



Episode 3-8: Right and Good

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Transcript:

Jocelyn: I don't just need to feel better. I need the truth. And ultimately that will make me better.

Janet: I just want to make it as totally simple as possible for ladies to see that the Bible is really applicable to their everyday life.

Jocelyn: When they understand theology, the application flows out of it quickly with joy.

Janet: It is a journey, but even the journey itself is joyful when I'm doing it, holding the hand of my savior and trusting him all along the way. This is the joyful journey podcast, a podcast to inspire and equip women to passionately pursue beautiful biblical truth on their journey as women of God. When you choose truth, you're choosing joy.

Janet: Well, hello, I am Janet Aucoin, back once again with Jocelyn Wallace, my lovely host.

Jocelyn: Hello.

Janet: And today, Jocelyn's gonna be leading us in a topic that I'm excited to learn more about.

Jocelyn: Well, today we're gonna be exploring righteousness, and this is one of my big ones. This is a topic I think about a lot, I talk about a lot, and I wanted to talk about it today because it's one of those words that, you know, sometimes we say a lot in church with like a churchy word.

Janet: Yes.

Jocelyn: But sometimes we don't always know what it really means, what we're talking about. So I know I heard this word a lot and I just kind of passed over it in my mind, like, okay, whatever. Righteousness. I just wasn't really sure what it meant. Like a lot of words, you know, when I started following Jesus, I was like, wait a second, wait a second. What does glory mean?

Janet: Yes.



Jocelyn: Glorify. Holy. Something about God. Okay, now let's go back to real life. I decided to study this because I really wanted to see what it actually meant and it turned into years of study and focus and this topic really, it's become the central point of my life. And as I'm entering my midlife, it's kind of coming more and more a way to keep my mind really laser focused on what's actually important instead of getting caught in a lot of weeds.

Janet: And I would imagine many of our listeners right now are listening just a little bit more intently. You are saying this one concept is what you orient your life around.

Jocelyn: It is.

Janet: And it keeps you from getting off track.

Jocelyn: It does.

Janet: Then we wanna know all about it.

Jocelyn: So this topic begins in the garden at creation and it.

Janet: Oh, this is gonna be a long one. It begins in Genesis 1.

Jocelyn: In the beginning of time. And it brings to mind the creation mandate, which I love to think about and talk about. But the creation mandate, if you remember, is the commandment or the mandate from the Creator to the human creations that we see in Genesis 1:26-28. And so before he even created any human, God had declared what His purpose for them was going to be. He said He was creating humans so that He could have objects to pour His love out on. And in response to that love, humans would love Him back by living within His created world according to His purposes and plans. We know from studying the creation mandate that ultimately God's purposes for humans was that they would know Him so well that they would live within His created world, representing His values in the context that He placed them in.

Janet: And we did a whole episode on that.

Jocelyn: Yeah.

Janet: Episode number 2, Purpose: The Creation Mandate. I would encourage any of you listeners, if you've not heard that one, to go back and listen to that.

Jocelyn: So the key point in the creation mandate was that humans would represent the Creator's values in whatever context He chose to place them. Humans were designed to live forever in perfect harmony with their Creator, knowing Him, representing Him accurately. And God wanted His humans to be trained by Him. He wanted His humans to learn His definitions of what



is right and good, to know His righteousness, and then to administer His definitions of what is right and good in a way that was equitable and just.

Janet: Ooh, more words we're gonna have to explain.

Jocelyn: Oh, I love definitions. So humans were to be His agents, His ambassadors, joining Him in His mission, spreading His goodness so that all the world would be full of His glory, and all of God's creation could enjoy being ruled over with God's definitions of what is right and good, and then being privileged to have those definitions of what's right and good held up for them as their right to enjoy and live within.

Janet: So God had said that humans were created to know and love Him and to represent His values precisely in their context. He'd taught them His thoughts on all things, and if they lived out His thoughts on all things, then they would have a good life. Full of joy, freedom, protection, and welfare.

Jocelyn: Doesn't that sound great?

Janet: Oh my heavens. I want it.

Jocelyn: So we don't know how long the Garden of Eden functioned in that perfect way before the Great Rebellion happened, but we see as early as Genesis 3 that Adam and Eve responded at some point by saying, basically, listen, God, we've got plans for ourselves. We have our own purposes we prefer, instead of learning how You define what is right and Your good ways designed to keep us safe and provided for, we'd much rather think through life with our own definitions of what's right and good. We don't care what You say is right and good. We wanna do whatever we wanna do. And the consequences of that rebellion have devastated humanity. Instead of functioning as representatives of good God, humans now spend a lot of their energy deciding what they think about things and holding out those values, and the reason that's scary is that humans don't approach thinking through things with perfection or with absolute truth. They don't think self sacrificially and they don't have God's glory in mind. So the curse of sin or the effect of that initial rebellion against God makes us think about ourselves first. We don't write out our life definitions because of love. I don't even enact my own policies justly.

Janet: No kidding.

Jocelyn: So the scriptures tell us that one of the many reasons God is praised is because His definitions of what is right and good are born out of policies that transcend human logic. And I just love Psalm 89. It's such a cool chapter, and it teaches us that God is praiseworthy. Precisely because His kingdom is founded on perfect, unchanging definitions of what is right and good for all people. Every single person will be benefited if they function according to God's definitions of what is right and good. Psalm 89:14 says this, "Righteousness and justice are the foundation



of your throne, unfailing love and truth, walk before you as attendants". So the foundation of God's throne, the very foundation that His kingdom rises up out of is his righteousness and justice. And the two things that attend Him and inform Him are unfailing love or *Hesed* and truth. Psalm 89 then goes on to say, "They or God's human subjects rejoice all day long in your wonderful reputation. They exalt in your righteousness. You are their glorious strength. It pleases you to make us strong". So the result of God's kingdom being founded on righteousness and justice, we, His humans are made strong. Deuteronomy 4:1-24 talks about this time when the Israelites were about to enter into the Promised Land and they were being prepped for it by Moses. So Moses was teaching them how to conduct themselves in the Promised Land because basically they were gonna stick out like sore thumbs. So they were getting ready to enter this land that was inhabited by pagan people, who worshiped demons and sacrificed their children to false gods. And so they were characterized by every evil thing you can imagine. And Moses tells the Israelites, listen, people, if you have been trained by God's law, His definitions of what is right and good, you're gonna be so different that people are gonna think you're weirdos. And not only that, they're gonna wanna know why. They're gonna be like, what has made you so great? So wise, so understanding, and so intelligent. So Deuteronomy 4:5-8 says this, look, I now teach you these decrees and regulations just as the Lord my God commanded me, so that you may obey them in the land you're about to enter and occupy. Obey them completely, and you will display your wisdom and intelligence among the surrounding nations. When they hear all these decrees, they will exclaim, how wise and prudent are the people of this great nation? For what great nation has a God is near to them as the Lord our God is near to us whenever we call on Him? And what great nation has decrees and regulations as righteous and fair as this body of instructions that I am giving you today. So the Israelites were gonna become great because of their closeness to the Lord and them having their way of thinking and acting revolutionized by the righteous decrees and laws of God. Unfortunately, we know from history that Israel failed for many, many years to fulfill those commandments to live differently than the people around them, and they didn't live trained by the right and good definitions and decrees of God. So let's just take a minute and break down things that we're talking about. We're talking about the righteousness of God.

Janet: So you've said a lot that makes me want this, and I see that it leads to joy for me and strength and all of that, but help me get my mind around it. What exactly is righteousness?

Jocelyn: Well, when we look at the word righteousness in the original languages, here are some of the descriptions and definitions. So in the Strongs, the word number 6664 describes righteousness as what is right or just, or normal, rightness, justice, and especially about weights and measures or the natural moral or legal right. In a physical sense, it talks about straightness, so rectitude, rightness. So it's ethically what is so or what ought to be so. And it's doing what's right, acting rightly. So to summarize then, righteousness is what is morally right, correct, good, and fair. And so righteousness, the way that I think about it in a way that I can remember,



righteousness is what is right and good. And we learn what is right and good for humans from God, the person who created the humans.

Janet: Yes.

Jocelyn: So righteousness is whatever God has said is right and good ways to think, want, and act. And when you read the scriptures, you see all over the place from Genesis to Revelation, God telling His people what is good. This one year when I was studying this and I was reading through the Bible that year, I decided just to emphasize this, I was gonna circle in the Bible every time I read the word good. And then I triangled around every time I read the word evil.

Janet: How interesting.

Jocelyn: It was a super interesting exercise. It was really vivid to just be able to turn any page of the Bible and see that God has regularly throughout the Bible, He's regularly said this is a right thing and He has regularly warned us about what is a wrong thing.

Janet: So I assumed you did synonyms as well.

Jocelyn: No, I did just good and evil.

Janet: Interesting.

Jocelyn: Those two words. I could have done synonyms, but like I get perfectionistic, and my whole bible would've been colored.

Janet: We'll do a session on that later. So in Psalm 89:14, it says that righteousness is one of the foundations of God's kingdom and justice is the other foundation of God's kingdom. So if righteousness is what God says is right and good, what is justice?

Jocelyn: Well, it's really interesting because in so many cases in the scripture, the word righteousness and the word justice are almost interchangeable. So it was actually a little bit hard to study this word, and I still find times where my mind is like, wait, what? What are we talking about? In the Strongs, justice is described as judgment or decisions that are based off of righteousness or the act of deciding a case. So you had a standard and then you decided a case based off of that standard. It's a right, a privilege, or a due, or to plead anyone's cause. It's that which is right. That which is just, lawful, what is according to the law, according to what is right, and then it's used of that, which is lawfully do anyone, so a privilege. Another word in the Strongs describes justice in a way that is used to govern or judge by standards that are right and good. So you execute judgment. And that can be vindicating or that can be condemning. It's something that is done to pronounce a sentence for or against. So we learn what's right and good from God, that's righteous, and then we discern and judge according to those definitions from God, and that's justice. So justice is the state of living in such a right and good way that



everyone's rights and privileges to enjoy a life, also defined by God's definitions of what is right and good, is upheld for them with equity.

Janet: I mean, I know that God made us and He has the right to determine how we should live and what we should value. I am just so thankful that we know He is good and right and loving because even if He wasn't.

Jocelyn: Yeah.

Janet: He'd still be God.

Jocelyn: Yeah.

Janet: But living under those standards would be terrifying if He were not also so good.

Jocelyn: And that's a lot of other religions that is how they view their god.

Janet: Yes.

Jocelyn: He's a terrifying god.

Janet: Yes.

Jocelyn: But what I really love about the verse Psalm 89:14, is because it tells us precisely what informs the one true God's definition of what is right and good. We had some really unfortunate experiences working with a variety of victims of evil people, and they have been abusive. So in those cases, what the abuser said is right and good is for them to be obeyed at all costs. So that's the right and good thing or what's right and good is for them to never be inconvenienced or for the victim to always be the one that does all of the work, or for the victim to guess what the abuser is thinking.

Janet: Yes.

Jocelyn: So a wicked person will define what is right and good according to their own thoughts and desires. But even I, and I'm not a wicked person, I'm a redeemed person, still under the curse of sin and still functioning in this sin cursed world. I can find that my definitions of what is right and good can be informed by my own desires. Like I define what's right and good based on how tired I am.

Janet: Yep.

Jocelyn: Or what I feel like doing that day or how much I hate doing what I need to do.



Janet: Oh, so true. All of us can be tempted to define what's right and good according to our own thoughts. It just reminds us of the rebellion in the garden.

Jocelyn: Yep.

Janet: So, what then informs God's definitions of what's right and good?

Jocelyn: Well, Psalm 89:14 tells us that two things inform God's definitions of what is right and good, and those two things are qualities that will never fail or change. The Psalmist says that unfailing love and truth are God's attendants advising him. So Janet, I know you love talking about this topic, so why don't you give us a little brief update? What is unfailing love or hesed?

Janet: You know that I could do a whole podcast on that.

Jocelyn: I do.

Janet: Oh wait, we did.

Jocelyn: We did.

Janet: It is one of my favorite topics. God's hesed is His commitment to do us good. Not because of anything we've done, but just because He loves to do it. Man, we see such a vivid example of that in John 13, the night before Jesus died. He loved first, most, sacrificially to His hurt all out of His hesed. I would encourage you guys to listen to Episode 4 about hesed, if you want to learn more about that.

Jocelyn: It's such a great topic to think about. So one of the advisors to. Informing him about how to make his laws of what is right and good is unfailing love. Goodness, kindness, faithfulness, and the other attendant advising God about how to make laws of what is right and good is truth. And that word means firmness, faithfulness, sureness, reliability, stability, continuance, certainty, establishment, sureness.

Janet: Wow.

Jocelyn: So certain, steadfast, faithful reliability, and never-ending loving, kind, faithfulness have informed God as He made His definitions of what is right and good for His people. So, His laws, His definitions are for our good and benefit.

Janet: So that's getting clearer. If I wanna really be able to understand something, sometimes I just need to see the opposite.

Jocelyn: Yeah.

Janet: So what would you say is the opposite of righteousness?



Jocelyn: Well, righteousness is what God has defined as right and good. So the opposite of righteousness will be what has God defined as wrong and evil? And we would use words like wickedness, unrighteousness, lawlessness, or even sin.

Janet: Yeah.

Jocelyn: So there's a passage in Psalm 55:10 that talks about the seriousness of evil. It says this, "Its walls are patrolled day and night against invaders, but the real danger is wickedness within the city". So there are physical dangers all around, but the real danger to the people is wickedness in their own city. So God's definitions of what is right and good informed by hesed love and truth should result in a human population that lives in a way that allows all other humans to freely enjoy the benefits of a right and good life for themselves.

Janet: And humans helping others flourish in that way is justice.

Jocelyn: Exactly. But what if God's righteousness has not informed your life? If God's righteousness, His definitions of what is right and good have not informed your life, something very serious happens. The Bible says that if God's definitions of what is right and good have not become your definitions of what is right and good, and you live them out justly, you will become a lawless person. So a community of humans who have not been trained by God's law will be known for their lawless. I'm just gonna take a little breath and silence to allow that to settle in. A community of humans who have not been trained by God's law, what He has defined as right and good, they will be known for their lawlessness.

Janet: It sounds like something I see today.

Jocelyn: It does. And if you take an honest assessment of the world around us, that is increasingly obvious.

Janet: Yeah.

Jocelyn: Like we live in a world that is very untrained by God's definitions of right and good. The world is full of people who are without law, uncontrolled by a law, unbridled, unruly, unrestrained, full of anarchy, chaos, and crime and disorder, full of illicit immoral licentiousness. And we can be assured that the further we go in human history, the closer we get to Jesus's imminent return, the lawlessness will continue to increase.

Janet: Yeah.

Jocelyn: Ultimately, we know that when Jesus comes back to rapture His church out of the world, it's a protection from the lawlessness, but it's also a protection from the judgment that's about to be poured out of heaven as a response to that lawlessness. And there are just vast portions and sections of scripture devoted to describing the results of living in an unrighteous,



lawless way. I'm not gonna get into all of them as the main topic today, but here's a summary. Proverbs 1:30-33 says it this way, "They rejected my advice and paid no attention when I corrected them. Therefore, they must eat the bitter fruit of living their own way. Choking on their own schemes. For simpletons turn away from me to death. Fools are destroyed by their own complacency, but all who listen to me will live in peace untried by fear of harm".

Janet: That's so sobering in a culture, and certainly in my own heart, I wanna live my own way. And to realize God says, go ahead and you'll eat bitter fruit and choke.

Jocelyn: Wickedness, lawlessness, and unrighteousness in your own heart will lead you to actions that are unjust.

Janet: Well, we've talked about the opposite of righteousness, the wickedness. Help me see a picture of the opposite of justice.

Jocelyn: So if justice is the state of living in such a right and good way, that everyone's right and privilege is to enjoy a life defined by God's definitions of what is right and good is upheld for them with equity. So the opposite of justice would be injustice or depriving or violating the rights of others, unjust or unfair actions and treatment. Amos 5:10-11 talks about how injustice violates the rights of others. How you hate honest judges, how you despise people who tell the truth. You trample the poor, stealing their grain through taxes and unfair rent. And Amos 5 is describing just how unjust the land of Israel had become. We just talked about how their goal was supposed to have been to go live so just and right.

Janet: Yeah.

Jocelyn: And so Israel had become this unjust land, and they were going to be facing discipline because of it. So they acted like a bunch of good people because they did a bunch of religious rituals, but all God wanted from His people was that they would live the way He had to defined was right, representing His values. I love how this passage in Amos 5 ends. Amos 5:21-24 says this, "Yes, the day of the Lord will be dark and hopeless without a ray of joy or hope. I hate all your show and pretense the hypocrisy of your religious festivals and solemn assemblies. I will not accept your burnt offerings and grain offerings. I won't even notice all your choice peace offerings. Away with your noisy hymns of praise. I will not listen to the music of your harps. Instead, I want to see a mighty flood of justice, an endless river of righteous living".

Janet: Wow, that's powerful. What would we expect to be the result of righteousness? If all the world suddenly started living righteously, what would that look like?

Jocelyn: Well, Isaiah 32 describes it this way. In verses 17 and 18, it says, "The effect of righteousness will be peace and the result of righteousness, quietness, and trust forever. My people will abide in a peaceful habitation, in secure dwellings, and in quiet resting places".



Janet: Don't all of our souls just go, oh, I want that.

Jocelyn: If all the world would begin living righteously right now, here's what we could expect. Peace, quietness, confident trust, security, liberation, welfare and happiness.

Janet: Yeah.

Jocelyn: We know that righteousness is required to have a relationship with God, and the curse of sin on all humans is that we are now bent toward unrighteousness as a default. It's only the Gospel that can make it possible for any of us to live righteously. So the Gospel is the good news that there is a solution to that terrible problem, our inborn proclivity to want to choose something other than God's definitions of what is right and good.

Janet: Yes.

Jocelyn: The problem is that we've chosen rebellion. And the solution to that problem is Jesus, who never, ever chose rebellion and then came to earth, united His divinity with a human body, lived a life completely by God's definitions of what is right and good, and then offered His perfect life as a sacrifice to pay our penalty from rebelling against God.

Janet: Yes.

Jocelyn: We know from scripture that we can believe that Jesus' death was an adequate sacrifice to satisfy the rightful wrath of God against our rebellion, and we can place our faith in that payment being applied to our life being the solution. So the Bible says that at that moment of faith, this is so cool, the righteousness of Jesus, the rightness and goodness of Jesus, can be imputed to us. And it basically, when I picture it, is like His righteousness and goodness was shoved into me, and it transformed me. So after salvation, we're once again returned to being capable of being righteous because Jesus gave us His righteousness, and then we spend the rest of our human lives on earth being trained by that righteousness. So unrighteousness or sin, it makes us act like wild, untamed animals, crazy animals. In Psalm 73, the Psalmist says that when he was enslaved to his bitterness, which is sin, he became like a brute beast. Our rebellion causes us to begin to behave like beast. It makes us wild, but the gift of the Gospel enables us to be transformed from being wild beast, who will have no master, to become productive, fruitful humans tamed by the rightness and goodness of God. Psalm 23:3 says that He leads me along righteous paths that bring honor to His name, and we learn how to apply what He has said is right and good and practice in our life. That's what wisdom is. Wisdom is saying, here is what God has said is right and wisdom is saying, and here's how I'm going to apply it. I take the knowledge I've learned from God's good definitions, and I apply it in my life. Proverbs 1:2-3 says that the purpose of God's law is to teach people wisdom and discipline to help them understand the insights of the whys. Their purpose is to teach people to live disciplined and successful lives, to help them do what is right and just and fair. And I just love this hilarious



section of scripture in Proverbs 30:1-3, verses one says this. It says, I am weary, Oh God. I am weary and worn out, Oh God. I am too stupid to be human and I lack common sense. I have not mastered human wisdom, nor do I know the holy one. And without God's help, we don't even know how to be human. We're literally too stupid to be human.

Janet: Too stupid.

Jocelyn: But there are some precious, precious promises to the people of God, who have made it their mission and their redeemed life, to be taught by the righteousness of God. And one promise that I've really been clinging to recently is found in Proverbs 35. It says, "Every word of God proves true. He is a shield to all who come to Him for protection". Yes, literally, we're too stupid to know how to be human without the influence of the One who created us. Only He can teach us how to be rightly human, and in that training we are safe.

Janet: That's so beautiful.

Jocelyn: We have this beautiful passage that my friend Becky crafted for me hanging in our dining room right above our piano, and it says this, Isaiah 54:13-14, "All your sons will be taught of the Lord and the wellbeing of your sons will be great. In righteousness, you'll be established". Isn't that so beautiful? Underneath that passage are two canvases that are the senior photographs of our two daughters. And so think about what senior photos look like. Confident, settled, forward looking, they're so excited about their future. And when you look at those two beautiful, smiling face, you might mistakenly believe they came out of the womb being precious and beautiful.

Janet: No way.

Jocelyn: And kind and ready for adulthood. But I know the truth. I know how many thousands of hours have gone into training them, molding them, influencing them, urging them, and praying for them and pleading with God for them to be trained by His righteousness, His definitions of what is right and good lived out equitably. I know what God has said will give them a good life. And that is if they adopt His definitions of what is right and good, and then live them out equitably and justly. And I know what God has said is the future of the wicked. Psalm 55:23 says this, "But you, O God, will send the wicked down to the pit of destruction. Murderers and liars will die young, but I am trusting you to save me".

Janet: You know, it's hard to believe sometimes when the unrighteous seem to be prospering. I encourage anybody listening to read Psalm 73 to hear the Psalmist struggle through that as well.

Jocelyn: So this was really kind of a summarization of a gigantic topic. We could talk about any of the different things we've talked for pages.

Janet: Yes.



Jocelyn: And paragraphs and minutes. So I'm just gonna summarize the topic of righteousness by asking a couple of specific application questions. First of all, who are you going to believe? Will you believe what God has said is right and good? Or will you believe what someone else or even yourself tells you is right and good? You can see in scripture that what God has told you is right and good is truth. Derived from His hesed love. But here's what you also have to realize, what anyone else tells you is truth that contradicts with God is propaganda. You have to understand that.

Janet: That's important. That's helpful to think through.

Jocelyn: There's truth and there is anyone else's version of truth and that is propaganda. They're trying to get you to believe something. Number two, have you accepted the payment for your rebellion against God so that you can have Jesus' righteousness given to you? You cannot live rightly without that gift, so if you've never accepted the payment for your sin so that you can be right with God, I beg you today accept the gift today.

Janet: Please. Please.

Jocelyn: Number three, how are you gonna invest in knowing God's definitions? If you're gonna know God's heart and His definitions, this is what it's gonna take, you're going to need to study and you're going to need to learn.

Janet: Yep.

Jocelyn: It's not rocket science, but it is hard work.

Janet: Yep.

Jocelyn: Number four, when you've sinned or missed the mark of doing what God has said is right and good, do you confess or say the same thing God does about what happens in your life? So if you've come to realize that you've been living in some way, that's alternate to what God has said is right and good. Do you bend your knee? Do you submit to His rightness? Here's a hard one. Number five, when someone around you acts like a rebel or that it's cool to be a rebel, how do you respond? Is it funny? Is it cute? Is he handsome? Does that make him hot? Or is it what God says it is? Dangerous, destructive, and scary.

Janet: Yep.

Jocelyn: Number six, do you remind yourself that God's definition of what is right and good are informed by His hesed love and solid, unchanging truth? Do you fight against temptations to think of God as a jerk or a hoarder or a tyrant? Number seven, do you work hard to allow God's definitions of what is right and good to train you. Or do you embrace being wild and unruly or lawless? Eight, do you work hard to uphold justice so that every person should have the privilege



of enjoying living under God's definitions? When someone is being treated unjustly or unfairly, or their human rights are being violated, do God's definitions of what is right and good inform your actions? Do you defend the widow and the orphan and the foreigner and the weak? Number nine, do you strive to represent God's values in your life? There's so many other things you could do. Create your own version of yourself, create your own identity, or do you represent God's values? And then last, when you stick out like a sore thumb because your life is so different than the world around you, how do you explain it? Are you just naturally wonderful or has your entire life been shaped and benefited because you've been taught by the righteousness of God? So there's a lot of resources that we could recommend, and literally, I'm gonna recommend one.

Janet: Oh, I can't wait. Which one?

Jocelyn: Read your Bible.

Janet: Amen.

Jocelyn: There are so many books that you can read about the topic of righteousness, but the book that you need is God's Word. His Word to you, so that you know how to have a right relationship with Him.

Janet: So that we'll know what is right and good.

Jocelyn: Yeah.

Janet: Excellent. Thank you, Jocelyn. This has been very helpful and encouraging, and I hope those of you listening are more and more committed to God's righteousness and living what is right and good for His glory. Thank you for joining us, and I hope you'll be joining us again for our next episode.

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