

What God Requires

(Micah 6:6-8 ESV) With what shall I come before the LORD, and bow myself before God on high? Shall I come before him with burnt offerings, with calves a year old? Will the LORD be pleased with thousands of rams, with ten thousands of rivers of oil? Shall I give my firstborn for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?



He has told you, O man, what is good; and what does the LORD require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?

Contrary to what one might think, this Bible passage is not about “what it takes to be saved.” Salvation is a free gift of God’s grace; it cannot be earned or deserved; it can only be received or rejected.

But this is a very important passage, because it sums up, in one short sentence, everything that God expects and requires of those who are His men and women. What does the **LORD** require of those of us who name Him as our Lord?

- Do justice.
- Love kindness.
- Walk humbly with our God.

Let’s figure out exactly what each of these requirements means.

Do justice. I believe that this simply means, do what is right from God’s perspective, based on His moral law. For example:

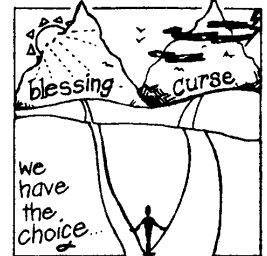


Be honest. Don’t rob anyone, don’t cheat anyone, don’t take unfair advantage of anyone. Don’t lie. Don’t excuse your wrong behavior just because “everybody does it.”

Act responsibly. Pay all your debts. Pay your taxes. If you are the father or mother of a child, accept responsibility for that child’s welfare and upbringing. If you have a job, do it well and make sure you earn what you are being paid.

Here’s a kind of negative twist on the Golden Rule: *If you would not want people to do it to you, don’t do it to them.* Don’t treat anyone worse than you would want to be treated. Don’t throw your weight around; don’t be a bully. Don’t injure anyone physically, emotionally, financially, or by gossip or slander. Be respectful in all your dealings with others.

In short, I believe that “Do justice” means do what God says is right, and do not do what God says is wrong. It’s a very sad fact that, in our society today, many kids do not get much instruction on God’s truth about right and wrong. That is one of the most damaging aspects of the failure of the family. Sometimes kids get helpful guidance in school, but, sadly, very often their behavior training is essentially left to other kids (gangs, for example), local petty crooks, and drug pushers.



Love kindness, or, in certain Bible translations, **Love mercy**. Of course, this has to do with how one treats other people—being kind, thoughtful, compassionate, helpful, loving, and forgiving. But it has even more to do with what I’ll call one’s heart attitude: with caring about the physical, emotional, and spiritual well-being of others; with sincerely wanting others to do well and be blessed.

It means caring so much for other people, no matter who they are, that you will reach out, extend yourself, go out of your way to do a kindness for them. And, of course, when you do that, you come to realize the truth of Jesus’s words: “It is more blessed to give than to receive.” (Acts 20:35)



To “love kindness” is to live out the very same idea that is expressed in the book of Deuteronomy and echoed by Jesus in the Gospel accounts: “Love your neighbor as yourself.”

Walk humbly with our God. This involves several separate ideas, each of which is important.

First, perspective. This means to realize who God is: the all-powerful, all-knowing, ever-present Being who created and sustains the entire universe. That He would care about, and want to have an intimate relationship with, every human being on the planet is totally mind-boggling—and yet it is true. It also means to understand who we are: weak, ignorant creatures with so much arrogance that we think we should be able to tell God what to do. But we are created in His image, and therefore, in spite of our



failings and limitations, we are infinitely valuable in some absolute sense—we are worth dying for, and worth being adopted as His children. To “walk humbly” with God is to understand and accept that relationship—He is God; I am not, and that is as it should be.

Trust and obedience are also important parts of our “walk with God.” We have to believe, and live out our belief, that He always knows what is best and will do what is best—not necessarily to our liking, but best, anyway. And when He orders us or invites us to do something, do it, even if it seems hard or painful or foolish at the time. “Trust and obey” is not only a fine old hymn, it is the essence of walking humbly with God.

God doesn’t usually give us direction with signs in the sky or visions or audible voices, but He does offer guidance and help on our walk with Him. His guidance is given through the presence of the Holy Spirit, which has been “poured out” since the day of Pentecost for the purpose of giving this guidance and help to us. The Bible says specifically and emphatically, “Be filled with the Spirit,” and “Those who are led by the Spirit are children of God.”

Another aspect of the Spirit’s work in our lives is to develop in us “the mind of Christ”—in other words, the character of Jesus, which perhaps is best described in Galatians 5:22-23: “The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.”

So let me summarize the above:

Do justice: Do what’s right; don’t do what’s wrong.

Love kindness: Be dedicated to helping, loving, blessing, and forgiving others.

Walk humbly with God: Let God be God; trust Him and obey Him, always being guided and helped by the Holy Spirit.

This is what God requires and expects of His children. Of course none of us can do all of this perfectly, but He knows that. His plan of salvation for each of us includes the entire process that will take us from where we are today to the place He has prepared for us in Eternity. Our main job today is to desire, with our whole being, for His plan for us to be accomplished. “And I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ.” (Philippians 1:6)

Finally, let’s look again at Micah 6:8:

He has told you, O man, what is good;
and what does the LORD require of you
but to do justice, and to love kindness,
and to walk humbly with your God?

I see in this verse, in these three requirements, a remarkable representation of our triune God:

To do justice is to imitate and honor God the Father, the creator, the builder, the law-giver, who has established for all time, for all people, the boundaries of right and wrong, good and evil.

To love kindness is to imitate and honor God the Son, Jesus, the Messiah, who “went about doing good;” who was the “friend of sinners” and the “Good Shepherd” who gave His life for the sheep (us). Even when He was chastising the Pharisees and lawyers, He was speaking the truth in love.

To walk humbly with God, with complete trust and willing obedience, is possible only with the help and guidance of the Holy Spirit. You could say that the reason the Spirit was given to us is to make it possible for us to begin to meet this requirement.

What God requires of us is straightforward; it’s not complicated. I won’t say it’s easy, because it isn’t. Dying to self is not something we want to do, and it can be very painful. Let’s do it anyway. It will please God, and that will truly be wonderful.

Blessings always —

Brother Roland

The Golden Rule (Matthew 7:12)

Author Unknown

“BE NICE! How would you like it if someone did that to you?”

Familiar words. Heard often as I was growing up and spoken often since I've grown up. Words that form the bottom line of all ethical teaching, a basic truth—“What you do not wish to be done to you, do not do to anyone else.” Simple to understand, it forms the basis of most of our law. This is a teaching that preceded Jesus as a part of Jewish, Greek and Roman writings. But Jesus said it differently, very differently. He took the basic teaching of ethics and made it the pinnacle of social ethics. The negative form is not particularly religious. It involves nothing more than not doing certain things. Jesus demands more.

There are some teachings of Jesus that are so familiar to me that I know they were among the first lessons that I was ever taught. At times they may be too familiar, and consequently lose some of the impact they should have. And so it may be with “The Golden Rule”. It is possibly the most universally familiar thing that Jesus ever said. It was one of His most radically new teachings. Yet it can seem so basic, so familiar, so accepted, that it loses much of the challenge or power inherent in the words: “Do unto others as you would have them do unto you.” That is how I learned it. The whole law summarized in a few very powerful words. To really follow what Jesus demands requires that a person has the love of Christ in his or her heart. Jesus does not say, “Do no one harm” but “You, do what is necessary to help another.”

In my years as a youth worker, I learned many lessons from the students I was supposed to be teaching. There is one lesson that I particularly remember and pray that I will never forget. Our junior high school was experiencing a very difficult situation where certain students were really being verbally abused and mistreated in the school. The students had become the victims of bullying at its ugliest. The school administrators, counselors and teachers had been frustrated in all attempts to change the attitude of the students, eliminate the bullying, remedy what had become a culture of “meanness”. They contacted the youth workers in the town's churches and asked us for help. The junior high group at our church was quite large and very active. I agreed to try and develop a program that might help the situation. I don't remember the program but I have never forgotten the conclusion.

The program built up to the following question: “Do you think it would make a difference in the school if those of you here were to go to school and treat all the other students with kindness and respect? Treat other kids like you want to be treated?” I was completely prepared to deal with the inevitable answer of “No, it really wouldn't change anything.” I was prepared to challenge them to try it for the next week. To see if anything changed. I wasn't prepared for the answer I got. A young man responded immediately, “Are you stupid? Of course it would. Just look around at who all is in the room. It would change everything.” Caught off guard, I looked at him and asked somewhat innocently, “So why don't you do it?” He did not see it as an innocent question but as an accusatory response and answered quite angrily, “That's unfair! Why don't you adults act differently? That would certainly change things too.”

I had a close friend years ago who used to say that the biggest problem with the church was that it was filled with people who would proclaim that “Jesus is Lord” and then live their lives as if it made no difference. William Barclay ends his “Daily Study Bible Series” commentary on Matthew 7:12 with this thought, “...if the world was filled with people who sought to obey this rule, it would be a new world.” Oh what a difference we could make.

Prayer for the day: Heavenly Father please help me to become the person you would have me be and open my heart to the needs of those around me. Give me the courage, wisdom and strength to serve you this day. Amen.

Please send your Bible questions and address changes to me:

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What Love Is

The basic message of the Bible is that God loves us, He loves all people, and He wants us to participate with Him in loving all people by doing justice, loving kindness, and walking humbly with Him as His Holy Spirit gives us guidance and help. For us, it's all about Him and His love.

Puzzle:

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N V F Y Y F O K T A N F L T U M V V P P U I N I O L D I P L R
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Y S F A X E R F R E G R M X A N T A A P B B W T P G A R K P Y
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F A W W A C X N J T N P S O A T R O O C Y U V Q O R D Z F F J
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M S T I H V U A I F R N N H D E O O H D Z O S K I N D O F B T
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Words:

ACCOMMODATING
AFFECTIONATE
ATTENTIVE
AVAILABLE
BENEVOLENT
BLESSING
CARING
COMFORTING
COMMITTED
COMPASSIONATE
CONSIDERATE

COOPERATIVE
DEVOTED
FAITHFUL
FORGIVING
FRIENDLY
GENEROUS
GENTLE
GIVING
HEALING
HELPFUL
HONEST

HUMBLE
JOYFUL
KIND
LIFTING
LOYAL
NOTCRITICAL
PATIENT
PEACEFUL
PERSONAL
PLEASANT
REASSURING

RESPECTFUL
STRENGTHENING
SUPPORTIVE
SYMPATHETIC
TENDER
THOUGHTFUL
TRUTHFUL
UNDERSTANDING
UNSELFISH
UPLIFTING
WARM