

JUSTICE

Several meanings occur for the word “Justice”, but for this letter the basic definition will be: the quality of being just, impartial, or fair.

Sometimes the understanding or interpretation of justice conflicts with a view point or perspective of a person or group; for example, two drivers in a car accident may dispute over who was at-fault – in both cases, the drivers believe they are right, or that they are telling the truth. In such cases, the police or a traffic court must evaluate the accident and resolve such conflicts. On the court’s decision or the outcome, the driver at-fault may still believe that he was right and may resent the court’s decision; or he accept the outcome gracefully and consider the gains over the losses. Whether right or wrong, the drivers’ gains may be that there were no deaths or fatalities and, possibly, no major injuries.

Justice is not always clear or absolute: one person’s definition of a just or fair outcome may be vastly different than another person; then, there are cases where justice *is not served* for one reason or another, or the facts are not pursued and presented as the truth. Justice is something that all of us claim to desire – as it does not conflict with what we want; when it does (conflict), we generally ignore or may side-step justice or the truth. As Plato describes below, the fight over injustice is largely driven out of fear rather than by honor.

Mankind censure injustice fearing that they may be the victims of it, and not because they shrink from committing it.

- Plato, Greek author & philosopher in Athens (427 BC - 347 BC)

Justice, which is predicated on the truth, has remained a goal rather than an absolute accomplishment; consequently, many forms of injustice continue to occur and often will involve us from time to time. The outcome of injustice can be very devastating or costly – it can be very hurtful for the victims or those dealt the injustice. In such circumstances, the hurt can lead to several responses: restitution, which is being restored; retribution which is being paid-back or compensated, or revenge which is retaliation with the aim of hurting others – presumably those who have apparently caused the hurt. In all possible responses however, the fact remains that justice was not severed because the truth was not found – or even sought!

Recently, while at a Boy Scouting event, I heard a memorable definition for justice: Justice is being fair in all things without prejudice toward others.

In a **WORD**