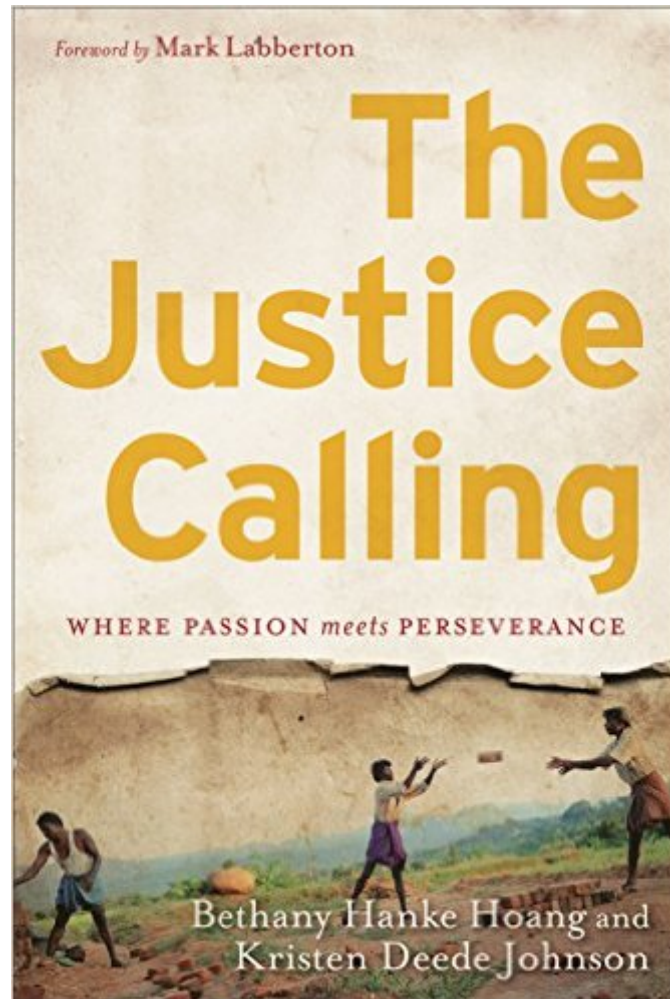


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The Justice Calling: Where Passion Meets Perseverance



Synopsis

Grounding Our Passion for Justice in Deeply Rooted Faith Justice requires perseverance--a deep perseverance we can't muster on our own. The world's needs are staggering and even the most passion-driven reactions, strategies, and good intentions can falter. But we serve a God who never falters, who sees the needs, hears the cries, and gives strength--through Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit--to his people. Offering a comprehensive biblical theology of justice drawn from the whole story of Scripture, this book invites us to know more intimately the God who loves justice and calls us to give our lives to seek the flourishing of others. The authors explore stories of injustice around the globe today and spur Christians to root their passion for justice in the persevering hope of Christ. They also offer practices that can further form us into people who join God's work of setting things right in the world.

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Customer Reviews

I finished this book a few weeks ago and I'm still contemplating its contents. This is a very easy read that makes a great argument on why social justice fits into every Christian's life. I've been bringing this book up frequently in conversations since I finished it. I'm definitely glad I read it and may buy a clean copy to share with friends, as mine is now quite marked up.

The core message of this book is one I have heard over and over, so at times it can be easy to go through the motions of sharing and pursuing biblical justice, but burn out of passion. Thankfully, Bethany and Kristen wrote *The Justice Calling* with refreshing truth that truly inspires endurance. The scripture, personal stories, and miraculous examples they present so well tie together God's

intention of Kingdom Come on Earth. I'm grateful for this deep look into Christ's love and judgment, and highly recommend it to anyone who might be exposed to these ideas for the first time, or those who have been active in the work of justice for years.

There are many instances where things are easier said than done. With compassion, people usually want to do the right thing. With passion one can press on to do the right thing. Put it another way, our talk and our walk must match each other every step of the way. The prayer to God to help us be the same person in thought, in word, and in deed is very applicable here. According to the famous Micah 6:8 passage, we are reminded: He has shown you, O mortal, what is good. And what does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God. Why is there a need to call for justice in the first place? That is because injustice still reigns in many difficult parts of the world. How do we persevere in our quest and practice of compassion and justice? We need to go back to the source of all Justice. We must be anchored on solid ground, and in this book, the solid Rock is Jesus, the Person who embodies the full character of God. The authors do this by giving an overview of God's character from Genesis to Revelation through six movements of Scripture and five key words of God's character. The six movements are: Creation, Fall, Israel, Jesus, Church, All Things Made New. The five key words are God's: Holiness, Hesed (loving kindness), Justice, Righteousness, Flourishing. The way to read this book is through the lens of justice. After all, the authors have a vested interest and passion in an organization fully focused on facilitating and delivering just that. On justice and righteousness, we are briefed on the horrors of human trafficking, where evil perpetrators profit from enslaving people in sex, labour, and other sources of unjust income. The money involved is extremely lucrative, considering that the annual profits far exceed those of the world's largest corporations combined. Each chapter comes with stories of injustice, enslavement, and the dark world of sinister forces that take away the basic liberties of vulnerable human beings. We learn of Boola, trapped in labour slavery becoming a victim of a trade that exploits their vulnerability for evil gains. We read about how slavery is a direct violation of God's commandments. We learn about the meaning of ruling over the world not in terms of domination but through ensuring and promoting of the welfare of one another. The story of 16-year-old Rosa who was repeatedly raped by her step-brother and due to the lack of law enforcement, she had to suffer multiple injustice. While some cases have good endings when justice was achieved, others remain in the dark, such as Grace who had been trapped in a society that has weak laws against prostitution and child slavery. From Latin America to Asia; from East Europe to South Asia; the stories are basically the same: The deprivation of basic

human rights in order to profit the powerful. This book offers a look at how God is greater than all of the injustice combined. In fact, the way to do justice in the world is to recognize that we are all called to be saints, not heroes. We are called to take action and not passively hear and do nothing. We are called to be the Church that God has called us to be. We are called to be God's agents for justice. Above all, whatever we do, we must reflect the Person of God, which is why the authors end the book with a call for everyone to abide in Christ. For apart from Jesus, we can do nothing. In each chapter, we read about how the hopelessness of sin and despair can be transformed by the gospel, by people who are earnest about God; and for people who desire to do whatever they can to bring about good in this world. We need to know God's Word and what it says, lest we miss out on the calling to us. We need to have a vision of God's flourishing, to participate in the culmination of Sabbath Rest in the last days. In suffering and pain, we plumb the depths of sin through understanding and knowing how much we need to lament and to pray. We are encouraged to live as saints as the Bible talks more about saints and almost nothing about heroes. The Church are urged to be the people of God who will take action; be sanctified in Christ and to be sent for God. The message is clear. We are called to God and God calls us to be agents of goodwill, justice, and mercy. The hope is that we are not going to be alone. God has given us the Church. God has given us resources. God has given us one another. God has given us Christ. Hoang and Johnson combine their experience and expertise to give us a powerful and needed shot in anyone's complacency about the need to be part of the entourage for justice. Working with International Justice Mission (IJM), Hoang is part of a team that advocates for justice and protection for the weak and vulnerable. Named among "50 Women to Watch" by Christianity Today magazine, she travels around the world to engage leaders and influential figures to bring about greater justice. Johnson serves as an associate professor of theology and Christian Formation at Western Theological Seminary in Holland, Michigan. Together, they combine their resources to give us real-life stories, theological foundations, and practical suggestions on the area of justice and the need to persevere in spite of the huge challenges. Justice is a difficult subject to uphold. If we do not do anything about it, it will get worse. If we want to do something about it, be prepared for mountains of challenges. That said, given the experiences and the testimonies of the people mentioned in the book, there is hope. As long as we learn not to depend on our own strengths and wisdom, and to lean on Jesus, the strength of the Holy Spirit, and the enduring love of God the Father, we will always have hope. For our perseverance comes about as a fruit of the Spirit. If you don't know about the depth of injustice in this world, or if you think you lack the resources to do anything about it, don't fret. Begin by reading this book. Rating: 5 stars of 5. conrade This book is provided to me courtesy of Brazos Press

and Graf-Martin Communications in exchange for an honest review. All opinions offered above are mine unless otherwise stated or implied.

Coauthor Kristen Deede Johnson is a family friend from her youth, so we expected the measured thoughtful prose we found. A delightful surprise, however, was the wide ranging way the authors introduced the topic of justice. Their discussion of Tikkun Olam, for instance, a Jewish concept, rightly belongs in any text that hopes to help folks build the "kingdom" or even build bridges. We are giving this book to people in places of influence and responsibility, people we hope are kingdom-and-bridge builders.

The Justice Calling is a profound, theologically grounded work that invites us to return to the biblical narrative that reveals a God who is not indifferent to human suffering, but who chooses to enter into it and take it upon Himself. Before reading this book, I have yet to see such a beautiful, thorough exposition on how the God of the Old and New Testaments is seeking to restore shalom and justice in a broken world--and how He is inviting us as His people to join Him in this work. To bring us on this journey, the authors have wisely and carefully knit passages of Scripture, personal experiences, and stories of victims of slavey and other forms of violence that International Justice Mission has worked to rescue and restore. What I love most about this book is how Bethany and Kristen remind us that our actions to intervene on behalf of those suffering must be based on a biblical understanding of His Sabbath rest and not a reliance upon our sporadic bursts of effort. This is a fantastic resource for anyone who desires to deepen their understanding of our calling to seek God's Kingdom and His righteousness and justice. I especially recommend it for church leaders, small groups, theology students, and those who daily work to confront darkness and violence in our world. Let us rediscover that justice is not a buzzword or popular topic, but a core aspect of God's character and our call as His people. I encourage you to get a copy of this book (and maybe one for a friend!) and take a step forward on discovering the justice calling.

This book encapsulates so well my heart for justice and how our passion to see it upheld comes from God Himself because of who he is. Very thankful for these women who were brave enough to sit down and chronicle their spiritual journeys.

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