament and make the turn to hope?



## Prayer:

*God of hope, your future of justice, peace, and fulfillment is on its way even now. Give us the eyes to see it breaking through our present. May we neither be afraid to give voice to our lament, nor may we let our despair curdle into cynicism. Turn our lament into hope.*

*Amen*



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