**A graphic design with a scale and text

AI-generated content may be incorrect.**

**Small Groups Discussion Guide**

The God I Want // Week 3

The Judge

***Leader Tips:*** *Share discussion guides with every group member. (perhaps send them the link or use screen-sharing). It makes the discussion go so much better when people can see the questions. With each bullet point, read the entire bullet point before opening discussion. Also consider this group time breakdown: 1 hour discussion, 20 minutes prayer.*

**Small Group Challenge:** We may be asking you to step out of your comfort zone, but don’t worry, you’ll have your fellow Small Group members right there with you in this fun challenge. Make a short video of your group singing a portion of your favorite Christmas song! It can be any Christmas song of your choosing, but you all must sing it together. Send the clip of at least 30 seconds to the small group point person.

**ICEBREAKER:**

At Christmas time, sometimes parents can struggle to know what is fair when it comes to buying gifts for their kids.

* Were you ever jealous of someone else’s Christmas or birthday present? Tell us about it.
* What is the best Christmas present you’ve ever received?
* Are you giving a Christmas gift this year that you are particularly excited about?

**DISCUSSION:**

**WAIT!!! Hold up. Have you discussed with your group when your first meeting will be after the New Year?? Let’s get that set on the calendar.**

1. We heard in the message that a desire for justice is common across all ages, geography, and cultures. When we experience or see injustice, we long for it to be made right.
   * Where do you think this desire comes from and why does it evoke such strong emotions?
   * How does our biblical worldview affect our view of justice and injustice?
2. Today’s message explored the intricate balance between justice and mercy, not as opposing attributes but as integral components of God’s character, emphasizing that while justice is the ultimate destination, mercy guides the journey.
   * How does understanding justice and mercy as interconnected facets of God's character change your perspective of Him? Read Exodus 34:6-7.
   * Reflecting on Matt.18:21-35, how can we practically apply mercy in our interactions with others, even when faced with situations that seem to demand justice?
3. The message this week helped us understand that just because we are waiting for God’s justice in Jesus’s second coming, we shouldn’t give up fighting for justice. How can we as Christians continue to fight for justice in the waiting period?

* What role does mercy play in our journey towards justice?
* Is there anyone that God is bringing to mind that you know you should be extending mercy to… but aren’t?  If so, how could you go about doing so?

**GOING DEEPER:**

In this week’s message, we talked about the concept of the "already and not yet." It refers to living in the in-between time—already experiencing the presence of God's justice and mercy but not yet fully witnessing their complete manifestation.

* Do you see evidence of God’s justice and mercy already at work in the world today?
* In what ways does anticipating God’s full justice in the future impact your present actions and decisions? Read Rom. 2:1-3.
* How do we maintain hope and perseverance in our faith when faced with the incompleteness of the world’s redemption? Read Matthew 5:13.

**PRAYER:**

Below is a historic Christian prayer.  Some of the language may seem unfamiliar, and it may feel a little “formal” to pray words that someone else wrote, but perhaps it would be helpful to pray this through together, discussing (either before or after) how praying such a prayer regularly might make a difference in your life:

*Most merciful God,*

*we confess that we have sinned against you in thought, word, and deed,*

*by what we have done, and by what we have left undone.*

*We have not loved you with our whole heart;*

*we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves.*

*We are truly sorry and we humbly repent.*

*For the sake of your Son Jesus Christ,*

*have mercy on us and forgive us;*

*that we may delight in your will, and walk in your ways,*

*to the glory of your Name.*

*Amen*