Seek Wholeness and Justice

What Does Wholeness and Justice Mean?

Start and Stay with the Gospel

Our foundational theological and doctrinal convictions as followers of Jesus compels us to have the whole conversation about wholeness and justice upon us. It is core to the gospel since the gospel is good news about God's justice.

Jesus' Thesis Statement

Read Luke 4:16-21. Jesus launched his public ministry by reciting a biblical text about wholeness and justice. This becomes the thesis statement that undergirds all his ministry.

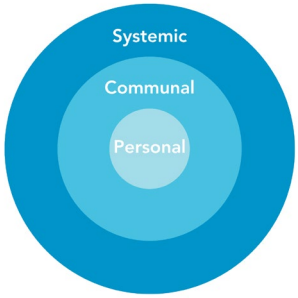
But What Does It Mean to Seek Wholeness and Justice?

Wholeness is the state of being in which our broken hearts get mended. Justice is operating in a state of fairness or where everyone gets their due. Wholeness repairs brokenness, while justice ensures fairness for all. Though separate, they're connected.

Personal, Communal, Systemic

Seeking wholeness and justice happens at three levels:

- **Personal** – We are broken and in need of wholeness and redemption
- **Communal** – Our brokenness impacts our relationships and community life
- **Systemic** – Our injustice and brokenness as we relate to others metastasizes into systems that are unjust and broken



A Healthy Culture

Seeking Wholeness and Justice on Campus

Don't feel like you have to tackle everything at once. In God's kingdom you are freed to listen to God and engage as a community in the ways God invites you to.

- **Listen** – Spend some time with others listening to God and asking him if there's a specific area of brokenness and injustice he wants you and your ministry to engage.
- **Learn** – With your category of brokenness and injustice in mind, take some time to research what other organizations, activists, and ministries have already done and are already doing in that area.
- **Lean** – Take a small and humble step of engagement. You may not make the right first step—that's okay. Just lean in faithfully.
- **Repeat** – Listen to God and your community. Learn a little more. Lean in again. Over time, you'll be wowed by what transformation can happen.

A Healthy Culture of Seeking Wholeness and Justice

Healthy Culture	Unhealthy Culture
1. Engages in activities that seek wholeness and justice—and integrates them into the rest of ministry. 2. Recognizes that we are not the saviors (Jesus is), and that we partner with him as we seek wholeness and justice. 3. Spends time listening to God to help create sustained hope that Jesus will bring wholeness and justice. 4. Communicates both safety and challenge in invitations to seek wholeness and justice. 5. Discusses complex topics and areas of disagreement with honest, clarity, and charity. 6. Sees personal, communal, and systemic fruit throughout the ministry.	1. Sees activities and ministry that seek wholeness and justice as extracurricular, bonus, or not necessary to the gospel or a Christian community. 2. Acts with a savior-mentality—up to me or us all by ourselves. (well-intentioned maybe but ...wrong). 3. Becomes overwhelmed by the issues and either checks out or settles into a fatalistic stance. 4. Uses guilt and shame as primary motivators. 5. Incapable of discussion or disagreement. 6. Little fruitfulness.

General Justice Pathway

Consider this sample developmental pathway:

- **Step 1:** Read or listen to discipleship content that forms and challenges me in healthy ways (for example, *The Next Worship* by Sandra Maria Van Opstal).
- **Step 2:** Lead a small group to engage what God has to say about wholeness and justice (for example, using the Justice Bible Studies or Flourishing Communities Curriculum).
- **Step 3:** Participate in a campus context prayer walk and have conversations with people on campus about the injustices or places of brokenness they see in my place of ministry.
- **Step 4:** Share a large group talk or lead a seminar on a wholeness and justice topic that my ministry has been focusing on this year.
- **Step 5:** Lead students and faculty in a session at an experiential event (like a Justice Program or Justice pilgrimage on campus).
- **Step 6:** Lead a program, initiative, or even start something new like helping my chapter advocate for a living wage and decent benefits for the housekeeping or groundskeeping staff on my campus.

Getting Practical

Engaging the Issues of Sexuality and Race

The next two lessons will discuss the topics of sexuality and race so that:

- You can engage in ministry feeling prepared to have, and even initiate, conversations on two topics that are very relevant to our campus context.
- You can apply a similar process to other issues that you encounter on campus.

Seeking Wholeness and Justice around Sexuality

Three ideas to start seeking wholeness and justice around sexuality:

- **Practice Hospitality:** How can you create space for people who feel cast out because of their sexuality and show them the love, affection, and compassion Christ has for them?
- **Listen Carefully:** What concrete actions can you take to practically make a difference in one area of brokenness?
- **Love Sacrificially:** Who would you connect someone with if they needed help beyond your capability? Save that person's or organization's name and number on your phone.

Practical Milestones (A Sample)

- **Step 1:** Read/listen to discipleship content that forms and challenges me in healthy ways (for example, *Redeeming Sex* by Deb Hirsch).
- **Step 2:** Complete the Understanding Human Sexuality and God's Big Story course.
- **Step 3:** Study, understand, and be able to teach the 3x3 guide on how to welcome LGBTQ+ folks into a small group and into my ministry.
- **Step 4:** Identify what to do if a student or faculty person shares with me about abuse, sexual confusion or curiosity, or confesses an area of sexual brokenness. I can listen with compassion and support them to get the proper resources.
- **Step 5:** Lead a group discussion around a topic related to sexual wholeness and justice.
- **Step 6:** Lead our ministry to serve on campus in one area related to sexuality.

Seeking Wholeness and Justice around Race

Three ideas to start seeking wholeness and justice around race:

- **Practice Hospitality:** Who can you invite into your community and what can you do to help them feel welcomed?
- **Listen Carefully:** How will you carve out the time and emotional space to pay close attention to people who come from different backgrounds than yours?
- **Love Sacrificially:** Where do you hear people on campus calling out for healing, restoration and justice when it comes to race? What specific actions can your ministry take in response to what you're hearing?

Practical Milestones (A Sample)

- **Step 1:** Read or listen to discipleship content that forms and challenges me in healthy ways (for example, *Beyond Colorblind* by Sarah Shin).
- **Step 2:** Complete the Exploring Race, Ethnicity and the Gospel Course.
- **Step 3:** Lead a Bible study exploring what God has to say about race, ethnicity and culture (for example, the Beyond Colorblind series or the Ethnic Identity LifeGuide Bible Study).
- **Step 4:** Seek out intentional displacement experiences where I'm a cultural minority and have spent time to process and learn from the experience. Note: While this is an exercise that emerges from white identity development, people from every ethnic background can benefit.
- **Step 5:** Lead a seminar or Large Group talk around a topic related to racial wholeness and justice.
- **Step 6:** Lead our ministry to serve on campus in one area related to racism.

Barriers to Seeking Wholeness and Justice Together

Barriers are Inevitable

The brokenness is not just "out there" but also "in here"—in ourselves, in our chapters, on our campuses. Injustice appears wherever you find sin. How are you personally processing these issues? We want you to be able to provide a non-anxious space for students and faculty to be able to learn, grow, fail, seek Jesus and—as a result—seek wholeness and justice together.

Personal Experience

Four reasons people raise for resisting seeking wholeness and justice:

1. **I'm not qualified** – Break through by owning your own learning and recognizing that qualifications are not a barrier to seeking wholeness and justice.

2. **I've been wounded** – Break through by seeking God for healing of our traumatic pasts and consider that the triggering that happens will be used by God to bring the poison to the surface so that it can be removed.
3. **I'm too busy** – Break through by leaning to integrate seeking wholeness and justice into things you're already doing and asking a mentor for help.
4. **I'm apathetic** – Break through by asking Jesus to help you to care and praying out loud with fervency and frequency.

Pushback

Five philosophical pushbacks you may encounter:

1. **Too big!** – When issues of wholeness and justice seem overwhelming large/complex, trust in God who is sovereign and has the power and desire to make a difference.
2. **Too heated!** – Our fiercest opponents in our struggle for wholeness and justice are people who are also dearly loved by Jesus – let's not abandon them.
3. **Too costly!** – We need to learn to pay the cost of discipleship to become the sort of people who love, forgive, and express compassion. Remember we leverage our access to the riches of Christ.
4. **Too political!** – No political party exactly matches the kingdom of God. Spend time reading the Gospels, meditating on the life of Jesus, and wrestling with how to obey his commands.
5. **Too much to do!** – Stop seeing things as separate and find ways to overlap what you're doing.

Fear of…

- **We're afraid of failure** – Talk to Jesus and a friend about your fear. God commands us to be strong and courageous and he is the one who gives us what we need to move forward.
- **We're afraid of strong emotions** – Emotions can be a gift. Embrace them, establish healthy rhythms, and bring them to Jesus for guidance.
- **We're also afraid of danger** – The early followers of Jesus also felt fear, and their path through was to follow Jesus. Practice wisdom, and wisdom will always encourage you to follow Jesus even when it feels a little risky.

Related Resources

Articles

- Building Trust with LGBTQ+ Students
- Tom Skinner's sermon at Urbana 70
- How to Create a Justice Pilgrimage of Your Campus

Bible Studies

- Beyond Colorblind Small Group Series
- Flourishing Communities Bible Studies
- Justice Bible Studies

Books

- *7 Practices of Effective Ministries* by Andy Stanley, Reggie Joyner, and Lane Jones
- *Beyond Colorblind* by Sarah Shin
- *Ethnic Identity LifeGuide Bible Study* by Steve Tamayo
- *Generous Justice* by Tim Keller
- *One Blood* by John Perkins
- *Redeeming Sex* by Debra Hirsch
- *The Next Worship* by Sandra Maria Van Opstal

Programs

- Global Program
- Global Urban Trek
- Justice Program

Recommended Courses

- Sharing the Gospel
- Cultivating Spiritual Rhythms
- Exploring Race, Ethnicity, and the Gospel
- Understanding Human Sexuality and God's Big Story

Visit the Ministry Playbook to learn more about leading, planting, and building Kingdom movements on college campuses: https://www.theministryplaybook.com/